

## MISSION-CRITICAL PROFILE

Name: Rick Hodge

Organization: Central Contra Costa Sanitary District

### Job Category (Check one below):

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water Treatment         | <input type="checkbox"/> Electronic Maintenance Technician/ Instrument Technician |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water Distribution      | <input type="checkbox"/> Electrician/Electrical Line Worker                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wastewater Treatment    | <input type="checkbox"/> Machinist/Mechanic                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wastewater Distribution | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other – Wastewater Collections                |

1. Please describe the work you do:

Central Contra Costa Sanitary District has over 1,500 miles of sewer lines that must be maintained. As a Maintenance Crew Leader for the Rodding Section, I prepare the maintenance schedule for pipeline cleaning activities each month, and help oversee the work that is done. The Rodding Section provides mechanical cleaning of sewer lines and works in conjunction with the Hydro-Vac Section, which provides high-pressure water cleaning of sewer lines.

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 have been working in the wastewater industry for more than 25 years. I started in the private sector doing residential-side sewer cleaning and then plumbing. Since joining CCCSD, I have gained additional experience as I worked in all five Maintenance Department Sections.

3. What do you like best about your job?

I like being able to work outdoors, helping the public by keeping the environment clean and safe. We are here to help the public. I feel that being a public employee is a rewarding career.

I also enjoy helping to maintain safe work environments for our staff as well. For example, when we set up for a project, we insert a gas monitor into the manhole to detect the presence of dangerous or explosive gases. This and other measures help keep our staff safe as well as the public.

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.

My job allows me to consider a variety of ways to accomplish a given task. This might include developing a new procedure or technique, or revising one; or, it might involve adapting an existing piece of equipment to better or more easily complete the task at hand. As an example, I have participated in the design of two different types of trucks used here at the District: One truck was what we call the Construction Truck, and the other truck was the Locating Truck for use with Underground Service Alert (USA) projects. I enjoy this creative aspect of my job.

I recently began serving on the District's Safety Committee. I have appreciated this opportunity as it has provided me a broad perspective of and participation in safety in workplace and for the public.

I have also enjoyed the teaching aspect of my job as Maintenance Crew Leader. This allows me to pass on some of my experience as well as learn from other staff members.

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 this field, I think it is important for someone to be a well-rounded person. They should have an open-mind to different circumstances and different approaches to solutions. They should also have both a strong mechanical aptitude and broad mechanical ability. That person should also enjoy problem-solving and fixing things.

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

You need to have an open mind and be willing to want to get dirty. If you can start in the field in the private area, then you can try to get into the training program if there is one at the local agency near you.

Having some type of mechanical experience would be good start. For example, the construction industry might be a good place to get some important field experience. Taking courses in Shop during school years would also be beneficial, if such courses were available.

On-the-job training is by far the best experience to get. If you know of someone in the sewer cleaning field, or in related fields such as plumbing or construction, it would be good to try to get a summer job or other temporary employment that would help provide the practical experience you need.