



Apprenticeship Program Water & Wastewater Operations Specialists

Objective

The objective of Water & Wastewater Operations Specialist apprenticeship standards is the training of workers skilled in all phases of the industry and who can acquire the requisite licenses from the NJ Department of Environmental Protection. To accomplish this there is a well-developed on-the-job training combined with related technical instruction. The NJWA provides administrative support for the program.

This guidance document provides a summary of the program and program requirements. Additional information is available at www.njwater.org under the Apprenticeship Program link. Questions regarding the program can be sent to apprenticeship@njwater.org with "Apprenticeship Question" in the "Subject" heading or by calling 609-242-7111.

Occupations Included in this Program (USDOL O*NET-SOC Code 51-8031.00)

- Water Systems Operations Specialist (Licensed Operator): RAPIDS Code 0507
- Wastewater Systems Operation Specialist (Licensed Operator) RAPIDS Code 0507R

Program Overview

- **Two-year Program**
- **4,000 hours** of Mentored On-The-Job Training over 2 years
 - Training Elements/Approximate Hours
 - Tools, Equipment & Workplace Safety – 240 Hrs.
 - Vehicles & Specialized Equipment – 400 Hrs.
 - Systems Operation & Maintenance – 1,920 Hrs.
 - Quality Control – 960 Hrs.
 - Logistics, Reports and Supervision – 480 Hrs.
- **288 hours** of Related Technical Instruction (RTI) over 2 years
 - RTI Elements
 - Program Orientation
 - Professional Requirements
 - Introduction to Water & Wastewater Operations
 - Advanced Water Operations
 - Advanced Wastewater Operations Course
 - Operations, Safety Related/Miscellaneous Training
 - Security & Emergency Response

- RTI May Be Provided By
 - Colleges
 - Vocational/Technical Schools
 - Qualified Water Associations
 - Employers/Consultants

Apprentice Minimum Requirements

- Apprentices must not be less than 18 years of age.
- A high school diploma, General Educational Development (GED) equivalency or other high school equivalency credential is required. Applicants must submit a DD-214 to verify military training and/or experience if they are a veteran and wish to receive consideration for such training/experience.
- Applicants must be physically capable of performing the essential functions of a water or wastewater operations specialist, with or without reasonable accommodation, and without posing a direct threat to the health and safety of the individual or others.
- Candidates will be required to undergo a drug screening prior to employment.
- Candidates will be required to undergo a background check prior to employment.
- Applicants must possess a valid state-issued vehicle operator license and be insurable at normal commercial rates.

Apprenticeship Application

- Applications are available at NJWA's website at www.njwater.org under the Apprenticeship Program link.
- Upon receipt of the application and supporting documentation, applicants are scheduled for a screening interview where the candidate is ranked among other candidates based on their interview score.
- Opportunities for employment with participating employers are presented to the candidates based on their ranking.
- Upon the offer of employment, the candidate must complete an apprenticeship agreement and undergo drug screening and background check before being registered as an apprentice.

Apprenticeship Agreement

- After an applicant for apprenticeship has been selected, but before employment as an apprentice or enrollment in related instruction, the apprentice will be covered by a written apprenticeship agreement.

Supervision of Apprentices

- No apprentice shall work without proper or adequate supervision of the employer's Licensed Operator.
- Mentoring is on a 1:1 basis. USDOL approved for 1:3 as of May 2021.
- Employers are required to sign an Employer Acceptance

Agreement Term of Apprenticeship

- The term of the occupation and on-the-job training attainment supplemented by the required hours of related instruction will be as stated on the Work Process Schedule and Related Instruction Outline for each occupation. Refer to Appendices A1 (Water) and A2 (Wastewater).

Probationary Period

- Every applicant selected for apprenticeship will serve a probationary period. The probationary period is the first 1000 hours of on-the-job training.
- During the probationary period, either the apprentice or NJWA may terminate the apprenticeship agreement, without stated cause, by notifying the other party in writing. Any probationary apprentice evaluated as satisfactory after a review of the probationary period will be given full credit for the probationary period and continue in the program.
- After the probationary period, the apprenticeship agreement may be cancelled at the request of the apprentice or may be suspended or cancelled by NJWA for reasonable cause after documented due notice to the apprentice and a reasonable opportunity for corrective action.

Hours of Work

- Apprentices will generally work the same hours as fully proficient Licensed Operator except that no apprentice will be allowed to work overtime if overtime interferes with attendance in related technical instruction.
- Apprentices who do not complete the required hours of on-the-job training during a given segment will have the term of that segment extended until they have accrued the required number of training hours.

Apprentice Wage Progression

- Apprentices are paid a progressively increasing schedule of wages during their apprenticeship based on the acquisition of increased skill and competence on the job.
- Before an apprentice is advanced to the next segment of training, NJWA will evaluate all progress to determine whether advancement has been earned by satisfactory performance in on-the-job training and in related technical instruction courses based on work experience and related instruction records and reports.
- The progressive wage schedule is established by the employer in coordination with NJWA. In no case will the starting wages of apprentices be less than that required by any minimum wage law that may be applicable.

Credit for Previous Experience

- NJWA may grant credit toward the term of apprenticeship to new apprentices. Credit is based on a demonstration of previous skills or knowledge equivalent to these standards.
- Apprentice applicants seeking credit for previous experience gained outside the supervision of the sponsor must submit the request at the time of application and furnish such records, affidavits, and other documentation to substantiate the claim.
- An applicant who is a veteran and who wishes to receive consideration for military training and/or experience must submit a DD-214. The request for credit will be evaluated and a determination made by the NJWA prior to completion of the probationary period. The amount of credit to be awarded will be determined upon review of the apprentice's previous work and training/education record and evaluation of the apprentice's performance and demonstrated skill and knowledge.
- An apprentice granted credit will be advanced to the wage rate designated for the period to which such credit accrues. NJWA will notify the Registration Agency (USDOL) any credit granted and the wage rate to which the apprentice is advanced.
- The granting of advanced standing will be uniformly applied to all apprentices.

Transfer of An Apprentice and Training Obligation

- The transfer of an apprentice between apprenticeship programs and within an apprenticeship program must be based on agreement between the apprentice, employer, and the NJWA.
- The transferring apprentice must be provided with a transcript of related instruction and on-the-job training by the NJWA.
- Transfers must be to the same occupation.
- A new apprenticeship agreement is required between the apprentice and new employer.
- The apprentice receives credit from the NJWA for training satisfactorily completed.

For Complete Details of the Program, click on the Apprenticeship Program link at www.njwater.org and view the following documents:

- Apprenticeship Standards
- Appendix A-1 (Water Systems Operator)
- Appendix A-2 (Wastewater Systems Operator)
- Appendix B (Apprenticeship Agreement)
- Appendix D (Qualifications/Selection Procedures)
- Appendix E (Employer Acceptance Agreement)

Contact Us

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