



Roxie Kierst
Water Quality Technician

What is a water quality technician?

I am the person who checks the water and equipment used to maintain the exhibits to make sure everything is clean and healthy for all of our animals.

How long have you worked in this job?

I have been in this job since June of 2017. But I have worked at the aquarium in different positions since about 2011.

What does it take to get a job like yours?

Degrees in chemistry or environmental science are really helpful, as you learn a lot about the science involved. More helpful than that though is experience in laboratory work. If you want a future job in water quality, I recommend taking a lot of laboratory classes in school and volunteering or interning at an aquarium or university to get hands-on experience.

What is your background (training and education)?

My education was not originally in chemistry or animal care actually. I originally went to school for medical training with the hopes of working in a medical office as a medical assistant. However, after finishing I realized that I did not actually like the work that much. That's when I decided to come back to the aquarium and work here instead. I have had a lot of different jobs here. I started in the food grill part-time while I was still in school. After the food grill, I moved into guest services as an exhibit host part-time. Then I worked for Wildflight as a seasonal husbandry assistant before moving to the landscaping/physical plant department. From there, I became the overnight water quality monitor before finally becoming the full-time water quality technician.

What is your favorite part of your job?

Overall my favorite part is working at the aquarium, and being surrounded by so many amazing animals that I get to help take care of every day. I also love talking to the guests I see and share what I am doing with them.

What is the most challenging part of your job?

Learning the details of the chemistry involved. Learning the process of what to do to test them is not that difficult, but learning exactly how/why everything works the way it does gets complicated.

What does a typical work day look like for you?

During the day I do rounds to check all of the equipment and gauges for water quality every two hours. When I do rounds, I fill out a checklist of all the data I need to collect each time to make sure I don't miss anything. Each round takes about 20 minutes.