

SENIOR ENVIRONMENTAL SPECIALIST

This class specification indicates, in general terms, the type and level of work performed as well as the responsibilities of employees in this classification. The job functions described are not to be interpreted as being all-inclusive to any specific employee.

DEFINITION

Under direction, performs a variety of complex environmental studies, analysis, and field work in support of OC San's environmental protection, monitoring, and compliance programs such as conducting environmental analyses and studies, collecting and analyzing wastewater, marine, air, ocean sediment, fish tissue, and industrial waste samples, and conducting field work; troubleshoots and repairs equipment and instrumentation; prepares, compiles, and analyzes data for the generation, submission, and distribution of reports and related documentation; and performs duties as assigned.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED

Receives direction from assigned supervisory and/or managerial staff. Exercises no direct supervision of staff. May coach and/or mentor less experienced staff.

CLASS CHARACTERISTICS

This classification is the third of four levels within the environmental job series. Incumbents at this level perform the more difficult assignments, projects, and analyses assigned to classes within the series, requiring the use of considerable discretion and independent judgment in performing assigned work and full and thorough knowledge of the concepts, practices, procedures, and policies of environmental protection, monitoring, and compliance. Assignments are given with general guidelines and positions are responsible for establishing objectives, timelines, and methods to deliver work products or services. Work is typically reviewed upon completion for soundness, appropriateness, and conformity to policy and requirements. Responsibilities may include providing guidance on programs and/or projects and providing coaching and mentoring to lower-level staff. This class is distinguished from the Principal Environmental Specialist in that the latter is responsible for providing functional and technical direction to less experienced staff, provides advice and analysis on regulatory issues taken into consideration for program strategy and policy decisions, and is responsible for the development, implementation, and administration of the most complex programs.

EXAMPLES OF ESSENTIAL JOB FUNCTIONS (Illustrative Only)

The following essential job functions are typical for this classification. Incumbents may not perform all of the listed job functions and/or may be required to perform additional or different job functions from those set forth below to address business needs and changing business practices.

- Performs or coordinates a variety of complex sampling, inspection, and analyses in support of various environmental protection, monitoring, and compliance programs, such as toxicity testing on OC San discharges, invertebrate taxonomy identification, ocean monitoring sampling, stormwater management, biosolids management, water quality sampling, industrial waste sampling, air quality,

TNI and Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (ELAP) compliance, and National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit compliance.

- Participates in or coordinates environmental protection, monitoring, and compliance research projects, oversight programs, and special studies; develops research plans, including planning field work activities and estimating staff hours and other resource requirements; serves as primary point of contact, provides technical guidance, and coordinates efforts with other OC San staff and external contacts; gathers data and prepares reports including analysis, findings, and recommendations for review by management.
- Performs a variety of complex statistical calculations and data input and analyses using specialized computer software; performs graphical analysis of data; interprets test results and recommends solutions to problems; maintains required documentation; participates in internal and external audits.
- Coordinates the preparation and review of reports for assigned programs to ensure accuracy, completeness, and adherence to regulatory requirements; establishes schedules and coordinates review of reports with department staff and contractors; collects, tracks, and provides comments; performs quality assurance/quality control (QA/QC) review of the annual report for accuracy, format, and consistency of data; performs similar activities for monthly and quarterly reports.
- Reviews various technical documents including construction specifications, engineering drawings, scientific studies and research papers, and related documents.
- Assists with methods development, improvement, and validation under general guidance of senior personnel; assists in new procedure setup and testing; writes and updates laboratory standard operating procedures, manuals, and documentation.
- Performs regular and preventative maintenance on assigned equipment and instruments; troubleshoots equipment and instrument repairs and breakdowns; cleans and prepares glassware; maintains quality assurance logs for equipment.
- Performs complex field work for sampling efforts; operates, calibrates, maintains, and troubleshoots sampling and monitoring equipment and instrumentation; collects, organizes, prepares, extracts, and processes a wide variety of samples for permit compliance and regional or special projects and studies.
- Coordinates sampling and data submissions from OC San laboratories and contractors; monitors and tracks data handling activities, coordinates transfer of samples and data review, and performs QA/QC review to ensure contract compliance and adherence to OC San policies and procedures and regulatory requirements; performs monitoring activities and on-site inspections.
- Coordinates with outside research facilities on cooperative ventures; prepares comprehensive reports and may present findings to superiors, other agencies, and the general public.
- Performs a wide variety of inspections of OC San treatment facilities, fleet, and equipment, OC San or offsite construction sites, industry dischargers, watershed areas, urban run-off diversion systems, and other areas, sites, and systems; secures permits; ensures compliance with laws, regulations, and OC San policies and standards.
- Attends and participates in professional group meetings; serves on various technical advisory or professional organizations; makes presentations to regulatory agencies and professional groups; stays abreast of new trends, innovations, and legislative changes related to environmental protection, monitoring, and compliance; researches emerging products and enhancements and their applicability to OC San needs.
- Prepares and revises environmental protection, monitoring, and compliance training programs and materials, plans, standard operating procedures, and related documentation.
- Monitors inventory of and orders supplies and materials.
- Drafts, evaluates, and makes recommendations on request for proposals (RFPs) for outside contract services; may participate in contract negotiations with selected vendor.
- When assigned to Ocean Monitoring, may require field work on OC San's marine vessel.
- Ensures safety and health procedures and precautions are adhered to, corrects unsafe work conditions/practices, and/or reports unsafe work conditions/practices to assigned supervisory or managerial staff.

- Performs duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS

Knowledge of:

- Practices and methods of environmental and/or laboratory testing and analysis.
- Principles, practices, and methods related to the care, maintenance, troubleshooting, and repair of environmental and/or laboratory equipment and instrumentation.
- Principles and techniques of sampling procedures, statistical sampling, and analysis.
- Principles and operations of wastewater collection systems and wastewater processing, including pretreatment methods, system design, wastewater engineering, industrial operations, wet processes, and categorization, and wastewater flows and characteristics.
- Principles and applications of critical thinking and analysis.
- Principles and practices of QA/QC related to environmental protection, monitoring, and compliance.
- Techniques of odor control in a wastewater collection system and treatment plant.
- Regulatory framework for NPDES permitting.
- Principles and procedures of record keeping and reporting.
- Techniques for effectively representing OC San in contacts with governmental agencies, community groups, and various business, professional, educational, regulatory, and legislative organizations.
- Applicable federal, state, and local laws, codes, and ordinances relevant to area(s) of responsibility.
- The structure and content of the English language, including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition, and grammar.
- Current equipment and communication tools used for business functions and program, project, and task coordination, including computers and software programs relevant to work performed.

Ability to:

- Collect samples from a variety of sites/sources and in varying conditions; analyze data and samples and interpret results.
- Apply critical thinking and analysis to a broad range of situations and in making decisions and problem solving.
- Troubleshoot, maintain, and repair equipment and instrumentation; clean and wash lab equipment correctly and safely.
- Operate a variety of sampling and testing equipment and instrumentation in the field and laboratory.
- Inspect the work of others and maintain established quality control standards.
- Conduct complex research on a wide variety of environmental issues and prepare effective technical, compliance, and staff reports.
- Read and interpret technical documents such as engineering drawings.
- Identify problems, research and analyze relevant information, and develop and present recommendations and justification for solution.
- Operate a vehicle and travel to field and OC San sites, projects, and/or meetings.
- Maintain accurate logs, records and basic written records of work performed.
- Understand, interpret, and apply all pertinent laws, codes, regulations, policies and procedures, and standards relevant to work performed.
- Make accurate arithmetic and statistical calculations.
- Effectively represent the department and OC San in meetings with governmental agencies, contractors, vendors, and various businesses, professional, regulatory, and legislative organizations.
- Independently organize own work, set priorities, and meet critical time deadlines.
- Use tact, initiative, prudence, and independent judgment within general policy, legal, and procedural guidelines.

- Comply with safe work practices and procedures in the workplace.
- Provide a high level of customer service by effectively dealing with the public, vendors, contractors, and OC San staff.
- Effectively use computer systems, software applications relevant to work performed, and modern business equipment to perform a variety of work tasks.
- Communicate clearly and concisely, both orally and in writing, using appropriate English grammar and syntax.
- Establish, maintain, and foster positive and effective working relationships with those contacted in the course of work.

Employment Standards:

Any combination of education and experience that provides the required knowledge, skills, and abilities may be qualifying as determined by OC San.

1. Bachelor's degree from a college or university accredited by the U.S. Department of Education, with major coursework in biology, chemistry, microbiology, environmental science, marine biology, statistics, and/or quality assurance, or a related field.
2. Three (3) years of work experience in a testing laboratory, field collection environment, pretreatment program, and/or related environmental compliance.

Licenses and/or Certifications:

- Must possess a valid California Class C Driver's License.

Disaster Service Workers:

All Orange County Sanitation District employees are designated Disaster Service Workers through state law (California Government Code Section 3100-3109). Employment with the Orange County Sanitation District requires the affirmation of a loyalty oath to this effect. Employees are required to complete all related training as assigned, and to return to work as ordered in the event of an emergency.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

- Mobility to work in a laboratory and standard office setting and use laboratory and standard office equipment, including a computer; standing in work areas and walking between work areas is required; occasionally bend, stoop, kneel, reach, push, and pull drawers open and closed to retrieve and file information.
- Mobility to work in the field and to take samples and conduct inspections at various OC San sites, including traversing uneven terrain, climbing ladders, stairs, and other temporary access points; ability to operate a motor vehicle to travel to various OC San sites, projects, and/or meetings.
- When assigned to work on OC San's marine vessel, must be capable of working in wet, unstable conditions, at times while the vessel is under way to the next sampling location.
- Perform medium to heavy physical work; standing in work areas and walking between work areas, within treatment plants, and in the field and to conduct inspections and take samples is required.
- Lift, carry, push, and pull materials and objects up to 51 pounds.
- Lift, carry, push, and pull materials and objects averaging a weight of 200 pounds, or heavier weights up to 300 pounds on an occasional basis, in all cases with the use of proper equipment and/or assistance from other staff.
- Vision to read printed materials and a computer screen; color vision to identify chemical and biological solvents and substances.
- Vision to inspect and operate equipment.
- Hearing and speech to communicate in person and over the telephone.

- Finger dexterity is needed to access, enter, and retrieve data using a computer keyboard or calculator and to operate laboratory and standard office equipment.
- Finger dexterity to operate and repair tools and equipment.

ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENTS

- Office environment with moderate noise levels, controlled temperature conditions, and no direct exposure to hazardous physical substances.
- Field work with exposure to loud noise levels, cold and hot temperatures, inclement weather conditions, road hazards, vibration, chemicals, mechanical and/or electrical hazards, hazardous physical substances and fumes, dust, and air contaminants.
- Employees may interact with upset staff and/or public and private representatives in interpreting and enforcing departmental policies and procedures.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

- May be required to work extended hours, including nights, weekends, and holidays when necessary.
- Probationary Period: All OC San employees, except classifications considered “at-will”, are subject to the probationary period provisions as specified in the applicable Memorandum of Understanding, policies, and/or resolutions. Employees who have not yet successfully completed their initial probationary period serve “at-will” and may be released from employment without cause or recourse to any appeal or grievance procedures.
- Pre-Employment: All employment offers are contingent upon successful completion of OC San’s pre-employment process, which includes a background investigation, a physical examination, and a drug screen.
- Work Location Assignment: Employees will be assigned to a work location based on business needs which may be located at any/all of OC San locations; this work location may be changed at any time.