



King County

Department of Natural Resources and Parks
Wastewater Treatment Division

Wastewater “Dirty Jobs” for Clean Water

Wastewater leads to career choices that most people have never heard of or considered. Many wastewater systems in the U.S. are more than 40 years old, many of the employees are nearing retirement, water quality regulations are getting stricter and populations continue to grow and use more water. Wastewater jobs are increasingly important to our economy and environment.

King County’s Wastewater Treatment Division (WTD) offers competitive pay (starting pay for many of these jobs is approx. \$21-\$30 an hour) and a benefit package (dental, vision, vacation). Work environments and schedules vary in the technical and professional fields of:

Wastewater Operations
Electrical/Instrumentation
Mechanical/ Maintenance
Process control/Lab

Job opportunities may include:

- Wastewater Utility Worker
- Industrial Instrument Technician
- Industrial Maintenance Mechanic
- Industrial Maintenance Electrician
- Process Analyst
- Lab Specialist
- Office and administrative support staff
- Facilities and grounds maintenance



Getting started:

Operations: Operators control the flow of water through the conveyance (pipes) and treatment system, ensuring all water is treated before re-entering the environment. They assist with energy and chemical usage efficiencies and respond to and prevent sewer overflows and emergencies. To become an operator you must be licensed and pass tests from the state Department of Ecology (DOE).

Online courses and state test preparation materials

- UC Sacramento Self Study Program
<http://www.owp.csus.edu/training/courses/>
- Awwa.org 10 week Online Study Program
<http://www.awwa.org/Conferences/learning.cfm?ItemNumber=51924&navItemNumber=54566>
- Washington Environmental Training Center <http://www.wetrc.org/index.shtm>

Technical College Programs

Skagit Valley College

http://www.skagit.edu/sampschd_nav.asp_Q_pagenumber_E_2696

Required State tests, http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/wastewater/op_cert/index.html

Contact the Washington Department of Ecology's Wastewater Operator Certification Program for help answer any questions you have about the process.

Mechanical/Maintenance: These employees continually install, inspect, maintain and rebuild wastewater treatment equipment; working to increase efficiency, improve treatment quality and increase equipment life-span.

Electrical/Instrumentation: These jobs focus on control, electrical, safety and security systems and data collection components of the operations system.

These skills can be obtained through a technical school or an apprenticeship program. Career paths in the fields of or containing the phrase(s) *Electrical, Industrial, Mechanic, Instrumentation Technician, Machinist, Equipment Maintenance* have potential for the wastewater field.

Schools that offer technical programs include:

- North Seattle Community College <http://northseattle.edu>
- Bates Technical College <http://www.bates.ctc.edu>
- Renton Technical College <http://www.rtc.edu>
- Seattle Community Colleges Program Offerings
<http://www.seattlecolleges.edu/DISTRICT/catalog/ccprotech.aspx>
- Bellingham Technical College <http://www.btc.ctc.edu>
- Perry Technical Institute <http://www.perrytech.edu>

Apprenticeships: On the job training programs, teach a skill or trade which prepares the apprentice to be work-force ready at the end of their term.

- Washington State Labor & Industries
<http://www.lni.wa.gov/TradesLicensing/Apprenticeship/default.asp>
- Seattle Area Pipe Trades <http://www.seattlepipetrades.org/applicant.aspx>

These “earn while you learn” apprentice programs are in a variety of fields and include the electrician, pipe fitting, water system operations/maintenance areas of technical study

- Puget Sound Electrical JATC <http://www.psejadc.org>
- Seattle Public Utilities
http://www.seattle.gov/util/About_SPU/Careers/Job_Opportunities/ApprenticeshipOpportunities/index.htm
- United Association, union of Plumbers, Fitters, Welders and HVAC Service Techs
<http://www.ua.org/trades.asp>

Lab Specialist: This person collects samples, runs tests, and analyzes data. Most chemistry or biology degrees will qualify a person to be a Lab Specialist.

All colleges and universities with Biology or Chemistry programs can provide more information.

More jobs....

Many four-year college programs can lead to wastewater jobs in planning, accounting, construction, engineering, environmental and resource management.

More information:

For more specific information on job descriptions, requirements, and openings in King County Wastewater see our website: www.kingcounty.gov/jobs.aspx