

CHIEF PLANT OPERATOR (CPO) RESPONSIBILITIES

The Chief Plant Operator (CPO) is responsible for the overall operation of a wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) including compliance with effluent limitations established in the WWTP's waste discharge requirements and ensuring that operators-in-training (OITs) are supervised directly in accordance with the WWTP Operator Certification Regulations. The CPO has a unique position among all certified operators. The CPO's management and supervisory responsibilities at the WWTP include:

- Overall operation of the WWTP and compliance with the regulations regardless of the facility organizational hierarchy.
- Notification to the Wastewater Operator Certification Program (WWOCP) regarding any modifications including process changes at a WWTP by submitting a Plant Classification Form, available on the WWOCP home webpage under "Forms" or at:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/operator_certification/docs/forms/plantclassification.pdf

- Development, review and use of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for all operators to ensure reasonable care and judgment covering operations, maintenance, and compliance at the plant including:
 - 1) Operator SOPs (short, clear and concise step-by-step procedures for operators, to be used on a daily and/or weekly basis for ensuring consistent work tasks at the plant).
 - 2) Reference SOPs (narrative descriptions for operators, to be used covering operational and maintenance requirements for the plant - major treatment unit processes).
- Submitting a Chief Plant Operator Acknowledgement Form to the WWOCP within 30 days of becoming a CPO, or change of CPO. The form is available on the website under "Forms" at:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/operator_certification/docs/forms/cpo_acknowledgement.pdf

- Signing certification applications for OITs and certified operators employed at the WWTP. By signing these applications, the CPO is verifying that the employment information provided is true and correct. The CPO must maintain and/or keep work records of qualifying experience for OITs under its supervision or direction.
- Returning an OIT's original certificate to the WWOCP when an OIT's training at the WWTP ends, along with the documentation stating the total number of hours worked in wastewater operations. The information must be on official WWTP letterhead and include the name of the OIT, the start and end date of hours worked, and the total number of hours worked under the supervision of the CPO or another operator at the same or higher grade level as the OIT.
- Post all current certified operator certificate(s) including those for OITs in an area accessible to the public or if not available, posted at the WWTP's headquarters.
- Understanding and acknowledging the wastewater operation certification regulations at: http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/operator_certification/docs/ocr_clean.pdf
- Develop a procedure for designating a qualified Designated Operator-In-Charge (DOIC) when the CPO is unable to carry out the responsibilities of the position. DOIC appointments must be properly documented in the SOPs, organization charts, and duty rosters. The DOIC work details including timeframe for coverage at the plant should be documented via email and/or in the plant logbooks.



DESIGNATED OPERATOR-IN-CHARGE

The DOIC is a certified operator appointed by the CPO to be responsible for the overall operation of a WWTP, including compliance with the applicable waste discharge requirements when the CPO is unable to carry out the responsibilities of the position. The DOIC reports directly to the CPO who is responsible for documenting the DOIC work details and timeframe (see above). The DOIC's minimum required certification level depends on the WWTP classification. Please see the chart listed below.

| WWTP Classification | Minimum Grade Level of CPO | Minimum Grade Level of DOIC |
|---------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| I | I | I |
| II | II | I |
| III | III | II |
| IV | IV | III |
| V | V | III |

LONE OPERATOR REQUIREMENTS

A lone operator is a certified operator working alone at a WWTP at a grade level lower than the DOIC. The CPO must obtain prior written approval from the WWOCP before allowing an operator to work alone. An OIT can never be a Lone Operator.

The CPO must demonstrate that the owner has had difficulty, despite due diligence, hiring a certified operator of the appropriate grade level to operate the WWTP. The CPO must submit a written plan that includes:

- a.) the name(s) and grade level(s) of the lone operator(s) and the proposed duties of the lone operator(s);
- b.) a work schedule showing when the lone operator(s) will be working alone; and
- c.) the procedure lone operator(s) will use to communicate with the CPO, the DOIC, or an operator at the same or higher grade level as the DOIC when the lone operator(s) needs direction.

An approval for a lone operator is valid for a maximum of 180 days.

DIRECT SUPERVISION

“Direct supervision” means the supervising operator shall oversee and inspect the work performed by an OIT and provide adequate training to ensure the safe and proper operation and maintenance of the plant. Direct supervision must be carried out by a certified operator at the same or higher grade level as the OIT. The supervising operator must be present at the WWTP or otherwise readily available to consult with, including reasonable distance to come to the plant if needed, to provide immediate assistance.

EXAMPLES OF OPERATIONAL DUTIES

- ❖ adjusting pump and valve controls
- ❖ collecting water quality samples
- ❖ adjusting chemical controls
- ❖ monitoring and adjusting SCADA systems
- ❖ reading and monitoring meters
- ❖ visual inspections of operational equipment

DISCIPLINARY ACTION REQUIREMENTS

If a WWTP issues a disciplinary action, are they obliged to report it to the WWOCP? The facility **owner** (or CPO representing the facility owner) is required to provide written notification to the WWOCP within thirty (30) days of any final disciplinary action. Disciplinary action includes reprimanding or placing on probation, suspending, demoting, or discharging an operator, provisional operator, OIT, or contract operator for performing, or allowing or causing another to perform, any act of violation. Only final disciplinary actions that violate the WWTP Operator Certification Regulations and/or the Water Code are reportable to the WWOCP. Owners do not have to report disciplinary actions due to a DUI or other action that does not have any bearing on the operation of the WWTP. The notice must include the name of the operator, provisional operator, OIT, or contract operator, the specific violations, and the final disciplinary action taken. The notice also must include the operator’s certificate number or the contract operator’s registration number.

Any person (e.g., a CPO, operator, OIT, or member of the public) who has reason to suspect a violation of the WWTP Operator Certification Regulations and/or the Water Code is encouraged to contact the WWOCP or the Office of Enforcement directly at (916) 341-5272 or siu@waterboards.ca.gov. Reports can be made anonymously.

For more information, please see section 3676(g) of the WWTP Operator Certification Regulations. If you have any questions regarding reporting disciplinary actions call (916) 341-5648 or email at wwocertprogram@waterboards.ca.gov.

REQUEST FOR MAILING LIST OF CERTIFIED WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT OPERATORS

The WWOCP will release the names, addresses, and grades of certified operators who have authorized us to release their personal information to owners of WWTPs for recruitment purposes. Owners should submit a mailing list request by using the Request for Mailing List of Certified Operators form. If a private company is recruiting on behalf of an owner, the owner must submit the form and indicate in the *Special Instructions* section, the name and email address or physical address where the WWOCP should send the mailing list. The WWOCP may send the mailing list via email or by mail. The WWOCP only is authorized to provide and release this information to owners or authorized designated representatives of WWTPs.

The Request for Mailing List form can be accessed at the following:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/operator_certification/docs/forms/requestmailinglist.pdf

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND PROGRAM UPDATES VISIT THE WASTEWATER OPERATOR CERTIFICATION WEBSITE AT:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/operator_certification/operator_certification.shtml

CONTACT INFORMATION

State Water Resources Control Board
Wastewater Operator Certification
P. O. Box 944212
Sacramento, CA 94244-2120
Main Telephone: (916) 341-5819
Fax: (916) 341-5734

Email: wwocertprogram@waterboards.ca.gov



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