

A SPECIAL REPORT

New England Marine Resources Information Program

Narragansett Bay Campus, University of Rhode Island, Narragansett, R. I. 02882

Marine Career Series:
OCEANOGRAPHIC TECHNICIAN**CIRCULATING COPY**
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The Oceanographic Technician assists oceanographers and other professionals in the collection, preparation and analyses of data gathered from the sea for research purposes.

REQUIREMENTS AND QUALIFICATIONS

You should have these:

- normal vision and hearing, natural or corrected
- full use of arms, legs and hands
- ability to work with others
- ability to pay attention to detail
- strong background in math and science
- ability to swim and enjoy water activities

You must be able to:

- work at sea for long periods of time and under adverse conditions
- follow instructions exactly
- operate many kinds of scientific measuring and data gathering devices

You should know that:

- minimum acceptable educational level is two years of education beyond high school
- generally speaking, those who are not physically fit and not able to do difficult outdoor work are not qualified for this field
- there is a gradually increasing demand for Oceanographic Technicians

PREPARATION AND TRAINING

Education:

Applicants must have two years of junior college training with a major in marine technology or a closely related field. Many jobs require further college training. Adequate high school preparation should include courses in mathematics, biology, physics, chemistry and a foreign language.

Locations :

Junior colleges offering majors in marine technology or closely related fields or colleges and universities offering majors in oceanography or closely related fields.

Special entry requirements:

- physical examination will normally be required
- most jobs are for men age 30 or younger
- many jobs are filled through Civil Service procedures
- some jobs will require a federal government security check

OPPORTUNITIES: PRESENT AND FUTURE

As this is a relatively new field, jobs are few in number. It should be pointed out, however, that the number of qualified individuals to fill these jobs is also small. In future years, the opportunities for Oceanographic Technicians are expected to increase considerably.

Opportunities for advancement in this field depend largely on the type of employer. Most technicians receive regular pay raises. After several years on the job, most technicians become senior technicians and some may eventually obtain management jobs.

EARNINGS AND WORKING CONDITIONS

Salary:

Based on current salary information, most technicians earn from \$130 to \$140 per week for a 40-hour work week. The usual starting salary range (40-hour work week) for those entering the field is \$90 to \$100.

Hours :

While in port, a regular five-day, 40-hour week is normal. While at sea, hours may be worked at nights and on weekends and the number of hours worked per week will vary.

Fringe benefits:

These depend on the employer and seniority. Generally speaking, however, some or all of the following may be expected:

- paid vacation and retirement plan
- group life insurance, health insurance
- paid holidays
- planned pay increases for Civil Service workers

EMPLOYMENT OUTLOOK

As indicated earlier, this is a relatively new field with relatively few job openings. Sixty to seventy-five percent of the graduates of the two-year Oceanographic Technician programs this year will find employment in the field. Some, however, will go on to college or go into other fields for personal reasons. It is expected that opportunities in this field will increase in the 1970's and qualified individuals will have opportunities for employment. For the most part, jobs for Oceanographic Technicians may be found in coastal and port cities. The largest percentage of technicians are, and will continue to be, employed by several govern-

mental agencies, by universities, and by private employers, particularly large companies that perform sea research.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Oceanographic Technicians assist professionals in several areas of research and analysis. Technicians work onshore and at sea. At sea, the Technician will be expected to perform the following tasks:

- take temperatures of the sea and air under various conditions, and in the water at various depths
- operate and maintain all types of oceanographic instruments and equipment
- collect and prepare water samples for chemical analysis
- collect bathymetric and seismic data
- collect and inspect biological samples

While onshore, the Technician will be expected to perform the following tasks:

- general office work
- assist in processing of observations and data noted and gathered at sea
- assist in statistical work including plotting graphs, making calculations and preparing data for computer processing
- calibrate thermometers and other instruments

WHERE TO GO FOR MORE INFORMATION

- American Society of Limnology and Oceanography, Inc., Department of Oceanography, Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon 97331
- *Oceanography Information Sources*, Printing and Publishing Office, National Academy of Sciences, 2101 Constitution Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037
- State Employment Office, U.S. Civil Service Commission Regional Offices
- Your high school or junior college counselor