

Water or Waste Water Network Operative

A water or waste water network operative installs, repairs and maintains the pipes bringing in fresh water supplies and the sewers carrying away waste water.

The Work

You could be:

- searching, sometimes using closed circuit television (CCTV), to find breaks in pipes due to frost, soil movement, traffic or roadworks
- switching valves to divert the water supply away from the area of work
- warning customers in advance about operations and cutting off water supply while work is carried out
- using road breaker drills, diggers and lifting equipment, and digging a trench to expose the pipes needing maintenance
- taking out and replacing the faulty section of a pipe, taking care not to break nearby gas pipes and cables; joining up the parts, making sure they are watertight
- refilling the trenches and resurfacing them with tarmac
- cleaning the pipes using rods, high pressure water jets, compressed air or carbon dioxide; installing hydrants, stopcocks and meters
- working inside sewers if they are large enough, having first checked electronically for dangerous gases and availability of oxygen
- carrying out maintenance work at reservoirs and sewage treatment works.

Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Actual pay rates may vary, depending on:

- where you work
- the size of company or organisation you work for
- the demand for the job.

The salary for apprentices with Scottish Water is currently £19,587 a year. Once qualified, salaries rise to between £21,053 and £28,425 a year (2023). They may earn extra through overtime.

In other companies operatives can earn around £20,000 and go up to £35,000 or more for operatives with several years' experience.

Conditions

- You work outdoors in all weathers, perhaps sometimes in remote areas.
- You often work indoors in places which are dark, cold, wet, noisy, dusty, smelly and dirty.
- You are on 24 hour call out on a rota basis, although normal hours are daytime.
- You are on your feet all day, bending and working sometimes in confined spaces.
- You have to wear protective clothing and occasionally breathing equipment.

- You may be at risk of exposure to dangerous gases and other substances.

Getting In

- You might enter through a Scottish Water Technical: Repair and Maintenance Modern Apprenticeship.
- For entry to this Apprenticeship you usually need five subjects at National 4 or 5 including English, Maths and science subject.
- Scottish Water also offer 2-year Repair and Maintenance Traineeships for Water and Waste Water. See their website for more details.
- You may need a driving licence or be working towards one.
- If you have to operate machinery you must be over 18.

Apply for jobs with Scottish Water.

What Does It Take

You need:

- the ability to follow detailed instructions
- the confidence to work alone
- awareness of health and safety
- good observation
- good problem solving skills
- knowledge of local areas
- the ability to deal with the public
- practical skills.

Training

- The Scottish Water Modern Apprenticeship leads to a relevant SVQ at SCQF Level 6.
- You could train on the job and attend college on a day release basis.

Getting On

- There are good opportunities later for progress into technician or incorporated engineer (IEng) level work.
- You could move into promoted posts as a supervisor, a water inspector, an area superintendent or controller or a trainer for new staff.

More Information

You can find more information here at the [Energy and Utility Skills](#) website.

Contacts

Scottish Water

Website: www.scottishwater.co.uk

X: @scottish_water

Statistics

Employment Status : Not available this career.

Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

Predicted Employment Statistics : Not available this career.