

MISSION-CRITICAL PROFILE

Name: Alex Rodriguez

Organization: San José/Santa Clara Water
Pollution Control Plant, City of San José



Job Category (Check one below):

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| ☐ Water Treatment | ☐ Electronic Maintenance Technician/ Instrument Technician |
| ☐ Water Distribution | ☐ Electrician/Electrical Line Worker |
| ☒ Wastewater Treatment | ☐ Machinist/Mechanic |
| ☐ Wastewater Distribution | ☐ Other |

1. Please describe the work you do:

In my current position as Plant Shift Supervisor, I coordinate technical training for the Operations Division. As a wastewater plant operator I would:

- inspect, operate, adjust, and maintain equipment;
- read and interpret dials, gauges and other process equipment that would allow me to make any necessary process and equipment adjustments in order to maintain the treatment process integrity;
- maintain records and make routine log book entries; and
- take samples and perform a variety of simple tests to monitor process control.

2. What combination of education, vocational training, apprenticeship, experience, and/or skill did you obtain in order to be qualified and selected for your job?

I completed a two year operator apprenticeship (operator-in-training) program. In those two years, I rotated through all 6 process areas, completed three wastewater field study manuals, and took on-site wastewater classes to be prepared to take the California Grade II Wastewater Certification exam.

3. What do you like best about your job?

I like how unique this job is, as well as how necessary it is for everyday life. This job field not only helps the environment, but is a public health necessity.

I like to work outdoors and having to roll up my sleeves and “getting my hands dirty,” so to speak.

4. Please tell us about the projects and activities you have enjoyed most in your work in the water/wastewater field, and what made them rewarding.

I like teaching and training operators on new equipment.

5. What qualities and capabilities are needed in order for a person in your area of expertise to be successful in the water/wastewater industry?

To be successful in the wastewater industry as an operator, you cannot be afraid of “getting dirty.” You should be a good communicator, both verbally and in writing. Be good with math. Have a mechanical aptitude, and the ability to think outside the box.

6. Do you have any advice for an individual who is considering pursuing a career in your field in the water/wastewater industry?

Look for operator-in-training positions at your local water/wastewater plant. Check with local colleges to see if they offer any water/wastewater classes.