

## Water or Waste Water Treatment Operative

A water or waste water treatment operative runs the systems which provide fresh water supplies and treat sewage and other waste water.

### The Work

As a **water treatment operative** you could be:

- working the pumps to adjust the level of water flowing through the pipes
- checking the level of acid and bacteria on a computer screen
- cleaning and carrying out maintenance on tanks and filters
- taking samples and checking water and gas levels
- adding chemicals to treat water
- inspecting the reservoirs and outlets to check, for example, if the level of rainfall has affected them
- reporting any major faults to the engineers
- keeping accurate records of water quality
- carrying out general grounds maintenance and repair work.

As a **waste water treatment operative** you could be:

- using electric scrapers to separate sludge (solid material) from effluent water
- working machinery to thicken the sludge and to produce gas to generate electricity to run the works
- encouraging bacterial processes which convert sewage into clean water.

### 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 a year, rising to £35,000 a year or more for operatives with several years' experience.

### Conditions

- At the water or sewage treatment plant it may be wet, smelly or dirty.
- You will probably work shifts, including weekends and evenings, and be on a rota for out of hours service.
- You might have to lift heavy equipment.
- You will have to bend, climb ladders and work in confined spaces.

- You will wear protective clothing and occasionally breathing equipment.
- You might sometimes be outdoors as well as indoors.
- There is a risk of exposure to chemicals and skin irritants.

## Getting In

- You do not need any formal qualifications, but a good general education is useful.
- You might enter through a Scottish Water Technical: Water Industry Modern Apprenticeship.
- For entry to the Scottish Water four year Technical Apprenticeship you usually need at least five subjects at National 4 or 5, preferably including English, Maths and science subject.
- You may need a driving licence or be working towards one.
- There is no age restriction for entry, but if you have to operate machinery you must be over 18.

Apply for jobs with Scottish Water.

## What Does It Take

You need:

- the confidence to work alone
- strong problem solving skills
- good verbal and written communication skills
- the ability to organise and prioritise your work
- health and safety awareness
- the ability to follow strict procedures
- accuracy and good observation skills
- IT skills.

## Training

- Training is mainly on the job.
- 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 level work, or into promoted posts as a supervisor, a water inspector, an area superintendent or controller or a trainer for new staff.

## More Information

For more information please see the [Energy and Utilities Skills](#) website.

## Contacts

**Scottish Water**

Website: [www.scottishwater.co.uk](http://www.scottishwater.co.uk)

X: [@scottish\\_water](https://twitter.com/scottish_water)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/scottishwater](https://www.facebook.com/scottishwater)

## Statistics

Employment Status : Not available this career.

### Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

Predicted Employment Statistics : Not available this career.