# Emptying Service Competency Framework



Emptiers are an essential part of the non-sewered sanitation service chain. They are more than sanitation workers; they are educators, behavior change practitioners, and public health professionals tasked with protecting the health, wellbeing, and dignity of the communities they serve.

Fulfilling all of these important functions is not easy. Emptying is a challenging job that involves far more than simply transporting fecal sludge from pits to treatment facilities.

In order to be successful, emptying service providers must:

- Manage huge risks to both personal and public health and safety.
- Have the financial, administrative, and communication skills required to run a profitable and sustainable business.
- Meet client expectations of being on-time, professional, courteous, and able to anticipate their needs.
- Understand and adhere to rules and regulations set out by their municipality and utility.
- Coordinate and interact with other existing actors all along the sanitation service chain.

Accomplishing these objectives is only possible with support.

This competency framework is designed to be a tool for emptying service providers, and the capacity development organizations that work with them, to understand the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to deliver a high-quality service.

This competency framework can be used by:

- Emptiers and capacity development organizations to structure professional development activities for emptying service providers, by outlining required knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- 2. Municipalities and utilities to begin thinking about the certification of emptying businesses by outlining all that is required to deliver a high-quality emptying service.





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This competency framework was developed in partnership with representatives of the Pan African Association of Sanitation Actors (PASA). At CAWST we are still learning about emptying, if you use this framework, share your experience with us at kjames@cawst.org

#### **ABOUT THIS TOOL**

#### What is a competency?

Competencies are the combined knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA) that are required for people to effectively do their job.



Knowledge encompasses the things that people must understand. Facts and concepts fall into the knowledge category. Skill represents the things that people must be able to physically do. An example of a skill is being able to drive a truck or write a report. Abilities refers to the innate personal and social qualities required for a job. Showing respect for differing opinions is an ability, for example.

This framework classifies the variety of competencies that are necessary to successfully run an emptying business into four categories: competencies related to operations and maintenance, finances, business administration, and those related to stakeholder engagement.

#### **Operation & Maintenance**

An emptying service requires the operation and maintenance of highly technical equipment. This includes the process of selecting, sourcing, buying, operating and maintaining emptying equipment, and on staying safe and healthy while delivering emptying services.

#### **Finances:**

An emptying service requires effective management of financial resources to remain viable. This domain identifies the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to run a financially stable emptying service, including: accounting and budgeting; managing contracts including negotiations, paperwork, and legal documents; and identifying and applying for different types of funding.

#### **Business administration:**

Running an effective emptying business requires the ability to professionally manage relationships with clients, staff, and regulatory agencies. This competency domain outlines what is involved in managing a business' human resources, explores contract management, and explores what data is required, and how it should be used to ensure the smooth, and legal, operation of the business.

#### **Stakeholder Engagement:**

Much of the success of an emptying business relies on managing positive relationships with a whole range of different stakeholders; from branding your business and marketing your services, to collaborating with the local regulating authority, delivering courteous and professional customer service. This competency domain looks at what is involved in communicating with and engaging others effectively.





Each role within a business has its own set of competencies. Some of the knowledge, skills, and abilities overlap between roles. Others are specific to the role. For small businesses, one person will play multiple roles, and therefore requires multiple competencies. Larger businesses may allow for more specialized roles requiring fewer competencies.

#### **OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE:**

#### **Procurement of Technology**

Each emptying business has unique needs in terms of technology. The most appropriate emptying tool will depend on context, type and location of customers, typical sludge characteristics, and the available budget. This competency domain outlines the knowledge, skills, and abilities involved in selecting and procuring an appropriate technology.

#### **Operation of Technology**

A large part of an emptying service is being able to safely operate equipment to empty a pit and transport sludge for treatment. This competency domain outlines what is required to plan and execute a successful emptying service.

#### **Maintenance of Technology**

Delivering an emptying service is a tough and messy job, and equipment can quickly experience a lot of wear and tear. Keeping equipment in good working order is essential to the longevity of the business. This competency domain outlines what is required to assess, plan, complete, and track technology maintenance needs.

#### **Health and Safety**

Emptying is a dangerous profession. Emptiers often work with heavy equipment, and are in close contact with hazardous wastes. This competency domain outlines the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to anticipate health and safety risks, develop plans and procedures to mitigate these risks, and then respond appropriately in case of emergency.

#### **FINANCES:**

#### **Accounting and Budgeting**

An accounting system ensures that business owners can keep track of what they own, where money is being spent, who owes the company money, and to whom money is owed. An effective accounting system can be simple, but it does require that owners set up their books, arrange timely payments to vendors and government, coordinate staff payroll, and establish procedures for collecting payments from customers. The benefit of having a well-managed accounting system is that owners can make business decisions based on accurate and up-to-date financial data.

#### **Funding**

Starting up, growing, and even just running an emptying business often requires access to large amounts of capital. Securing necessary funding to purchase or repair equipment, offer services to under served communities, and invest in the professional development of staff can often be one of the biggest challenges facing emptiers. This competency domain outlines knowledge, skills, and abilities required to identify different sources of funding, develop compelling proposals or applications, and manage your business to be eligible for funding.

#### **Human Resources**

Running an emptying business involves building a strong team, supporting the professional development of staff members, and ensuring everyone is adhering to expected standards.. This competency domain explores all the knowledge, skills, and abilities to effectively manage human resources for your business

#### **BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION:**

#### **Contract Management**

The importance of effective contract management and execution cannot be understated as contractual disputes can have costly implications. A strong understanding of the benefits of contractual agreements and the laws that bind them, along with the ability to write and negotiate terms and conditions will help service providers safeguard their businesses.

#### **Data Management**

Emptying businesses have access to and generate a lot of important data. This might include client names, contact information, and estimated date of next service—which is important for businesses to plan and sell their services. It also might include volume of sludge emptied and then discharged at the fecal sludge treatment plant—a number which is often required reporting by regulating bodies. This competency domain covers the knowledge, skills, and abilities involved in identifying essential data, and then collecting, storing, and using this data effectively.





#### STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT:

#### **Communications Strategy**

Emptying businesses need to communicate effectively with a diverse range of audiences, including the municipality, utility, existing and potential customers, and other businesses. The purpose of this communication might be to advocate for the important role emptiers play, promote and sell their services, or educate customers on the proper use of their on-site systems. This competency domain outlines what is required to plan and execute an effective business communications strategy.

#### **Local Governing Authority**

A high-quality emptying service is one that is well-integrated and coordinated within the sanitation service chain. In order to achieve this, emptying business owners or managers must understand the expectations of the local governing authority—which might be the utility or municipality. These rules, regulations, and expectations need to be adhered to in their day to day operations. This competency domain outlines the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to manage and sustain the relationship between the business and the regulatory authorities.

#### **Customer Service**

Just like with any other business, customers of emptying businesses have expectations for the type of service they would like to receive; timely, professional, courteous, and reliable. This domain outlines all the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to ensure emptying businesses understand, anticipate, and meet customer expectations.



#### **Marketing**

In order to attract and retain clients, emptying businesses need to understand why and how to promote and sell their services. This group of competencies focuses on the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to determine a business's brand identity, as well as develop, enact, and uphold a marketing strategy.

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# Emptier

#### **Operation & Maintenance**

Procurement of technology	Maintenance of technology
Operation of technology	Health and safety

#### **Finances**

Accounting and budgeting	Human resources
Funding	

#### **Business Administration**

Contract Management	Data management	
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## **Stakeholder Engagement**

Communications strategy	Customer service
Local government authority	Marketing





	Knowledge	Skills	Ability
	☐ Identify characteristics that influence the quality	☐ Order supplies by telephone, paper-based	☐ Develop relationships with suppliers
	and appropriateness of a technology	and electronic formats  ☐ Perform quality check	☐ Demonstrate assertiveness in
ology	☐ Identify national, regional and international suppliers of emptying	of technology  ☐ Negotiate with	negotiations   Demonstrate
Procurement of technology	technologies	suppliers	commitment to accuracy when completing
	☐ Describe innovations in emptying technologies		requisition forms
	☐ Explain regulations, certifications, and standards for vehicles and other technology options		
	☐ Select emptying technologies based on quality, price, regulation and appropriateness for the needs of customers and emptier		

Competency Development Activities		

	Knowledge	Skills	Ability
	☐ Explain rules and regulations for driving	☐ Drive an emptying truck, motorbike or tricycle	☐ Commit to safe service delivery
	and operating emptying technologies  ☐ Select the most	☐ Operate the emptying technologies according to	☐ Comply with transportation related laws
nology	efficient route to client location or disposal site	guidelines ☐ Navigate to a client's location using a map or	and regulations □ Comply with disposal related laws and
f techn	efficient route to client location or disposal site  Assess access to pit or tank  Describe the features of the emptying technology (pump, GPS) to ensure correct use	GPS  ☐ Empty on-site systems	regulations  ☐ Respect household and
ation o		based on assessment of access needs and fecal	company property during service delivery
Opera		sludge characteristics	☐ Promote an organization wide culture
	☐ Assess fecal sludge characteristics for viscosity and solid waste		of safety

Competency Development Activities			





	Knowledge	Skills	Ability
Maintenance of technology	☐ Explain the maintenance needs of an emptying technology ☐ Identify national, regional and international suppliers of spare parts for an emptying technology ☐ Select spare parts based on quality, price and local regulations ☐ Evaluate a mechanic's competency ☐ Develop a maintenance plan for each technology used by the business	☐ Diagnose problems with the emptying technologies ☐ Perform basic repairs and maintenance on emptying technologies ☐ Complete a maintenance report ☐ Order spare parts according to company policy ☐ Monitor compliance with the maintenance plan	□ Develop working relationships with mechanics to improve the quality of services rendered □ Notice changes in the performance of a technology □ Value the importance of regular maintenance □ Think critically through a technical problem □ Promote a culture of respect for maintaining technologies

Competency Development Activities		

	Knowledge	Skills	Ability
	☐ Explain the transmission routes of fecal pathogens and their impact on human	☐ Bring attention to potential risks and hazards to health and safety	☐ Adhere to operational health and safety policies and standards
	health  Analyze health and safety risks associated with providing an emptying	☐ Demonstrate how to properly put on and take off personal protective equipment	☐ Promote health and safety standards across the business ☐ Demonstrate self-
	service  ☐ Explain the importance of immunizations, PPE,	☐ Provide basic first aid as needed	care by attending regular medical check ups and ensuring vaccinations are
	and regular medical check- ups to reduce health risks related to emptying fecal	☐ Clean spills and splashes of fecal sludge correctly	up to date  ☐ Choose to hold others accountable to safety
	sludge □ Explain the	☐ Report incidents verbally or in written form	standards  □ Exemplify self-care by
safety	occupational healthy and safety rights of emptiers	<ul> <li>□ Wear personal protective equipment (PPE) every time a pit or tank is emptied</li> <li>□ Use safety equipment and/ or call public services to respond to an emergency situation</li> </ul>	adhering to health and safety protocols
Health and safety	☐ Explain the dangers of using alcohol and drugs while on the job		
Health	☐ Explain when and how to seek assistance in emergency situations		
	☐ Explain the benefits of correctly using personal protective equipment	☐ Advise the customer on proper use of on- site systems to reduce risks to the health of the	
	☐ Develop an occupational health and safety plan that outlines prevention and response measures	household and the emptier	
		☐ Enforce compliance with the occupational health and safety policies and procedures	
		☐ Train staff on health and safety standards	
		☐ Wash emptying equipment, PPE, hands and other body parts with soap and/ or disinfectant after an emptying service	



## **F**INANCES

	Knowledge	Skills	Ability
eting	☐ Outline key steps in the business start up process	☐ Set up banking based on business type	☐ Model rigour and attention to detail through
	☐ Explain tax requirements	☐ Set up a book keeping system	accurate and timely recording, reporting and payments
	☐ Explain the importance of recording and tracking income and expenditures	☐ Submit taxes as required by legislation	☐ Commit to honest and transparent financial
dgeting	☐ Explain the importance of collecting service fees	☐ Prepare detailed reports (ledgers and balance sheets)	transactions and reporting  ☐ Comply with tax regulations
Accounting and budgeting	in a timely manner  ☐ Explain the implications of different ownership	☐ Use a filing system for tracking transactions, cash, and receipts	. ogalatiene
	types (sole proprietor, partnership, corporation, and limited liability corporation)	☐ Manage payroll activities to ensure accurate and on-time payments to employees	
	☐ Explain when and why to have accounts audited	☐ Make decisions based on financial reports	
	☐ Explain the importance of budgets for an emptying business	☐ Use accounting software to manage financial data	
	☐ Analyze financial data to guide strategies and develop budgets		

Competency Development Activities	

# **F**INANCES

	Knowledge	Skills	Ability
	☐ Explain financial terminology	☐ Use financial terminology	☐ Demonstrate persistence when facing
	☐ Identify potential funding sources, including	☐ Predict future funding needs	obstacles pertaining to funding
	loans, credit, grants, and service level agreements	☐ Write a funding application / proposal,	☐ Adhere to contractual obligations
<b>.</b>	(SLAs)  ☐ Explain the types of	including financials	☐ Demonstrate attention to detail
Funding	loans available	☐ Persuade funders of the viability and profitability of	☐ Demonstrate a
Full	☐ Explain how interest rates impact cash flow and	an emptying business  ☐ Analyze contract terms	willingness to take calculated risks
	profits  ☐ Select an appropriate	and conditions for the financial implications	
	funding source based on eligibility requirements and business needs	☐ Manage contract according to the terms and conditions	

Competency Development Activities	





# **F**INANCES

	Knowledge	Skills	Ability
	☐ Explain employment laws/ standards	☐ Monitor organizational culture and morale	☐ Promote accountability across the business
	☐ Explain the importance of accountability to	☐ Establish clear roles and responsibilities for each	☐ Pursues professional development opportunities
	organizational values, policies, and procedures	job description  Build an effective	☐ Lead by example
urces	☐ Explain the importance of continuing professional development	team by hiring qualified candidates for each role in the organization	☐ Promotes a learning culture within the organization by providing professional development
Human resources	☐ Explain the importance of organizational culture		opportunities
	and staff morale for a successful business		☐ Moderate emotions when dealing with stressful situations
	☐ Explain the best practices for recruitment and orientation		☐ Model a friendly and open but firm demeanor
	☐ Develop an organizational structure and human resource plan		

Competency Development Activities	

# **BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**

	Knowledge	Skills	Ability
	☐ Explain the benefits of contractual agreements	☐ Write a clear contract to ensure mutual	☐ Model accountability to the terms of a contract
	☐ Explain the laws related to contractual agreements	understanding of what is expected	☐ Ground negotiations in ethics and mutual respect
nent	☐ Describe the elements of a contract	☐ Negotiate the terms, conditions, and changes of a contract	☐ Attend to contract details
Contract Management	☐ Evaluate the terms and conditions of a contract	☐ Develop a record keeping system for all	☐ Facilitate clear communication between
act Ma	☐ Assess when a contract is necessary or beneficial	contracts and related communications	contract parties
Contra	☐ Explain when and how to amend a contract	☐ Monitor compliance with contract terms and	
	☐ Assess risks related to the contract	conditions  Resolve contractual	
		disputes □ Develop a risk mitigation plan	

Competency Development Activities	





# **BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**

	Knowledge	Skills	Ability
	☐ Explain the various data needs of the organization	☐ Record key details of interactions with clients	☐ Value the privacy and security of personal data
	(e.g. number of trips, customer feedback, etc)	☐ Collect data according to organizational policies	☐ Demonstrate attention to detail and consistency in data entry and management
	<ul><li>□ Explain local data reporting requirements</li><li>□ Explain the importance of security and privacy with data management</li></ul>	☐ Develop a data management system for	
		the organization	☐ Commit to preserve the
		☐ Use information technologies in line with	integrity and ethical use of data
ent	☐ Explain legal requirements governing data storage	company policies	
Data management		☐ Enter service delivery data accurately according to organizational requirements	
		☐ Update the data management system based on organizational needs	
		☐ Update data management softwares as required by the software and the needs of the organization	
		☐ Use data to inform business decisions	
		☐ Develop policies related to organizational data management	

Competency Development Activities	

	Knowledge	Skills	Ability
Communication strategy	Mnowledge  □ Describe the stakeholders who need to be communicated with to deliver emptying services effectively  □ Explain the importance of good communication to maintaining a relationship  □ Compare the advantages and disadvantages of different communication tools	□ Develop communication plans for different stakeholder groups □ Listen to stakeholders concerns and desires to respond appropriately to their needs □ Adjust communication style depending on the stakeholder	Ability  ☐ Demonstrate diplomacy in all communications ☐ Maintain flexibility in challenging situations ☐ Exemplify openmindedness
Comm	☐ Explain factors that impact communications	☐ Execute communication plans for different stakeholder groups ☐ Resolve miscommunications	

Competency Development Activities	





	Knowledge	Skills	Ability
Local government authority	☐ Explain licensing and permit requirements	☐ Advocate for FSM as a complement to sewered sanitation ☐ Advocate local authorities to include emptiers in all planning, policy and regulation related discussions ☐ Coordinate service delivery with other relevant actors ☐ Obtain necessary licenses or permits ☐ Convince authorities to consider alternate service delivery models	☐ Model confidence when dealing with authorities
	☐ Describe the local institutional arrangements		☐ Demonstrate pride in the profession
	☐ Describe the roles and responsibilities of key actors involved in		☐ Influence others through persuasiveness
	sanitation		☐ Follow through on commitments
	☐ Assess sanitation situation to identify opportunities to engage		☐ Model persistence when striving for goals
	with local authorities   Describe regulations		
	related to emptying and consequences for breeches		

Competency Development Activities		

Knowledge	Skills	Ability
☐ Describe the proper use and maintenance of	☐ Create a welcoming environment for in- person clients, callers, and emailers	☐ Promote culture of continuous improvement
their on-site system  ☐ Describe customer		☐ Commit to posted work hours
expectations from an emptying service	<ul> <li>☐ Educate households         on the proper use and         maintenance of their on-         site system</li> <li>☐ Perform service         according to expectations</li> </ul>	☐ Appreciate the importance of customers
☐ Explain the importance of maintaining a professional image		to the business  ☐ Commit to timeliness
		and efficiency  ☐ Model professionalism
	☐ Communicate terms of service and payment to customers	in all interactions with customers.  □ Promote emptying as a professional service
	☐ Advocate importance of safe emptying to public health	
	☐ Describe the proper use and maintenance of their on-site system ☐ Describe customer expectations from an emptying service ☐ Explain the importance of maintaining a	□ Describe the proper use and maintenance of their on-site system □ Describe customer expectations from an emptying service □ Explain the importance of maintaining a professional image □ Perform service according to expectations □ Communicate terms of service and payment to customers □ Advocate importance of safe emptying to public

Competency Development Activities		





	Knowledge	Skills	Ability
Marketing	☐ Explain the importance of understanding the client's needs and wants	☐ Develop a short and long term marketing strategy	☐ Exemplify the values of the brand ☐ Think creatively
	☐ Describe the benefit of branding and marketing	☐ Integrate the brand into marketing activities and	- Trimix creatively
	☐ Compare different channels, approaches, and tools for marketing	materials  ☐ Monitor effectiveness  of marketing strategy	
	☐ Explain the common motivators and barriers for households/ institutions to empty their pit or tank	☐ Execute a marketing strategy	
	☐ Recognize how individual actions affect the reputation of the brand		
	☐ Explain the importance of tracking the effectiveness of marketing campaigns		

Competency Development Activities		







CAWST, the Centre for Affordable Water and Sanitation Technology, is a nonprofit organization that provides training and consulting to organizations working directly with populations in low and middle income countries who lack access to clean water and basic sanitation.

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