



Hi-Desert Water District Classification Specification

Job Title: Chief Plant Operator
Job Grade: 16
FLSA Status: Non-Exempt (Could be considered for Exempt status)
Date: January 2026

JOB SUMMARY

Under direction of the Director of Operations , the Chief Plant Operator plans, organizes, supervises, and participates in the day-to-day operations of work and personnel assigned to the wastewater reclamation facility and collection system; reviews and monitors adherence to operational plans and procedures; manages environmental compliance; coordinates activities with other internal departments; reviews and analyzes daily logs, data sheets, and laboratory data, monitors wastewater operations and associated systems and equipment. Performs other duties as assigned.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS *(include but are not limited to the following)*

*Class specifications are only intended to present a description summary of the range of duties and responsibilities associated with specified positions. Therefore, specifications **may not include** all duties performed by individuals within a classification. In addition, specifications are intended to outline the minimum qualifications necessary for entry into the class and do not necessarily convey the qualifications of the incumbents within the class.*

- Operates District vehicles and equipment.
- Responsible for the overall operation of the wastewater treatment reclamation facility and collection system including compliance with effluent limitations established in the waste discharge requirements
- Supervises and participates as needed in maintaining, operating, and checking the operation of all wastewater treatment processes
- Operates pumps, valves, and other equipment by hand or mechanical means to regulate treatment processes
- Manages environmental compliance
- Interfaces with all regulatory authorities and provides all required reports
- Establishes employee objectives, evaluates employee performance, makes recommendations for employee development; reviews and approves employee time sheets and time off requests
- Manages operator training and daily scheduling; ensures that operators-in-training are supervised directly as required by section 3682 of Title 23 of the California water code.
- Oversees annual and unscheduled safety audits and inspections

- Performs record keeping functions, prepares reports as required
- Collects electric, water, and pump hour readings, records information into logbooks.
- Performs and supervises laboratory analyses
- Supervises and performs routine maintenance at plant facilities and grounds
- Observes and documents performance of plant machinery, equipment, piping, and structures; coordinates necessary repairs with maintenance personnel or outside contractors
- Makes capital and operating budget recommendations and manages department budget
- Ensures that staff adheres to company policy and procedures
- Serves in an on-call capacity in order to provide assistance in emergency operations.
- Performs other related duties as assigned.

JOB SPECIFICATIONS

Knowledge of:

- Principles and concepts of mathematics.
- Knowledge of supervisory principles.
- Operation, maintenance and repair of major wastewater plant equipment, collection systems, operations and facilities.
- Wastewater treatment principles, methods and practices.
- Operation and maintenance of a wide variety of tools and equipment utilized in the trade.
- Appropriate safety precautions, procedures, practices and regulations and safe work methods and precautions related to the work.
- Methods and precautions in storing and handling chlorine and other hazardous gases and chemicals.
- Process control tests; telemetry systems and preventative maintenance practices and procedures as applied to wastewater treatment facilities and collection systems.
- Basic English usage, spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Modern office practices, equipment, and procedures.
- Personal computer operation and related software applications at a basic level.
- Laws, ordinances, statues, and regulations related to wastewater treatment operations.
- District policies, rules, regulations and procedures.
- Best practices in customer service.

Skills and Abilities:

- Operate a computer workstation with basic skill level in Excel, Word, and Outlook.
- Interpret and follow District codes, policies, and standards.
- Maintain complete and accurate records and documentation.
- Monitor and evaluate work of subordinate staff.
- Prioritize and assign work.
- Coordinate the repair and/or resolution of potentially hazardous situations; identify and respond to wastewater system problems.
- Prepare legally-mandated reports.
- Operate wastewater treatment plant equipment.
- Perform facility maintenance activities and make operating adjustments to wastewater equipment.
- Operate applicable tools and equipment of the trade as needed.

- Recognize unusual, inefficient or dangerous operating conditions and take appropriate action.
- Read and record data from gauges and meters.
- Perform routine control tests and adjust plant equipment accordingly.
- Prepare and maintain a variety of records and logs of work performed.
- Apply independent judgment, personal discretion and resourcefulness in interpreting and applying guidelines, rules, and regulations.
- Communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, etc. sufficient to exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.
- Learn, follow, and ensure District safety programs.
- Interface with District customers and employees in a professional and courteous manner.
- Establish and maintain cooperative working relationships with management, crews, and other departments.
- Work with little or no supervision.
- Gather, analyze and interpret data.
- Understand and carry out oral and written instructions.
- Communicate clearly and concisely, both verbally and in writing.

PHYSICAL, MENTAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL WORKING CONDITIONS

The essential functions of this position may require the employee to perform the following physical activities. Some of these requirements may be accommodated for otherwise qualified individuals requiring and requesting such accommodations.

Physical Demands

- Work in an office environment with some exposure to dust, dirt and hazardous materials. Work in an outdoor environment with exposure to dust, dirt, and significant temperature changes between cold and heat.
- Frequently stoops, kneels, crouches, crawls, and climbs during field work. Walk, stand and crouch on narrow, slippery, or erratically moving surfaces, or uneven terrain.
- Work at a desk, stand, walk and sit for extended time periods.
- Able to carry, push, pull, reach and lift objects of medium to heavy weight such as equipment and tools up to 50 pounds. Hearing and vision within normal ranges with or without correction.
- Communicate orally with District management, co-workers, and the public in face-to-face, one-on-one and group settings; regularly use a telephone and two-way radio for communication.
- Sufficient finger/hand coordination and dexterity to operate and adjust office equipment and tools. Operate office equipment such as computer and keyboard, copiers, and fax machines; look at computer monitor for extended time periods.
- Travel by vehicle while conducting District business.
- Read and interpret complex data, information and documents; analyze and solve complex problems; use math/mathematical reasoning; perform highly detailed work under changing, intensive deadlines, on multiple concurrent tasks; work with constant interruptions, and interact with all levels of District management, board members, other elected and appointed government officials, media representatives, business and community leaders, employees, financial institutions, consultants, vendors, the public and others encountered in the course of work.

QUALIFICATIONS

Education, Training and/or Previous Work Experience

Any combination of education and experience that would provide the necessary knowledge and abilities is qualifying. A typical way to obtain the knowledge and abilities would be:

- High school diploma or equivalent. College level courses in related subject desirable.
- A minimum of five (5) years of supervisory experience in a California Grade IV or V Wastewater Treatment Plant. Experience in use of membrane bioreactors (MBR) desirable. Plant design experience desirable.

License / Certificate:

- Possession of a California Class C Driver's License and a satisfactory driving record free from multiple or serious traffic violations for a period of at least two (2) years. It is highly desirable for the incumbent to possess a Class A Driver's license, with Air Brake and Tanker endorsement, as issued by the State of California and satisfactory driving record free from multiple or serious traffic violations or accidents for a period of at least two (2) years.
- Possession of a valid California Grade IV Wastewater Operator Certification.

Other requirements:

- Completion of and satisfactory results of pre-employment drug and alcohol test; physical examination (including x-ray) indicating fitness for duty; DMV record review; and background investigation.
- This is a safety-related position subject to the District's Drug Prevention and Employee Testing Program.