

Full Job Description

Position Title

Operator Trainee

Department / Employer

Joint position of the Arch Cape Domestic Water Supply District and the Arch Cape Sanitary District. Day-to-day operational supervision is provided by the Manager of Plants and Operations. Administrative supervision is provided by the Districts' designated management representative or designee, as determined by the Boards.

FLSA Classification

Non-exempt, hourly. Overtime eligible.

Position Summary

The Operator Trainee performs routine field, plant, and collection-system work for the Arch Cape Water and Sanitary Districts under the direction of the Manager of Plants and Operations. This is an entry-level, training-track position in a very small team. The employee is expected to learn the Districts' water treatment, water distribution, wastewater collection, and wastewater treatment operations while working toward Oregon operator certification milestones as a condition of continued employment. The position supports the Manager of Plants and Operations in day-to-day operations and does not hold direct responsible charge, compliance reporting authority, or independent process-control responsibility. Advancement into more senior operator classifications is tied to demonstrated competence, certification progress, reliability, and ability to work well in the Districts' small-team environment.

Distinguishing Characteristics

This is the entry-level step in the operator series for the Districts. The Operator Trainee supports day-to-day field, plant, and system operations under the direction of the Manager of Plants and Operations, but does not independently hold direct responsible charge, compliance reporting authority, or primary process-control responsibility. The Operator Trainee is not the Districts' primary on-call lead.

Essential Duties

The following are illustrative, not exhaustive. All essential duties are performed under the direction of the Manager of Plants and Operations.

- Perform routine rounds at the water treatment plant, wastewater treatment plant, pump stations, storage facilities, and distribution/collection system facilities. Record readings, observations, and alarms in logs as directed.
- Assist with routine cleaning, housekeeping, and preventive maintenance of plant equipment, facilities, and grounds.
- Read water meters and perform radio-read meter routes; assist with investigation of read anomalies as directed.
- Perform hydrant and valve exercising, flushing, and routine maintenance on the distribution system.
- Inspect and assist in maintaining sewer lines, manholes, and pump stations; assist with routine collection-system cleaning and inspection.

- Collect water, wastewater, and process-control samples and perform routine lab work under direction, following applicable procedures and QA/QC requirements. The Trainee does not independently perform compliance sampling or reporting.
- Perform grounds, roads, watershed, and landscape maintenance, including mowing, brush control, and watershed road upkeep.
- Respond to callouts, alarms, and storm-event work as directed. Initial callout response is as backup support to the Manager of Plants and Operations, not as an independent on-call lead.
- Assist contractors, service vendors, and equipment suppliers on site as directed.
- Maintain District vehicles, trailers, small equipment, tools, and shop areas in clean, safe, and ready condition.
- Operate light and medium equipment, including pickups, trailers, skid steers, tractors, and small excavators, when properly trained or authorized.
- Wear and use required personal protective equipment and comply with District safety procedures, including lockout/tagout, confined-space, and chemical-handling requirements.
- Work effectively in a very small team environment, including taking direction well, communicating respectfully, and maintaining productive working relationships.
- Participate in required training and work toward Oregon operator certification milestones as described in this job description.
- Perform related operator-trainee duties as assigned, consistent with the position's classification, training, and certifications.

Secondary Duties

- Enter private property for meter reads, inspections, and service work as part of District duties. The Trainee is not the primary customer-facing representative; complex service complaints are referred to the Manager of Plants and Operations or the Districts' designated management representative.
- Basic data entry; operate SCADA/HMI screens and electronic records systems at a basic level after training.

Minimum Qualifications

- High school diploma or GED.
- Valid Oregon driver's license and an insurable driving record at the time of hire and throughout employment.
- Ability to pass a post-offer background check and any pre-employment screening required by the Districts.
- Mechanical aptitude and physical ability to perform the essential duties of the position, with or without reasonable accommodation.
- Ability to work effectively in a very small team environment, including taking direction from a single supervisor, communicating respectfully, and maintaining productive working relationships.
- Willingness to work toward Oregon operator certifications as a condition of continued employment, as described under Certification Expectations below.
- Willingness and ability to perform outdoor, field, and plant work in wet, cold, dirty, and occasionally confined conditions, including work in and around wastewater.

Preferred Qualifications

- One or more years of experience in public works, water or wastewater systems, construction, excavation, plumbing, mechanical maintenance, or heavy equipment operation.
- Any current Oregon operator certification in water distribution, water treatment, wastewater collection, wastewater treatment, or small water system operation.

- Current CPR/First Aid certification.
- Experience with SCADA, radio-read meter systems, electronic logs, or basic field technology used in utility operations.
- Experience with confined-space entry, lockout/tagout, chemical handling, or similar industrial or utility safety procedures.
- Experience working successfully in a very small team environment.

Required Licenses and Certifications

- Oregon driver's license with insurable record, maintained throughout employment.
- CPR/First Aid card within 6 months of hire; maintain thereafter.
- At least one Oregon operator certification milestone obtained within 12 months of hire as set out under Certification Expectations below.

Certification Expectations and Condition of Employment

Certification progress is a condition of continued employment. The Operator Trainee position exists to develop a certified operator over time.

Within the first 12 months of hire, the employee shall obtain at least one applicable Oregon operator certification or an approved certification milestone. Applicable certifications include:

- Oregon Water Distribution Level 1;
- Oregon Small Water System Operator certification;
- Oregon Wastewater Collection Grade I; or
- Another equivalent Oregon operator certification or milestone approved by the Districts

The Districts recognize that certification timing may be affected by exam scheduling, experience-accrual requirements under Oregon rules, prep-course availability, and other factors outside the employee's control. Where the employee is making documented good-faith effort, including consistent study, appropriate use of District-supported training, completed exam attempts, and satisfactory job performance, the Districts may extend the 12-month timeline or approve a revised certification target.

Failure to make documented good-faith progress toward certification may result in extension, reassignment, or separation of employment, consistent with District policy.

District support for certification:

- Reasonable exam registration fees
- One approved review or prep course, with advance approval
- Reasonable study materials
- Up to two exam attempts per certification target, with additional attempts considered based on circumstances
- A reasonable amount of approved study time on the clock during active exam preparation

A second applicable Oregon operator certification, or advancement to the next level within the first certification area, is expected within 24 months of hire.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

- Basic knowledge of math, mechanical principles, and safe work practices.

- Ability to read, follow, and record information in logs, forms, manuals, and manufacturer instructions.
- Ability to follow verbal and written direction from a single supervisor and ask questions when clarification is needed.
- Ability to work effectively in a very small team environment, including building trust, communicating respectfully, taking direction constructively, and maintaining productive working relationships.
- Ability to work alone at times, exercise sound judgment, and recognize when to seek assistance or escalate an issue.
- Mechanical aptitude and willingness to learn basic plumbing, electrical, equipment-repair, and maintenance skills under supervision.
- Ability to use smartphones, tablets, radio-read equipment, and basic electronic records systems; willingness to be trained on SCADA, GIS/locates, and more formal office software over time.
- Ability to conduct oneself professionally in dealings with the public, contractors, regulators, and other District representatives.
- Reliability, trainability, sound judgment, and willingness to learn are essential to success in this position.

Work Schedule and Callout Expectations

Regular schedule: five 8-hour days. Specific days and start times will be set by the Manager of Plants and Operations based on operational need.

- The regular work schedule is five 8-hour days. Specific days and start times will be set based on operational needs.
- The Operator Trainee is expected to be available on a backup basis for after-hours callouts, alarm response, storm-event work, and other operational needs as directed.
- During at least the first 12 months of employment, the Operator Trainee will serve as backup support and not as the Districts' primary on-call lead, unless otherwise authorized.
- The employee must be reasonably available to respond to District facilities within approximately 20 minutes during assigned callout periods. A new hire who does not currently meet that expectation must be willing to relocate within approximately 6 months of hire.
- Overtime, callout compensation, and standby expectations will be handled in accordance with District policy and applicable law.

Physical Demands

- Frequent outdoor work in rain, wind, cold, and other coastal weather conditions.
- Frequent walking on wet, slippery, uneven, and rough surfaces, including roads, trails, treatment facilities, and utility sites.
- Frequent bending, kneeling, crouching, climbing, and working in awkward positions.
- Frequent handling of hoses, pumps, valves, lids, tools, equipment, and materials used in utility operations and maintenance.
- Frequent lifting, carrying, pushing, and pulling of tools, equipment, and materials; occasional lifting of up to 50 pounds, with team-lifting or mechanical assistance for heavier items.
- Occasional ladder climbing and work at elevation.
- Occasional confined-space entry after required training and authorization.
- Frequent exposure to wastewater, chemicals, lab reagents, odors, and other utility-related environmental conditions.
- Occasional use of hand and power tools requiring both fine and gross motor control.

Work Environment

- Work is performed primarily outdoors and in treatment plant, pump station, shop, watershed, and field environments, with limited office or desk work.
- The employee will regularly drive District vehicles on paved roads, gravel roads, and watershed access roads.
- The position involves exposure to biological hazards, wastewater, chemicals, lab reagents, mechanical equipment, noise, weather, and seasonal storm conditions.
- Occasional work on private property is required for meter reads, inspections, and service-related activities.
- The work environment may involve wet, dirty, odorous, noisy, or otherwise uncomfortable conditions typical of water and wastewater utility operations.

Safety Expectations

- Use all required personal protective equipment and follow all District safety procedures.
- Comply with lockout/tagout, confined-space entry, chemical handling, and other applicable safety requirements.
- Maintain current CPR/First Aid certification as required by the Districts.
- Promptly report accidents, injuries, near misses, unsafe conditions, and equipment problems.
- Operate vehicles, tools, and equipment in a safe and responsible manner.
- Perform work in a way that protects the employee, coworkers, contractors, the public, and District facilities.

Compensation

Starting salary is \$42,000 to \$52,000 per year, depending on qualifications and experience. This position is part of the Districts' trainee-to-operator development path. Future advancement and compensation growth may be tied to satisfactory performance, demonstrated ability to work effectively in the Districts' small-team environment, and progress toward Oregon operator certifications, in accordance with District policy and any adopted classification or compensation structure.

Disclaimer

This job description is intended to describe the general nature and level of work performed by the Operator Trainee. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all duties, responsibilities, or qualifications associated with the position. Duties and responsibilities may change, or additional duties may be assigned, based on District needs. This job description does not constitute an employment contract. Employment with the Arch Cape Domestic Water Supply District and the Arch Cape Sanitary District is at will, except as otherwise provided by applicable law or District policy.