



Water/Wastewater System Operations Specialist Apprenticeship Program

New Mexico Rural Water Association

PO Box 92738, Albuquerque, NM 87199

Phone (505) 884-1031 • Toll Free (800) 819-9893 • Fax (505) 884-1032

To Apply: <https://apprenticeship.nrwa.org> Website: <https://nmrwa.org>

PROMISING, STABLE CAREER, POTENTIAL GROWTH. Invest in yourself and in turn get promotions. People keep flushing the toilet and drinking water. It's never going to go away.

We have 1/3 of the workforce leaving in the next few years. The opportunities will continue to open everywhere. We do not want a huge gap of information and skillset to go out the door before we harvest the information and skillset to new operators.

"In general, jobs within the water industry remain relatively less affected by changes in the economy than other industries." AWWA (American Water Works Association)

"In the 18 years I've been in the industry, I've never seen anyone laid off. Never because of lack of work. Some have been let go because of something that they have done though." Steve Hernandez of Water Wise Pro.

What does a Water Distribution System Operation and Maintenance Operator do?

- Ensures adequate, safe and pleasant drinking water is delivered to everyone's tap (no waterborne disease)
- Operates, inspects, lubricates, maintains & repairs equipment, keeps records and manages facilities
- Ensures adequate amounts of water and pressure are available during times of emergency, such as a fire

WHAT ARE YOU PASSIONATE ABOUT? If you don't love it, you can't really be successful in it. Understand what you like. It is very important in this industry. If you don't love it, you're not going to spend the extra time in it, stay late, invest in your education to further your career.

WHAT IT TAKES TO BECOME A CERTIFIED WATER AND/OR WASTEWATER OPERATOR:

- Good work ethic, attitude, always alert, focused and disciplined
- Willingness to work indoors, outdoors, nights, weekends, holidays as plants are always running
- Strong mathematical, mechanical and science skills
- Ability to read charts, graphs and maps & engage in logical processes for troubleshooting
- Excellent interpersonal, verbal and written communication skills
- Ability to create records and observations, report issues and lapse of best practices
- Articulate issues, problems and processes clearly
- Work can be potentially hazardous from slips, falls and dangerous gases
- Demonstrates a strong commitment to plant safety activities, practices and standards



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Minimum Qualifications for Water/Wastewater Apprenticeship

- 18 years old (driver's license or birth certificate for proof of age)
- Valid driver's license and be insurable at the normal commercial rates
- Graduated from HS, or have a GED/HS diploma
 - Submit Official High School and College transcripts (if applicable), or GED certificate
- Physically capable of performing essential functions of the apprenticeship program, with or without a reasonable accommodation and without posing a threat to the health and safety of the individual or others.
- Drug Screening: May be required for acceptance into the program and prior to employment.
- Background Check: May be required to pass a qualifying background investigation upon selection into the program and prior to employment.
- Open to anyone currently employed or seeking employment in the water and wastewater sector
- 2-year program for water operator/2-year program for wastewater operator
- Accumulate 288 related instruction class hours and 4,000 on-the-job training hours for each program (water & wastewater).
- Applications will be accepted on a rolling, year round basis.
- To apply go to <https://apprenticeship.nrwa.org>, click on Get Started.
- Review and sign Standards of Apprenticeship, sign and date last page, email to susanp@nmrwa.org
- Download documentation: Driver's license or birth certificate, high school/GED/College transcript(s), DD 214, etc.
- Once minimum qualifications are met, you will be emailed notification when and where to appear for an interview (whether in person or Zoom).
- After the interview, a written summary of judgement and rating score will be emailed.
- Once a position opens, you will be notified by phone or email scheduling orientation and start date of work.
- **Job Corps** - submit water/wastewater documentation for evaluation for direct entry
- **Structured Pre-Apprenticeship** - submit water/wastewater documentation for evaluation for direct entry
- **Veteran** - submit water/wastewater documentation and DD 214 for evaluation for direct entry. Will not need high school/GED/college documentation.
- **Youth Build Training** - submit water/wastewater documentation for evaluation for direct entry



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Typical duties of a Water Distribution System Operator

1. Place barricades, signs, and traffic cones around work sites to protect operators and public.
2. Excavate trenches and install shoring.
3. Lay, connect, test and disinfect water mains.
4. Tap into water mains.
5. Flush and clean water mains.
6. Read and update water distribution system maps and "as-built" plans (record drawings).
7. Operate and maintain well pumps and hydropneumatics pressure tanks.
8. Collect and transport water samples.
9. Clean and disinfect storage tanks and reservoirs.
10. Protect water mains and storage facilities from corrosion effects.
11. Observe pump motors to detect unusual noises, vibrations, or excessive heat.
12. Adjust and clean pump seals and packing glands, clean mechanical seals.
13. Repair and overhaul pumps, motors, chlorinators and control valves.
14. Safely load and unload chlorine cylinders and other dry and liquid chemicals.
15. Keep records and prepare reports.
16. Estimate and justify budget requests for supplies and equipment.
17. Start up or shut down pumps as necessary to regulate system flows and pressures.
18. Perform efficiency tests on pumps and related equipment.
19. Troubleshoot minor electrical and mechanical equipment problems and correct.
20. Detect hazardous atmospheres and correct before entry.
21. Conduct safety inspections, follow safety rules for waterworks facilities, develop and conduct tailgate safety meetings.
22. Troubleshoot to locate the causes of water quality complaints.
23. Discuss with the public their concerns regarding water quality complaints.
24. Discuss with the public their concerns regarding the quality of the water they receive.
25. Communicate effectively with other operators and supervisors on the technical level expected for your position.

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By becoming a successful water distribution system operator, you will eliminate or reduce the following problems:

1. Health hazards created by the delivery of unsafe water to the consumer's tap.
2. System failures that result from the lack of proper installation, inspection, preventive maintenance, surveillance and repair programs designed to protect the public's investment in these facilities.
3. Tastes and odors caused by water distribution system problems.
4. Corrosion damages to pipes, equipment, tanks and structures in the water distribution system.
5. Complaints from the public or local officials due to the unreliability or failure of the water distribution system to perform as designed.
6. Fire damage caused by insufficient water and/or inadequate pressures at a time of need.