# Dairy Utilities Operator

## Engineering and site services

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| **Job title** | Dairy Utilities Operator |
| **Department** | Engineering and site services |
| **Reports to** | Utilities Engineer (or Engineering Manager) |
| **Direct reports** | None |
| **Location** | *[To be confirmed by the employer]* |
| **Contract type** | *[Permanent / fixed-term / other]* |
| **Salary and benefits** | *[To be confirmed by the employer]* |

## Job purpose

Runs the steam boilers, refrigeration plant, compressed air, water treatment and hot water systems that keep a dairy site working during a shift. Does plant-room rounds, water tests and meter readings, responds to alarms, carries out basic maintenance and keeps accurate logs.

## Key responsibilities

### Running the boilers

- Start up, run and shut down the steam boilers to the site procedures and hold steam pressure steady for production and CIP
- Test boiler water and feedwater at the set times for hardness, alkalinity, TDS and treatment chemical levels, and record every result
- Carry out bottom and surface blowdown and adjust chemical dosing on the test results to keep the boiler water within its limits
- Check the feed tank or hot well, feed pumps, condensate return and deaeration so the boiler always has treated water
- Test the low-water cut-offs and check safety valves, gauge glasses and burner controls as the schedule says
- Treat any water test or check outside its limit as a failure: act on it at once, tell the Utilities Engineer and record what was done
- Watch fuel supply, flame and flue gas readings and report anything unusual

### Plant-room rounds

- Walk the refrigeration plant room on every round and check compressor oil levels, suction and discharge pressures, temperatures and the ammonia leak detection system
- Respond to ammonia leak alarms by following the site emergency procedure and calling the engineer; never enter a plant room in alarm to investigate
- Check air compressors, dryers and receivers, drain condensate and keep compressed air pressure and dew point on target
- Run the water treatment and softening plant, regenerate softeners, top up salt and check treated water hardness

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- Keep hot water, and the steam and water supply to the CIP sets, at the right temperature and pressure for production and hygiene
- Check cooling towers, chilled water and glycol systems for leaks, noise, vibration and correct levels
- Read gas, electricity, water and steam meters and log the readings on every shift

### Alarms, faults and basic maintenance

- Respond to alarms, find the cause, make the plant safe and call the Utilities Engineer when the fault is beyond your training or authority
- Carry out basic maintenance such as changing filters, greasing bearings, cleaning strainers and replacing gauges
- Report faults clearly on the maintenance system and help the technicians with repairs where trained
- Isolate plant for maintenance under the permit to work and lock-out rules, and never bypass a safety device
- Keep spares, chemicals and consumables for the plant rooms stocked and stored correctly
- Flag any plant that is drifting or working harder than normal before it fails

### Safety, hygiene and handover

- Do the legionella checks on cooling towers and water systems, such as temperatures, dosing and bleed-off, and record them
- Handle boiler and water treatment chemicals safely, using the correct PPE and the safety data sheets
- Keep plant rooms clean, tidy, well lit and free of leaks and trip hazards
- Give and receive a clear handover of plant status, readings, open faults and any alarms at every shift change
- Report leaks of steam, ammonia, gas or chemicals straight away, however small
- Keep boiler logs, water test records, meter sheets and checklists complete and accurate

## Qualifications and experience

### Essential

- Experience operating steam boilers or industrial plant-room equipment
- Boiler operator training or certificate, as required where the job is based
- Good reading, writing and number skills for logs, tests and dosing calculations
- Ability to follow written procedures and permit to work rules exactly
- Basic practical skills with hand tools, gauges and test kits
- Willingness to work shifts, including nights and weekends

### Desirable

- Experience with ammonia refrigeration plant and its leak alarm and emergency procedures
- Refrigeration or ammonia handling training, as required where the job is based
- Knowledge of boiler water treatment and the reasons behind each test
- Experience with compressed air systems, water softeners and reverse osmosis plant
- Legionella awareness training, as required where the job is based
- Experience in a dairy or other food factory
- Basic knowledge of CIP and the steam and hot water demands of a dairy
- Mechanical or electrical apprenticeship or trade background

## Skills and attributes

- Attention to detail with readings and test results
- Calm and methodical when alarms go off
- Honest, accurate record keeping

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- Safety first attitude
- Practical, hands-on approach
- Clear communication at handover and when calling for help
- Reliability and good timekeeping

## Measures of success

- Steam, compressed air, water, hot water and refrigeration supplied to production without interruption
- Boiler water tests done on time, with any result outside its limit acted on at once and recorded
- Safety devices tested on schedule with no overdue checks
- Meter readings and plant logs complete and accurate every shift
- No ammonia releases, boiler incidents or legionella non-conformances
- Plant rooms clean, tidy and ready for audit
- No accidents or injuries

## Working conditions and safety

Shift work on a production site, which may include nights, weekends and 12-hour shifts. The work involves rounds through hot, noisy boiler houses and plant rooms, some time outdoors at cooling towers and tanks, handling treatment chemicals and occasional lifting; PPE and training are provided.

- Follow health and safety rules and safe systems of work, and wear the correct PPE
- Follow food safety, hygiene, HACCP and quality procedures at all times
- Report hazards, accidents, near misses and concerns promptly

*This job description outlines the main duties of the role. It is not a complete list, and the employer may update it as the business changes, in consultation with the jobholder.*

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