



## WATER OPERATION SPECIALIST OR CIRCUIT RIDER?

Richard Winters | Circuit Rider

Over the course of my career I have worked in both positions, and as such, I felt that it should be ok for me to compare these positions.

As a Water Operation Specialist, I reported for duty early each morning to ensure that our customers could take their morning shower and make their coffee knowing that there would be good clean potable water to fulfill their needs. This happens 365 days a year, 24 hours each day, unless by chance they get caught in an area where we have a leak or some sort of issue, which is a very rare occurrence. We as Water Operation Specialists are pretty much invisible to the general public 99% of the time, but that one time when you have no water or discolored water, we are located immediately and blamed for not taking care of business. Wouldn't it be nice if just once someone stopped you on the street and thanked you for all those normal days when they had no problems with their service? We salute each and every one of our dedicated Water and Wastewater Operation Specialists who answer the bell daily. Let's not forget those holidays and freezing cold winter nights when our Operation Specialists leave their families and complete the tasks necessary to protect public health and the environment. Yes, we chose this profession, and yes we get paid to perform these tasks, but just a small bit of appreciation and respect for what we do would mean a lot. These emergency situations are one thing, but let's not forget the everyday tasks that these folks do as well. Maintaining the entire water system from the plant to the end of the distribution system (ex. hydrants, service lines, water meters).

Now let's take a look at what we do as Circuit Riders. When Water Operation Specialists run into a problem which requires outside expertise or assistance, they call on us to see if we could be available to assist in resolving their issue. Sometimes it is to help locate that leak that is causing a no water or dirty water situation. When this is the case, our presence is seen as some sort of miraculous thing, and we are seen as heroes. It should be stated that sometimes we have more advanced equipment and a lot more training in using this equipment, but WE ARE DOING THE SAME THING THAT YOUR EMPLOYEES ARE. We get the respect from your Water Operation Specialists and appreciation that they deserve from their customers and managerial team. Sometimes we are called to help locate lines or shutoffs, and again, sometimes we have more advanced equipment and a lot more training in using this equipment, but WE ARE DOING

THE SAME THING THAT YOUR EMPLOYEES ARE. Again, we are treated with respect and appreciation. I will never figure this one out, but when we speak to their employers (the Mayor, Supervisor or even Board Members) we are treated as professionals even though their employees could have 30 years of experience with their system and we just showed up today with no knowledge of their systems. As you can easily see, I appreciate my role a Circuit Rider, doing the same tasks I did as a Water Operation Specialist, and providing each of the Operation Specialists with my very best service, while learning new ideas from each of you every day! To your customers and managers we say...stop and thank your Operation Specialists! 💧💧