

What is it like to be a CFPUA Environmental Compliance Officer?



The **“Safe Drinking Water Act”** (SDWA) is a main federal law that ensures the quality of American’s drinking water. Under SDWA, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sets standards for drinking water quality and oversees the states, localities, and water suppliers. The **“Clean Water Act”** regulates the wastewater discharges and ensures that the water we’re putting back into the waterways is clean and safe for humans and the environment. CFPUA is the main water supplier and wastewater collector

for residents of Wilmington and New Hanover County and, therefore is responsible for implementing **“Clean Water Act”**, **“Safe Drinking Water Act”**, and other EPA standards.

What do they do?

CFPUA employs Environmental Compliance Officers who perform inspections and make sure customers are in compliance with the rules and regulations. It is this group’s responsibility to make sure that everyone is complying not only with CFPUA’s Ordinances but EPA standards and other **laws** as well. The primary responsibility of the officers is to help protect the **environment** and the public water supply. They do this through regular monitoring, testing, inspections and consumer education. Officers use scientific equipment such as **pH meters** (to determine whether a waste is acidic or alkaline), conductivity meters (to help pinpoint the locations of **contaminant** sources) and “sludge judges” (to determine the depth of solids in grease interceptors). Compliance officers regularly participate in various community and school events where they provide educational materials and teach the importance of **environmental stewardship**.



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The officers take a sworn oath to uphold the laws of the **United States Constitution**, the laws of North Carolina and the Cape Fear Public Utility Authority. They carry an officer badge and can issue fines to customers that are found to be in violation - fines can reach up to \$25,000 per day and depending on the severity of the violation, violators may even face jail time.

CFPUA’s Environmental Compliance Officers have college degrees, usually in a science-related field and they attend special training and certification classes. Officers also need a good background in math, chemistry, and biology. It’s important that they possess good analytical skills and they must be able to follow and understand rules and regulations. Environmental



Compliance Officers use a “sludge judge” during an inspection of a local restaurant’s grease interceptor.

Compliance Officers work both indoors and outdoors, in all kinds of weather conditions. They’ve got to be extremely safety conscious because they sometimes work in hazardous areas including swampy or high traffic areas. They’re also likely to come in contact with critters, like snakes and spiders, from time to time. If you like science and math, being outdoors, and think you might like doing something to help the environment, then a job as an Environmental Compliance Officer might be the one for you!



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Cape Fear Public Utility Authority
and the services provided.
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