ATLANTIC FIRST NATIONS WATER AUTHORITY (AFNWA)
POSITION DESCRIPTION

POSITION DETAILS

- **Position: Superintendent of Operations**
  Department: Operations
- **Salary:** $82,925–$117,133 (Pay Band 16 or 17, dependent on qualifications and experience, subject to annual CPI Increase on April 1st annually)
- **Reports to:** Director of Operations Engineering and Compliance
- **Travel:** Regular travel within the regional service area
- **Location:** located within a reasonable driving distance to Unama'ki / Cape Breton. The office is located in Millbrook, NS, however, frequent travel throughout Atlantic Canada (approximately 50–75% of work time will be spent in the field)
- **Supervises:** Operations Supervisors; Water and Wastewater Operations Staff; on-site contractors.

ABOUT AFNWA

The Atlantic First Nations Water Authority (AFNWA) is an Indigenous-owned organization supporting First Nations in Atlantic Canada in the delivery of safe, reliable and sustainable water and wastewater services. AFNWA works in partnership with communities to strengthen local capability, support Operator development and certification, and build resilient services grounded in First Nation priorities, governance and self-determination.

PRIMARY FUNCTION

The Superintendent of Operations provides active, visible and field-based leadership for the safe, reliable, efficient and compliant operation of water and wastewater systems across multiple First Nation communities served by AFNWA. The position combines strong people development and leadership skills with the technical aptitude and operational judgment required to lead complex utility systems.

The position works closely with the Superintendent of Technical Services, the Engineering department, the Director of Operations Engineering and Compliance, project teams and other qualified specialists on complex treatment, process, instrumentation, SCADA, infrastructure, design and regulatory matters. The Superintendent remains accountable for translating technical direction into coordinated field action and confirming completion.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Operational Leadership and Oversight

- Provide visible, field-based leadership for daily water and wastewater operations across assigned communities and facilities.

- Ensure systems are operated safely, efficiently and in accordance with applicable regulatory requirements, AFNWA standards, approved procedures and community service commitments.
- Direct and support Operations Supervisors, Operators and on-site contractors, and assume direct operational coordination when circumstances require.
- Establish work priorities, approve schedules, overtime and time off, and ensure adequate qualified coverage for routine operations, absences, planned work, emergencies and Direct Responsible Charge requirements.
- Monitor operational performance, service reliability, treatment and distribution or collection conditions, recurring issues and emerging risks; assign, track, escalate and resolve concerns.
- Respond promptly and professionally to community concerns and service issues, consistent with AFNWA policies and commitments.

2. People Leadership and Workforce Development

- Lead, coach and support Operations Supervisors and, through them, Operators working across geographically dispersed communities and facilities.
- Establish clear and shared expectations for conduct, attendance, performance, documentation, service and safe work, and follow through consistently and fairly.
- Conduct regular performance and development conversations, recognize progress, address concerns early and establish practical development plans.
- Support Operator certification and continuous learning through training, mentoring, job shadowing and planned experience across facilities.
- Participate in recruitment, succession planning, onboarding, attendance management, employee relations, corrective action and discipline in accordance with AFNWA policies and procedural fairness.
- Use a relational and culturally responsive approach that supports a respectful, inclusive and culturally safe workplace and strengthens Indigenous workforce capacity.

3. Safety, Emergency Readiness, Compliance and Risk

- Lead the implementation and continuous improvement of the safety management system through active field engagement, coaching, inspection and follow-up.
- Ensure work is assigned to appropriately trained and certified personnel and that required safe work practices, permits, protective equipment and controls are applied.
- Establish, maintain, review and exercise emergency operating procedures and response plans, including participation in the Incident Command System.
- Ensure adverse results, non-compliance events, equipment failures, service disruptions and other significant risks are reported promptly and managed through appropriate operational and technical escalation pathways.

4. Operations Planning, Maintenance and Asset Support

- Lead the development, implementation and oversight of operations and maintenance programs that support system reliability, regulatory compliance and lifecycle performance.
- Manage and oversee work orders and maintenance information through AFNWA's computerized maintenance management system (CMMS), including timely completion and documentation.
- Ensure logbooks, service reports, standard operating procedures, maintenance records and other operational documentation are accurate, current, maintained and archived to applicable standards.
- Recommend and coordinate repairs, upgrades and improvements to treatment facilities, distribution and collection systems, pumping systems and related assets.
- Review operational requirements for master metering, instrumentation and SCADA and coordinate enhancements with Technical Services, the Engineering department and other qualified specialists.

- Coordinate the operational acceptance, commissioning support and integration of new or upgraded infrastructure with project teams, contractors and community personnel.
- Bring Operator observations, field experience and community context into asset planning, technical discussions and continuous improvement initiatives.

5. Technical Operations and Escalation

- Apply practical knowledge of water and wastewater quality, treatment processes, hydraulics, pressurized systems, distribution and collection systems to assess conditions and guide operational response.
- Read and interpret operating data, trends, alarms, sampling results, process information, design drawings, equipment documentation and relevant technical reports.
- Ensure Supervisors and Operators understand delegated decision authority, consultation requirements and immediate escalation thresholds.
- Translate technical direction into clear work assignments, staffing plans, maintenance actions, training needs and documented operational follow-through.
- Work with technical partners to develop and maintain practical SOPs, preventive maintenance approaches and operational responses that can be applied consistently in the field.

6. Capital Projects and Financial Stewardship

- Assist capital project teams to support constructability, commissioning, operational readiness and successful integration of new and upgraded infrastructure.
- Exercise sound judgment in field-level purchasing and contractor use, ensuring alignment with approved budgets, delegated authority and procurement policies.
- Contribute operational information to budget development, work planning, forecasting and prioritization of repairs, renewals and improvements.
- Monitor operational expenditures and resource use within assigned responsibility and promptly identify emerging pressures or variances.

7. Relationships and Community Partnership

- Build trusted working relationships with First Nation leadership, community staff, Operators and other partners through presence, listening, reliability and respectful communication.
- Work in a manner that respects First Nation governance, community priorities, local knowledge and the diversity of the Nations served by AFNWA.
- Represent AFNWA professionally and support clear communication during routine operations, service disruptions, emergencies and change initiatives.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

Education and Experience

- Post-secondary education in water or wastewater operations, environmental science, engineering technology, engineering, public works, trades or a closely related discipline is preferred. A suitable combination of progressive operational leadership experience, industry certification and demonstrated technical competency may be considered in lieu of formal academic credentials.
- At least five years of progressive experience in water and/or wastewater operations, utilities or a closely related complex operational environment.
- Advanced water and/or wastewater Operator certification and willingness to achieve required certifications as directed.

- Demonstrated supervisory or management experience leading operational employees, preferably across multiple facilities or locations.
- Demonstrated experience with operations and maintenance programs, regulatory compliance, emergency response, work planning and performance management.
- Experience working with or in First Nation communities in Atlantic Canada is strongly valued.
- Valid driver's licence with a satisfactory driving record and the ability to travel frequently, including overnight travel and travel in varying weather and road conditions.

Assets

- Professional credentials such as Certified Engineering Technologist (CET) or Professional Engineer (P. Eng) are considered valuable assets.
- Experience leading a geographically dispersed or community-based workforce.
- Experience supporting Indigenous employee development, apprenticeship, certification or succession planning.
- Experience commissioning or integrating new or upgraded utility infrastructure into operations.
- Knowledge of Mi'kmaq, Wolastoqey/Wolastoqiyik or another Indigenous language spoken in the communities served by AFNWA.

Working Conditions

- Frequent travel, normally approximately 50% to 75% of work time, to First Nation communities and AFNWA facilities throughout the regional service area.
- Regular field presence in water and wastewater facilities and outdoor operational environments, using appropriate personal protective equipment and safety controls.
- Availability outside regular hours when operational circumstances require leadership attention.
- Work with dispersed employees, facilities and communities, requiring flexibility, dependable communication and effective prioritization.
- Participate in the Operations on-call rotation and provide after-hours leadership, decision-making and support during operational emergencies, service disruptions, regulatory incidents and other urgent events requiring management attention.

Key Competencies:

- **Operational leadership -** Provides visible direction, understands field realities and maintains accountability for safe, reliable and compliant service.
- **Technical and operational judgment -** Interprets operating conditions, makes timely decisions within authority and escalates specialized matters appropriately.
- **People leadership -** Builds trust, establishes clear expectations, gives useful feedback and addresses difficult issues fairly and directly.
- **Coaching and development -** Recognizes potential and creates practical learning, certification and progression opportunities.
- **Safety and risk leadership -** Recognizes risk, reinforces controls and follows through on incidents, deficiencies and corrective actions.
- **Cultural humility -** Listens, learns and works respectfully within First Nation governance and community contexts.
- **Collaboration -** Connects Operations, technical specialists, communities and corporate functions so decisions become effective action.
- **Accountability -** Documents decisions, tracks commitments and confirms completion of standards, work and corrective actions.
- **Adaptability -** Remains constructive and organized while travelling, responding to disruptions and balancing competing priorities.