

MISSION-CRITICAL PROFILE

Name: Starlin Jones

Organization: Central Contra Costa Sanitary District

Job Category (Check one below):

- Water Treatment
- Water Distribution
- Wastewater Treatment
- Wastewater Collections
- Electronic Maintenance Technician/ Instrument Technician
- Electrician/ Electrical Line Worker
- Machinist/ Mechanic
- Other

1. Please describe the work you do:

I am a Shift Supervisor who operates the wastewater facility. My work is to analyze data that is collected by laboratory and operators. I monitor all of the wastewater processes, equipment and alarms. Implement process changes such as pumping rates and chemical feeds to be sure the plant is treating the wastewater to the best water quality. The final effluent is either discharged into Suisun Bay or pumped through a reclaimed water system. I also communicate with subordinates when an alarm comes in or when an item needs attention.

2. What combination of education, experience, and skill was required in order for you to obtain your job?

I started out back in 1978 as a Regional Occupational Program, Foothill High School Student and completed the program at Dublin San Ramon Services District in 1979. I became a paid wastewater operator at the age of 18 for the City of Merced, CA, City of Livermore WRP, CA, City of Sparks, NV, Central Contra Costa Sanitary District, CA.

My experience includes being an Operator in Training all the way up to the Plant Manager; I have taken and passed the California State Resources Control Grade V Wastewater Operator and the State of Nevada Wastewater Operator Grade V Exam. I served on the State of Nevada Wastewater Operator Certification Board for 12 years.

I have taken numerous wastewater classes over the years and obtained a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Management.

During my 34 years I have operated several different wastewater processes and equipment. Additionally I have responded to many different types of emergency's that arise in a wastewater plant.

3. What do you like best about your job?

My favorite part of my job is knowing that I have a large part in protecting the downstream waterways from untreated sewage. If I total how much clean water that has been discharged in my 34 years it would amount to several billions of gallons. This is the intrinsic motivation that I get from my job. Plus I love the people that I work with now and over the years.

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 favorite activities have been teaching wastewater classes to the rural communities in Nevada. I found it rewarding. When I was Operations Superintendent In Sparks NV at the Truckee Meadows Water Reclamation Facility, I was involved with a \$46 million dollar expansion. I enjoyed working with the engineers and facility staff to evaluate and improve processes while conducting research on new equipment and processes when something goes wrong.

5. What qualities and capabilities are needed in order for an engineer to be successful in the water/wastewater industry?

The good quality of a person is someone with a great attitude and someone who enjoys being part of a team of professionals. Also have a good mechanical aptitude for industrial equipment and processes, enjoys science and like an indoor outdoor type of job. One must like the idea of being a jack of all trades.

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

The first thing I would do is look up the local wastewater treatment plant and ask for a tour. During the tour ask questions about the field. There are several on line resources and information about becoming and exactly what wastewater operator duties entail.

Then I would take some courses that are offered such as The University of Sacramento Wastewater Operator Correspondence Courses. Go to various Cities websites or agencies that employ wastewater operators, look up their job descriptions and determine what one would need to accomplish to fit the minimum qualifications to get in this field.