

## MISSION-CRITICAL PROFILE

**Name:** Chris Nicoletti

**Organization:** Union 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Machinist/Mechanic                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wastewater Distribution | <input type="checkbox"/> Other  |

1. Please describe the work you do:

I am a maintenance mechanic at Union Sanitary District. My department is called Fabrication, Maintenance and Construction and this pretty well describes what I do here at the district. On a daily basis I am tasked with troubleshooting, repairing, rebuilding, and maintaining a large variety of industrial process equipment including pumps, valves, internal combustion engines, compressors, conveyors, and centrifuges. In order to do this I am required to have skills in many different trades such as mechanics, welding, machining, pipe fitting, fabrication, and automation. I must operate heavy equipment to perform these tasks. I'm required to operate forklifts, water trucks, cranes, man lifts, and class A vehicles. The work is either performed in the shop or in the field at one of the 6 pump stations my department is also in charge of operating and maintaining.

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 was always mechanically inclined and I pretty much grew up in a shop. When I graduated high school I started working full time in an auto repair shop and going to vocational school for engine repair. I received an AS in engine performance. I kept improving my skills through school and work. I attended welding courses, a 6 month ROP program for Industrial maintenance/operations, and various job applicant prep courses including interview and leadership training. After 5 years of work, training and school combined I had enough education and experience to land this job. It wasn't easy.

3. What do you like best about your job?

The thing I like best about my job is that it allows me to utilize my strongest skill sets and be able to live comfortably in the Bay Area. I come to work every morning to a good job, receive my assignment for the day, and get the work done. I get to work outside, with crews, and independently while receiving specialized hands-on experience in many different mechanical trades. The job also provides lots of training which gives me more exposure and makes me better at what I like to do.

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,

The projects I like most at work are large critical projects. These type of projects are usually challenging and under time constraints, and usually require a lot of planning, skill, and hard work. They allow me to work on crews with more experienced mechanics and employees from whom I always learn a lot. When these projects go according to plan and are finished on time it gives a great sense of camaraderie and accomplishment which is very rewarding.

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?

The most important skills required for this industry fall into two categories with neither one being more important than the other. A good mechanical background along with experience, education, and a strong work ethic is a must. These are the skills required on a daily basis to properly perform assigned duties and stay safe. Besides those obvious skills you must have good leadership skills which allow you to be able to work on a team and communicate effectively. Other necessary 'soft skills' required in a person to be successful include being organized, visualization skills, and attention to detail.

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

If you want to get into this industry work hard at developing a good skill set. Opposed to popular belief this industry and type of work is very challenging, not only to perform, but to break into. You will need to have practical experience as well as classroom theory. I would recommend getting a job in any of the mechanical trades while also attending a vocational program or apprenticeship. The schedule will be long and at times grueling but nailing a job in the water/ wastewater industry is well worth the hard work.