

POWER PLANT OPERATOR OVERVIEW

1. **Occupation title:** Plant Operator
2. **Other titles for same position:** Power Generation Operator, Shift Operator
3. **Generic job description:** Power plant operators control and monitor boilers, turbines, generators, and auxiliary equipment in power-generating plants. They distribute power among generators, regulate the output from several generators, and monitor instruments to maintain voltage and regulate electricity flows from the plant. When demand changes, power plant operators communicate with dispatchers at distribution centers to match production with system the load. On the basis of this communication, they start and stop generators, altering the amount of electricity output. They also go on rounds to check that everything in the plant is operating correctly and keep records of switching operations and loads on generators, lines, and transformers. In all of these tasks, they use computers to report unusual incidents, malfunctioning equipment, or maintenance performed during their shifts.
4. **Level:** Mid to advanced
5. **Description of typical career path that includes this occupation:** With sufficient training and experience, workers can become shift supervisors, trainers, or consultants. Because power plants have different systems and safety mechanisms, it can sometimes be difficult to advance by moving to a different company, although this is not always the case. Most power companies promote from within and most workers advance within a particular plant or by moving to another plant owned by the same utility.
6. **Types of employers for this position:** Utility companies
7. **Training/education/apprenticeship requirements for position:** Requires journey level experience.
8. **Related skill standards:**
http://cleanenergyexcellence.org/wp-content/files_mf/plantoperators.pdf
9. **Education programs currently available:** [Degrees & Certificates](#)
10. **Related training offered within utilities:** Utility provides on-going training for journey level workers to keep employees current on new equipment, procedures and safety.
11. **Wage data:** <http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes518013.htm>