

What is it like to be a Camera Operator?

Lights-Camera-Action!

When you think of your water and sewer utilities, cameras probably aren't the first things that come to mind. Read on though and you'll discover how cameras, like the one pictured right (yes, that's a camera!), and the camera operators perform a very important job within CFPUA.



Meet the crew...



CFPUA's **Utility Camera Operators** are often called out to **inspect** the inside of sewer lines...they inspect and record the condition of the pipes and determine how much wastewater the pipe carries. They specifically look for cracks in the pipe, pipes that are crushed or damaged, **obstructions** like tree roots and rocks or sand, and other **blockages** such as those caused

by disposable wipes or FOG (Fats, Oils, and Grease). If there is a blockage or obstruction, jet crews or cleaning crews are first called out to wash out the pipe with high powered water jets. Vactor trucks are also sometimes used to "vacuum" the pipes before the Camera Operators begin their work. If broken or damaged pipes are discovered, a construction crew is called in to make repairs or replace the pipe.

Camera Operators spend much of their time working outside all year long. They can be exposed to some extreme weather conditions and are required to frequently work in and around traffic. Other on-the-job hazards include poison gas in the sewers, unleashed dogs, and other unpleasant animals like rats, spiders and snakes.

Journey Inside...

The **robotic camera**, like the one pictured above, is called a **crawler**. It "crawls" through the pipe and views the inside of sewer lines. It's kind of like a remote control car...the Camera Operator uses computerized controls and joysticks to move the crawler forward and backwards through the pipes...they can make it go faster or slower and they can maneuver the camera to record what is seen. The camera is waterproof and is connected to a **cable wire** so it doesn't get lost in the sewer. Usually, one operator prepares the crawler for its journey and lowers it into a manhole while another operator monitors and controls the movement from the back of the work truck where the crawler activity is watched and recorded on computers. If you like computers, cameras and working outside, perhaps you might like to be a Utility Camera Operator when you grow up?



The crawler recorded this portion of clay sewer pipe that had collapsed.

Each and every day, CFPUA treats, distributes and collects millions of gallons of water and wastewater throughout Wilmington & New Hanover County and it employs many dedicated, professional employees.

Each month we'll introduce a different job or group within the Cape Fear Public Utility Authority. Our employees strive to provide the safest and highest quality water and wastewater services while being environmentally responsible. Learn more about the Cape Fear Public Utility Authority and the services we provide by visiting our website: www.cfpua.org.