Water Distribution Operators D1/D2 Certification Class FAQs

- **How do I apply for the upcoming classes?**

  Complete and submit the online application form sent via email at 8:00 am on Wednesday, November 4, 2026. The application period closes on Friday, November 13, 2026 at 5:00 pm. **No late applications will be considered**.

- **What factors determine application scores?**

  The City of Roseville and the Roseville Adult School leadership will thoroughly review and score each application.

- **How many applicants will be accepted into the class?**

  There will be approximately 44-46 students selected for the 2026 spring semester. Any student not selected for the Spring Cohort will be asked to defer enrollment to a Fall 2027 Cohort. On the application if a student selects that they are also interested in a Wastewater Collection course, they will be contacted if the Course is Approved for the 2027 Semester.

- **What are the pre-requisites to enroll in the program?**

  A high school diploma or GED are required. Students on track to graduate or finish their GED during the Spring semester may also be considered.

- **How many weeks for the course?**

  The Water Distribution Operators Course runs two nights a week for approximately 16 weeks.

- **Cost for the program**

  The tuition for class at Roseville Adult School has no cost. The book cost is $100 and can be purchased at Roseville Adult School. The state exam and certification fees are not included and can be obtained on the State Water Resources Control Board website at https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/operator_certification/

- **Class schedule & dates**

  End of January through end of May. There will be a Monday/Wednesday option and a Tuesday/Thursday option. Class begins at 5:30pm and ends at 8:00pm. Full attendance is required for this coursework.

  There maybe be additional math review sessions outside of the class hours offered during the semester.

- **How much of the program will take place in-person versus online?**

  The course is in-person only and requires approximately 96 hours of commitment.

- **Location of classes**

  Classes are held at Pathways Adelante High School at 350 Atlantic Street, Roseville, CA 95678.

- **What is the coursework?**

  The coursework covers water distribution and treatment fundamentals, system operations, water quality, safety, regulations, maintenance, hydraulics, basic math, and certification exam preparation. Students learn the knowledge and skills needed to pursue a career in the water industry and prepare for state operator certification exams.

  Topics commonly covered include:

  - Introduction to the water industry and career opportunities
  - Sources of drinking water (surface water and groundwater)
  - Water distribution systems and components
  - Water treatment processes
  - Pumps, motors, and storage facilities
  - Valves, hydrants, and water mains
  - Water quality and disinfection
  - Basic hydraulics and mathematics
  - Safety procedures and safe work practices
  - Regulations and drinking water standards
  - Metering and customer service
  - Leak detection and system maintenance
  - Reading maps and system drawings
  - Emergency response and incident management
  - Certification exam preparation and test-taking strategies

- **Can I attend Roseville Adult School while working a full-time job?**

  Yes. Many students who enroll in water operator certification courses are currently working full-time and are taking the class to start a new career, advance within their current organization, or prepare for certification exams. Adult education programs are often designed with working professionals in mind and offer evening learning options.

  Success in the course requires:

  - Attending classes regularly.
  - Attend any additional exam review study sessions.
  - Completing assignments and study activities.
  - Setting aside time outside of class for reading and exam preparation.
  - Maintaining a consistent study schedule.

Many students find that the investment of time is worthwhile because water industry careers offer strong job stability, competitive pay, benefits, and opportunities for advancement.

- **Why does water need to be treated?**

  Water must be treated because natural water sources can contain harmful microorganisms, particles, and chemicals. Treatment removes these contaminants and disinfects the water to ensure it is safe to drink and meets drinking water standards.

- **What are the differences in D1 and D2 , T1 and T2 certificates?**

  The California State Water Resources Control Board offers different certification grades that reflect an operator's level of knowledge, experience, and responsibilities.
  D1 and D2 apply to the distribution system (pipes, valves, hydrants, tanks, and delivery of water), while T1 and T2 apply to treatment plants (making water safe to drink). Many water utility employees earn both distribution and treatment certifications to increase their employment opportunities and career advancement potential.

- **Would a water operator also hire women, even if it's a physical labor position?**

  Yes. Water utilities hire qualified operators regardless of gender. Many women have successful careers as water distribution operators, and modern tools, equipment, and safety procedures help employees perform the job safely and effectively.

- **What are the types of questions on the Water Distribution Operator D1/D2 certificate exam?**

  The California Water Distribution Operator exam is computer-based at a testing center assigned to the closest testing center to your address. The exam is multiple-choice questions. There is no essay component. Approximately 10% of the exam are math questions. The State Water Resources Control Board allows the use of the provided formula conversion sheet during the exam. Passing score is 70%.

- **What is the starting pay for a Water Distribution Operator with a D1/D2 certificate?**

  A Water Distribution Operators with a D1 or D2 certification typically earns around $30/hour or $62,000/year in the Sacramento region, depending on the employer, experience level, and any additional certifications (for instance, CDL license).

- **Are there any other licenses or certifications I can have to help me in this career?**

  Yes. While a D1 or D2 certification is an excellent starting point, additional licenses and certifications can make you more competitive and may help qualify you for a wider range of positions.

  In addition to your D1 or D2 certification, it is recommended to have a Class A or Class B Commercial Driver's License (CDL), OSHA Safety Training (10 hour or 30 hour), CPR/First Aid

Certification, SCADA, electrical experience, heavy equipment operation training, trenching and excavation safety training, basic welding or construction experience. These credentials can expand employment opportunities and support long-term career advancement in the water industry.

- **Is this course available if it helps with promotional opportunities at current employer?**

  Yes. Many people enroll in certification courses to improve their qualifications for promotion, advancement, and increased responsibilities within their current organization. Employees should check with their employer regarding training assistance or tuition reimbursement opportunities. The course embeds the Career Launch program to help our graduates be better prepared to enter the workforce

- **As a Water Distribution Operator, would repairs and maintenance be a component of the job duties?**

  Yes. Water Distribution Operators commonly perform maintenance and repair work on water mains, valves, hydrants, meters, and other parts of the water distribution system. Repair duties help ensure customers receive safe and reliable drinking water.

- **What are other job duties?**

  In addition to repairs, Water Distribution Operators inspect and maintain water system facilities, monitor water quality and system performance, operate equipment, respond to emergencies, assist customers, collect operational data, and help ensure a reliable supply of safe drinking water.

- **What is the typical work schedule for a City of Roseville Water Distribution Operator?**

  The typical schedule is Monday – Friday, 6:30 am to 3:00 pm. Emergency repairs could occur anytime outside of typical workday hours and could occur on weekends or holidays.

- **Is overtime readily available?**

  Yes. Water Distribution Operators may work overtime and respond to emergencies such as water main breaks, service outages, equipment failures, fires, and natural disasters. These emergency repairs can happen in the middle of the night, over the weekend, or during holidays.

- **Is there a minimum or maximum hiring age requirement?**

  Most water utilities require employees to be at least 18 years old. There is typically no maximum age to become a Water Distribution Operator, provided the applicant meets the job qualifications and can perform the essential duties of the position safely.

- **How to get started in the Water Distribution Operators career?**

  1. Earn a high school diploma or GED.
  2. Take a water operations course to learn industry fundamentals and prepare for certification exams.

3. Obtain an entry-level certification, such as a D1 or D2 (Distribution Operator Grade 1 or Grade 2) or T1 or T2 (Treatment Operator Grade 1 or Grade 2).
4. Apply for trainee, utility worker, maintenance worker, or operator positions with water utilities, special districts, cities, or private water companies.
5. Gain experience and continue advancing by earning higher-level certifications such as D2, D3, T2, T3, and beyond.

- **Does taking this course with the Roseville Adult School guarantee work when successfully completed?**

  No. Successfully completing the course does not guarantee employment. However, the course is designed to help students gain the knowledge and skills needed to prepare for California water operator certification exams and pursue careers in the water industry.

  Completing the course can help you:
  - Learn the fundamentals of water distribution and water treatment.
  - Prepare for D1, D2, T1, and T2 certification exams.
  - Strengthen your qualifications when applying for water utility positions.
  - Demonstrate your commitment to professional development.
  - Become more competitive for entry-level and promotional opportunities.

  Employment opportunities depend on several factors, including available job openings, certifications earned, work experience, interview performance, and each employer's hiring requirements.

- **What is the current demand for a Water Distribution Operator with a D1/D2 in the Sacramento area?**

  Demand for certified Water Distribution Operators in the Sacramento region is currently strong. Cities, counties, water districts, and private water companies regularly recruit operators due to workforce retirements, infrastructure improvements, population growth, and the ongoing need to maintain safe and reliable drinking water systems.

  Recent job postings in the Sacramento area show opportunities with agencies such as Sacramento County, Sacramento Suburban Water District, Golden State Water Company, and other local utilities. Many of these positions either require or prefer candidates with a D1 or D2 certification.

  A D1 certification can help open the door to entry-level positions, while a D2 certification is often preferred for higher-level operator roles and advancement opportunities.

- **How is AI being implemented into the field? What are your thoughts on job security with AI advancements?**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is becoming increasingly common in the water industry, but it is generally being used as a tool to help operators work more efficiently rather than replace them.

Examples of how AI is being used include:

- Monitoring water system performance and identifying unusual operating conditions.
- Detecting leaks and predicting pipe failures before they occur.
- Analyzing water quality data and identifying trends.
- Optimizing pump operations to reduce energy costs.
- Supporting maintenance planning and asset management.
- Assisting with data analysis, reporting, and regulatory compliance.
- Improving SCADA system monitoring and alarm management.

Most industry professionals believe AI will change the job but not eliminate it. Water operators are responsible for tasks that require judgment, troubleshooting, field inspections, emergency response, regulatory compliance, and public safety decisions. These responsibilities still require trained human operators.

In fact, as water systems become more sophisticated, operators may need additional technical skills to work with advanced monitoring systems, automation, and AI-powered tools.
Job prospects in the water industry remain strong due to workforce retirements and the continuing need for safe, reliable drinking water.

- **What is the employment pathway if I take this class?**

1. Complete the Water Operator Class
    - Learn the fundamentals of water distribution and water treatment.
    - Prepare for D1/D2 certification exams.
2. Obtain Entry-Level Certification
    - Earn a D1 or D2 (Distribution) certificate.
    - Continue working toward higher-level certifications as experience is gained.
3. Apply for Entry-Level Positions
    - Utility Worker
    - Water Maintenance Worker
    - Water Distribution Operator Trainee
    - Water Treatment Operator Trainee
    - Public Works Maintenance Worker
    - Meter Technician
4. Gain Experience and Advance
    - Earn D2-D5 certifications.
    - Move into journey-level operator positions with increased responsibility.

- Take on specialized duties such as water quality monitoring, SCADA operations, cross-connection control, or construction inspection.

5. Pursue Leadership Opportunities
    - Senior Operator
    - Lead Operator
    - Foreman
    - Supervisor
    - Operations Manager
    - Water Superintendent

After completing the class, students typically pursue D1/D2 certification, apply for entry-level water utility positions, gain experience, earn higher-level certifications such as D2 or higher, and advance into journey-level, senior, supervisory, and management roles. The course is intended to help prepare students for these career opportunities but does not guarantee employment.

- **Does the program offer internship opportunities or resume assistance for people transitioning from sea to chore careers?**

  Students transitioning from sea-based careers can often apply many of their existing skills to water utility work. The course may provide resume guidance, job search resources, networking opportunities, and information about internships or trainee positions when available. Internship placement and employment opportunities are not guaranteed.

- **Can a water operator also work as a wastewater operator? Do the two careers have similar qualifications?**

  Yes. Many skills and concepts overlap between drinking water operations and wastewater operations, and some professionals work in both fields during their careers. However, each field has its own certification requirements and specialized knowledge.

  Experience in one field can make it easier to enter the other because many of the operational, mechanical, electrical, and safety skills are transferable. Many employers value employees who hold certifications in multiple disciplines because they have a broader understanding of utility operations and may qualify for more opportunities.

  <u>Similarities</u>
  Both water and wastewater operators:
  - Protect public health and the environment.
  - Monitor and operate treatment systems.
  - Collect samples and perform testing.
  - Use pumps, valves, motors, and control systems.
  - Follow safety procedures and regulations.

- Maintain operational records and reports.
- Respond to emergencies and equipment failures.
- Use SCADA and computerized monitoring systems.

Key Differences

Water Distribution & Treatment

- Focuses on delivering safe drinking water to customers.
- Involves water treatment, storage tanks, pumps, hydrants, valves, and distribution pipelines.
- Uses certifications such as D1-D5 (Distribution) and T1-T5 (Treatment).

Wastewater Collection & Treatment

- Focuses on collecting, treating, and safely discharging used water.
- Involves sewer systems, lift stations, treatment processes, and environmental protection.
- Uses separate wastewater certifications issued by the State Water Resources Control Board.

➢ **How difficult is the job on the body?**

Water Distribution Operator work can be physically demanding, but the level of physical activity varies by position, employer, and daily assignments. Operators spend time both outdoors in the field and indoors performing operational, maintenance, and administrative tasks.

Physical activities may include:

- Walking long distances around facilities and job sites.
- Lifting tools, equipment, and materials.
- Digging or working around excavation sites.
- Opening and closing valves.
- Climbing ladders, stairs, and storage tanks.
- Working in varying weather conditions, including heat, cold, and rain.
- Responding to emergency repairs during nights, weekends, or holidays.

At the same time, modern utilities use:

- Heavy equipment and machinery.
- Hydraulic and power tools.
- Safety equipment and ergonomic practices.
- Team-based work methods for larger tasks.

These tools and practices reduce physical strain and help employees work safely.

Many operators find the job provides a good balance of physical activity, technical problem-solving, and outdoor work. As operators gain experience, some may move into positions that involve more system monitoring, technical analysis, training, supervision, or management.

- **How does the City of Roseville Environmental Utilities Department handle cross-functional teamwork between field operations, engineering, and water quality labs?**

  Water utilities rely on close collaboration between field operations, engineering, and water quality teams. Operators maintain and operate the system, engineers plan and improve infrastructure, and water quality staff monitor compliance and testing. Together, these teams help ensure the delivery of safe, reliable drinking water to the community.

- **Is this specifically for water distribution or water treatment roles as well?**

  This course is designed for water distribution careers and is designed to help students understand the different roles, responsibilities and certification pathways within water distribution. There are courses available for water treatment in the Sacramento Region and exams for water treatment certification information available on the State Water Resources Control Board website.

  <u>Water Distribution</u>

  - Water mains, valves, hydrants, and service lines
  - Pumps and storage facilities
  - Water system operations and maintenance
  - Leak detection and repairs
  - Distribution certifications (D1 and D2)

- **Are the credentials offered by the adult school relevant for out-of-state employment?**

  A California D1/D2 certification does not automatically qualify you to work as a certified operator in another state because water operator certification is regulated at the state level. Each state establishes its own licensing requirements, exams, experience standards, and certification grades.

- **Is the certification recognized for other jurisdictions/cities?**

  Yes. A California D1 or D2 Water Distribution Operator certification is recognized and valued by water utilities throughout California. Cities, counties, water districts, special districts, and private water companies commonly use these state certifications as hiring and promotional qualifications.

  Because the certifications are issued by the California State Water Resources Control Board, they are portable throughout the state and are not limited to a specific city or employer.

  For example, a D1 or D2 certification may be used when applying for positions with:

  - Cities and municipalities
  - County water agencies

- Water and irrigation districts
- Public utilities
- Investor-owned water companies
- Special districts throughout California

A D2 certification is particularly valuable because many journey-level operator positions either require or strongly prefer it.

If you move to another state, the certification may still strengthen your resume, but you may need to meet that state's certification or licensing requirements before working as a certified operator there.

- **Will a water distribution operator's job include any office work or is it all hands on?**

Most Water Distribution Operator positions are a combination of field work and administrative work. While much of the job involves hands-on activities in the field, operators also spend time completing paperwork, using computers, and documenting system activities.

<u>Hands-On Duties</u>

- Inspecting water system facilities.
- Operating valves, hydrants, and pumps.
- Repairing leaks and water main breaks.
- Installing and replacing meters.
- Collecting water quality samples.
- Operating vehicles, equipment, and tools.
- Responding to emergency calls.

<u>Office and Computer-Based Duties</u>

- Completing work orders and maintenance records.
- Entering data into computer systems.
- Reviewing maps, plans, and system information.
- Using SCADA or monitoring software.
- Preparing regulatory and operational reports.
- Communicating with customers, contractors, and coworkers.
- Participating in safety meetings and training.

The balance varies by position. Entry-level distribution operators often spend more time in the field, while senior operators, leads, supervisors, and managers typically spend more time on planning, documentation, and coordination.

- **Can you be a felon in the water distribution operator career path?**

Having a felony conviction does not automatically prevent someone from working in the water industry. Hiring decisions are typically made on a case-by-case basis, considering the nature of the offense, the applicant's qualifications, work history, and the requirements of the position. Applicants should review individual employer requirements and be honest during the application process.

- **What roles within California would I qualify for with my D1/D2 certificate?**

  A D1 or D2 certification can open the door to a variety of careers in the water and public works industries. The specific positions you qualify for will depend on your certification level, experience, driver's license, and employer requirements.

  <u>You may qualify for positions with:</u>

  - Cities and municipalities
  - Counties
  - Water districts
  - Irrigation districts
  - Utility districts
  - State agencies
  - Public works departments

  <u>Common job titles include:</u>

  - Water Distribution Operator Trainee
  - Water Distribution Operator I/II
  - Water System Operator
  - Utility Worker
  - Public Works Maintenance Worker
  - Water Maintenance Worker
  - Meter Technician
  - Water Quality Technician (entry-level)
  - Cross-Connection Control Specialist (with additional training)
  - Lead Operator or Senior Operator (with additional experience)