

Some Environmental Operator Criteria

Personality Traits	Good Moral Compass	Water is life. The public health is at stake. An operator must have integrity and value the well being of others. If mistakes are made in the lab/treatment process, they must be reported, and corrected. No operator is perfect nor are they expected to be but they are expected to be honest and forthcoming.
	Sense of Urgency	The 24 hour nature of water operations means that treatment is continuous. When a critical problem arises, the operator should report it to his/her Supervisor immediately to ensure water quality and ample quantity. An "I'll do it later" attitude is unacceptable.
	Can Work Alone	There will be times when an operator is working alone. Night shifts are often worked by a single operator. This not only requires an operator to work safely but also without the company of others. While operators briefly conversate and interact between shifts, this dynamic can become a problem for some who rely on the company of others for security.
	Attention to Detail	Water treatment deals with values like parts per million (ppm) and parts per billion (ppb). Slight changes can make grand changes in the process. Additionally, lab analysis requires precision and repeatability. An operator needs be scrupulous concerning changes in water characteristics or inconsistencies in the treatment process.
Geography	Roots in the Community	Operators who have a personal interest in the community such as family, friends and business are more apt to remain in the area. Currently, the certification process for operators is long, sometimes up to three or four years depending what type of treatment technique a plant uses. Longterm, experienced operators are vital to water quality and employee morale. When an plant is short staffed, other operators often have to work multiple shifts to make sure the plant remains in operation. Additionally, each treatment plant operates differently. A licensed operator will still need to train for months at a new plant before working independently.
	Live in the area - 15 miles	The nature of 12 hours shift work which is common in water and waste treatment, means that time at home is reduced considerably when off of work. A long drive home reduces that time even more and can be a deterrent for some operators.