

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

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
- ✓ 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 website at: 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
- ❖ 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

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Office of
Operator
Certification

Wastewater Treatment Plant Certification Program

OPERATOR-IN-TRAINING INFORMATION



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