

### MISSION-CRITICAL PROFILE

**Name:** Curt Thompson

**Organization:** City of San Jose – Environmental Services Department – San Jose/Santa Clara Water Pollution Control Plant



**Job Category (Check one below):**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water Treatment         | <input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> Other   |

1. Please describe the work you do:

I maintain and troubleshoot automated process control technology. We have a computer system here at the plant that monitors and controls the wastewater treatment process. The computer system known as the Distributed Control System (DCS) is fed data from plant instruments. The plant instruments are the responsibility of my team. I repair, calibrate, troubleshoot, and identify new or replacement instruments.

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 went to naval training schools for my initial electrical and instrumentation education. In the Navy we worked with nuclear power operations. After the Navy, I worked twenty seven years for various instrumentations companies. I have learned a lot from my experience on the job. I took care of all instrumentation relating to the nuclear reactor, i.e. pressure, temperature, nuclear instrumentation.

While working for Telstar I installed, retrofitted, and performed routine maintenance on the plant’s Reverse Osmosis System or “R.O. System” and Gas Detection (life safety). I also worked with the plant’s Neutralization Systems, adjusted flow-metering pressure levels, and water fabs. Besides working at Telstar, I have worked at numerous wastewater treatment facilities.

3. What do you like best about your job?

I really enjoy what I do! My work is like putting a new puzzle together every day. The people I work with are cool. I like working with other experts in many fields, and I also enjoy the variety of personalities among my coworkers.

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,

Working with everyone that has expertise is already rewarding. It creates a good working environment that allows the task to get done. The projects vary once again, from installing or retrofitting pressure transmitters, troubleshooting failures and performing routine maintenance. We work on something different all the time.

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 person needs to be able to adapt and focus on the task at hand. To be successful in this field, you need to have experience with mechanics and be able to deal with numerous different technologies in machineries. The crew here at the SJ/SC WPCP is awesome and the equipment I work on is right in my wheelhouse so to speak.

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

Find out if you like the field. Invest your time doing your homework and talk to people in the wastewater industry to gain insight from it.