

### – GETTING STARTED

#### Opportunity – *Is there a future?*

Now and for many years, the job market for water & wastewater operators holds the promise of being a sellers' market. Qualified operators are expected to be in short supply!

Do you like the idea of getting really good at a job & continuing to do it? Experienced, dependable operators are highly valued.

On the other hand, if you are excited by opportunities for advancement, there are *4 levels* of operator qualification!

Every community has a water & wastewater operation. So, you could have some choices in locations and utility size. This also means choices in work schedule flexibility, employer-supported training, as well as negotiable wages and benefits.

BC & Yukon have:

- ★ over 2100 facilities
- ★ more than 4500 operators

#### The Rewards – *Is it worth it?*

Based on the size of the utility, salaries can begin around \$35,000 and reach over \$100,000 in certain circumstances. Almost all municipal systems offer good health care and retirement plans.

One of the greatest rewards for water & wastewater operators - they know that this job is *more than just any job*.

In fact, it is one of *the* most important jobs in the world since no one can live without drinkable water!

Water and wastewater operators  
protect public health and  
the environment.

What could be more important to  
you and your community?

#### Exploring – *How can I see more?*

One thing is for sure – no 2 days are the same for water or wastewater operators. You could be repairing a leak in a water line, running a backhoe, welding pipe & fixing a pump in one day!

The next day you could be in the laboratory testing samples for “pathogens”. Or you might present information to the Town Council and the public. *Operators wear many hats.*

To explore different possibilities:

- ✓ Contact your local water or wastewater department listed in the blue pages. You may be able to gain experience through a summer job or internship.
- ✓ Look for tours of local facilities.
- ✓ Call the EOCP – we may be able to put you in touch with the right people.

Checkout EOCP's webpage Job Vacancies

<http://eocp.ca/jobs>

## Your Background/Preparation

It helps to have some science and math knowledge. MOST important, is having *some mechanical ability*.

People, who like to work with their hands and/or have an interest in how things work often do very well.

See *Resources for You* for ideas on a course or two you might take to help you explore whether this is something you want to do!

## Operator Certification

Because *operators have such important jobs*, you will need to have some training and certification.

Water and wastewater operators are certified by the Environmental Operators Certification Program (EOCP). There are minimum educational and experience-related requirements. It depends on the various certification levels.

See EOCP's webpage Certification for more info:  
<http://www.eocp.ca>

## Entry Requirements

What do you need to start out with? Small Water and Wastewater system operators require a training course and some hands-on experience. Entry levels in bigger systems require a high school or GED diploma and on-the-job experience. Extra experience can be substituted for some education. Higher levels require additional education and more experience.

Employers provide on-the-job experience and often help with the training.

## Resources for You

Training providers offer courses to help operators gain knowledge they need for their jobs and for certification. The EOCP has approved lists of supplied courses, including home study and online courses available for operator certification.

You can find all this information in one place – EOCP's Training Registry. Do a search to find what you are interested in. Then contact the agencies directly for more information.

Learn more at EOCP's Training Registry:  
<http://www.trainingregistry.eocp.ca>

## Cool Facts

- ★ It's great to work outside in the summer, but when a line breaks in winter you're especially important. Everyone wants to see you out there getting their water back on!
- ★ One of our first certified operators just retired as the Chief Administrative Officer of a Regional District. There are no limits in where a job like this can take you.
- ★ Many BC Operators work in other parts of the country and take their expertise around the world.

Our communities need knowledgeable, conscientious people to:

- ★ Deliver clean, potable water and
- ★ Make sure that wastewater is sent back to the environment in a safe manner.

*It takes special people to do this job.*

If you like a challenge and the responsibility of protecting the public health and the environment – this could be the job for you!