WHAT IS AN OPERATOR-IN-TRAINING?

An Operator-In-Training (OIT) is a person working at a wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) who is gaining the experience necessary to become a certified operator. OITs must complete at least 1,800 hours in wastewater operations to become certified.

HOW TO BECOME AN OIT

a) **Meet the educational requirements based on the requirements table in Title 23, Chapter 26.** For example, a Grade I OIT must submit a copy of a high school diploma or equivalent (such as a GED) and six educational points (a three unit college semester math or specific science courses is equal to eight educational points; ten classroom hours are equal to one educational point).

For more detailed information refer to the Training Directory which can be found at: http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/operator_certification/docs/trngdir.pdf

b) **Secure a position (either paid or volunteer) at a wastewater treatment plant working in wastewater operations.**

c) **Complete and submit an OIT application:**

✓ The chief plant operator (CPO) must sign the OIT application.

✓ The applicant must sign the OIT application.

✓ Complete all sections of the application, including section IV, with the proposed duties that will be performed as an OIT.

✓ Attach a copy of the current duty statement on the wastewater treatment plant's official letterhead or it must be signed by the CPO.

✓ Submit a check, money order, or online payment with the appropriate application fee.

WHAT COUNTS AS 1 YEAR OF FULL-TIME QUALIFYING EXPERIENCE?

Eighteen hundred (1,800) hours of "qualifying" experience in operations at a WWTP counts as one year of full-time qualifying experience.

• Volunteer, part-time, full-time and overtime hours qualify.

• OIT hours (Grade I to V) count as qualifying experience hours. OIT hours are not grade level specific.

• If less than an average of 40 hours per week is worked, an OIT will be considered working full-time if he/she works as the only OIT under the direct supervision of an operator who is the only operator and solely responsible for the operation of the WWTP.

• OIT experience does NOT expire.

OIT CERTIFICATION RENEWAL

• OIT certificates are good for two years from the date of issuance and can be renewed.

• In order to renew an OIT certificate an applicant must have taken and passed a Wastewater Exam within the last four years.

CAN AN OIT WORK AT MULTIPLE PLANTS?

Yes, an OIT can work at multiple WWTPs if he/she submits a complete application including additional pages completing sections IV and V for each WWTP that the OIT is applying for. The CPO for each plant must sign the OIT application.

Note: OIT's must have a current certificate for each WWTP that the OIT works in wastewater operations.

The OIT must work at WWTP's that are within the same geographical area of the State of California, otherwise the applicant must complete an additional OIT application including a new fee.

HOW MUCH SUPERVISION DOES AN OIT NEED?

• According to the State Water Board regulation Section 3682, an OIT is required to work under the direct supervision of an operator with a certificate of equal or higher grade.

• "Direct supervision" means the supervising operator oversees and inspects the work performed by the OIT and provides training to ensure the safe and proper execution of the OIT's duties.

• The supervising operator must be present at the WWTP or otherwise available to consult with; and provide assistance to the OIT in order to ensure the safe and proper execution of the OIT's duties.

• An OIT cannot work as the only operator at a WWTP. It is illegal for an OIT to operate without the direct supervision of a certified operator.

• An OIT <u>cannot</u> supervise other OIT's.

• An OIT <u>cannot</u> work a shift alone under any circumstance.

EXAMPLES OF OPERATIONAL DUTIES

- ❖ adjusting gauges
- ❖ adjusting dials and valves
- ❖ adding chemicals
- ❖ monitoring SCADA
- ❖ reading and monitoring gauges
- ❖ visual inspections of operational equipment

EXAMPLES OF NON-OPERATIONAL DUTIES

- ❖ laboratory testing
- ❖ landscaping
- ❖ engineering
- ❖ maintenance*

*A maximum of 15% of OIT experience will be allowed for wastewater maintenance.

WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT PROCESSES

Class I - Primary, Conventional Treatment Pond

Class II - Primary, Biofiltration, Modified Treatment Pond

Class III - Primary, Biofiltration, Activated Sludge, Sequencing Batch Reactor, Tertiary

Class IV - Primary, Biofiltration, Activated Sludge, Sequencing Batch Reactor, Tertiary

Class V - Biofiltration, Activated Sludge, Sequencing Batch Reactor, Tertiary

WHAT IS CONSIDERED A WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT?

To be considered a WWTP, the plant must meet all of the following criteria:

- ✓ Classified by the State Water Resources Control Board
- ✓ Publically or privately owned
- ✓ Used in the treatment or reclamation of sewage or industrial waste

Note: All water recycling treatment plants are WWTPs.

OIT APPLICATION AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For more information and program updates, visit the Wastewater Operator Certification's website at: http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/operator_certification/operator_certification.shtml

- ❖ The *OIT application* and additional information is located under **Quick Links** > **Certifications** tab > **Operator-In-Training** or at http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/operator_certification/oit_info.shtml

- ❖ The *Training Directory* and *FAQ's* is located under **Quick Link's** > **General Information** tab or at http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/operator_certification/docs/trngdir.pdf

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Wastewater Operator Certification
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Email: wwopcertprogram@waterboards.ca.gov

Office of Operator Certification
Wastewater Treatment Plant Certification Program

OPERATOR-IN-TRAINING INFORMATION

Water Boards
CALIFORNIA
STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD
REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARDS