

The Many Hats of an Operator by Charles Buckley, Wastewater tech

After being on the job for five months I have met many wonderful people. I have found that they are in a unique field. What other job requires you to wear so many hats? Are the town officials aware of the job description of said employee? What are the sacrifices of the said operators? Let's make a list of the duties.

- Water operations consisting of pumping, treatment, sampling, distribution and maintenance of the system.
- Waste water pumping, treatment and maintenance of the system.
- Mowing, trimming, landscaping, and treatment of the town grounds.
- Tree and bush trimming, planting and removal.
- Street and sidewalk snow removal, maintenance and repair.
- Mechanics maintenance and repair of equipment.
- Trouble shooting, repair and maintenance of pumps, motors, generators and mechanical parts of all operations.
- Electrical trouble shooting, repair and maintenance.
- Custodial duties of town buildings.
- Clerical duties such as reports, mapping, budgets, ordering parts, DMR's, sampling plans and other paper work required by the state.
- Plumbing work, water meters, repair and maintenance of collection and distribution lines.
- Heavy equipment operations, excavators, tractors, skid loaders, street sweepers and dump trucks.
- Lab work and testing.
- Public relations.
- Meter readers.
- Educators.
- Much needed day help for the fire and rescue departments.
- Pool maintenance.
- Garbage collection.
- Dog catcher.
- Other duties not mentioned.

Some of these duties are out sourced. While doing all or most of these duties the operator is expected to be at the beck and call of emergencies 24 hours a day 7 days a week 52 weeks a year. The operator is faced daily with the dangers of heights, confined space, electrical, working around water, wastewater-borne diseases, heavy equipment, traffic, and many others. This being said the operator sacrifices sleep, vacations, holidays, meals and time with family and friends. With so many towns looking for operators, it is easy to see from our standpoint how valuable the operator is to the community. Operators have a love for their community with a great understanding of the needs and financial burdens. Hats off to the Nebraska operators!