

## WHAT IS AN OPERATOR-IN-TRAINING?

An Operator-in-training (OIT) is a person working at a wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) who has been issued an OIT certificate by the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) and is gaining the qualifying experience required 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 science course 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: [https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/operator\\_certification/docs/2023/trngdir.pdf](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/operator_certification/docs/2023/trngdir.pdf)

### b) Secure a position (either paid or volunteer) at a WWTP working in wastewater operations.

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

- ✓ Signatures of the chief plant operator (CPO) and the applicant are required.
- ✓ 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 applicable fee amount.

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

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.
- Only hours acquired under the direct supervision of an operator with a certificate of equal or higher grade as the OIT qualify.
- OIT experience does NOT expire.
- For additional details on what may be considered full time for the purposes of qualifying experience, see the definition of "full-time" in the regulations.

## OIT CERTIFICATION RENEWAL

- OIT certificates are good for three years from the date of issuance and can be renewed.
- In order to renew an OIT certificate a wastewater exam must have been taken and passed 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.*

## HOW MUCH SUPERVISION DOES AN OIT NEED?

- 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 cannot supervise other OIT's.
- An OIT cannot 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

## WWTP 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 WWTP?

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

- ✓ Classified by the State Water Board
- ✓ Publicly 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 website at: [http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/operator\\_certification/operator\\_certification.shtml](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/operator_certification/operator_certification.shtml)

- ❖ The *OIT application* and additional information is located under the **Certifications** tab > **Operator-In-Training** or at [http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/operator\\_certification/oit\\_info.shtml](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/operator_certification/oit_info.shtml)
- ❖ The *Training Directory* and *FAQ's* are located under the **General Information** tab or at [https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/operator\\_certification/docs/2023/trngdir.pdf](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/operator_certification/docs/2023/trngdir.pdf)



## OPERATOR-IN-TRAINING INFORMATION



Effective January 1, 2026

