



2017-2018  
PORTRAIT N° 1

*Isabelle Vallières*

Control Room Technician

Learn together to recognize the workers who provide us the routing of 90% of our consumer goods, thus supporting our Quebec maritime industry both at sea and ashore!

**Tribute for our maritime ambassadors!**

***"The marine sector is exciting and impressive. I'm still learning things every day!"***



## ***When work and passion go hand in hand***

► Some occupations are naturally high-profile...everyone knows them. Others are less well known, and some we've never heard of.

On a lovely March afternoon, behind the Port of Québec's security booth, I was lucky enough to learn about the occupation of control room technician and to meet Isabelle Vallières, who works for the major port company QSL- Arrimage Québec.

Comfortable amid superintendents and stevedores, Isabelle waits for me with a big smile. With four years' work experience here, she loves her job...and it shows. "The marine sector is exciting and impressive. I'm still learning things every day!"; she tells me.

## **AN ACCESSIBLE, EXCITING, YET LITTLE-KNOWN CAREER**

Having come from another field, Isabelle knew absolutely nothing about the marine industry and even less about the job of control room technician despite the fact that she lives in the neighbourhood. She told me: "I wanted to change sectors and I saw a job advertised at Arrimage Québec. Since I had no college degree, I applied for another job to get started in the company. When we talked in the interview, my background interested them, and they offered me the control room

technician position. I jumped at the opportunity!"

Isabelle was trained right on the job, like her three control room colleagues. Not one has the same job history but all have virtually the same profile. They are organized, available, articulate, good listeners and able to manage stress well. "The only thing I had going for me was that I knew how the radio system worked! I received one month's training and was then able to do a boat on my own. It was an amazing challenge!"; according to Isabelle.

Still not well known by people outside the marine sector, the occupation of control room technician is accessible to all and is an excellent choice for transport logistics technology students. "The term "technician" scares people since they link it to a college-level education, but that's not true. Being a college graduate is an asset. I knew nothing about the marine sector. You just have to go for it and leave your fears behind. That's the beauty of this job, you learn everything here"; she points out.

By the way, a control room technician position is currently open.

## **COMBINING RESPONSIBILITIES AND ENJOYMENT**

Le métier de technicienne à la salle de contrôle com- Control room technicians have many responsibilities and the smallest mistake can be very costly. Isabelle is in charge of managing the conveyor system during ship



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loading and unloading (material flows on the conveyor belts, trap opening and closing, etc.) and recording all operations-related information (use of a crane, stoppages, breakdowns, etc.) in the computer register, all of which is used, among other things, to collate the information required for client invoicing.

She is also responsible for the water cannon systems needed to ensure that the terminal's humidity level is appropriate and for checking wind direction and weather conditions. Sitting in front of dozens of computer screens, she monitors all of these elements, like in a control tower. She becomes the information centre on operations' progress, tonnages handled and all of the other data the people in the field need for successful ship loading and unloading operations. "It's hard to summarize the job. Every day is different. It's definitely not routine work!"

Iron pellets, nickel concentrate, copper, coal and gypsum are examples of some of the materials Arrimage Québec stevedores and superintendents handle every day in collaboration with the control room technicians. "It's a team effort and the atmosphere is really nice here. The work is demanding and you have to be available days, evenings, nights and weekends. But it's worth it! The challenges are big but so is our feeling of pride and achievement," says Isabelle.

***"It's hard to summarize the job. Every day is different. It's definitely not routine work!"***



In the coming years, she hopes to stay with Arrimage Québec and continue to work in marine operations, an area she now loves.



Sugar, salt and cement. Simple materials that are part of our everyday lives. Materials that transit so easily to us, thanks to the work of port employees and control room technicians, who work behind the scenes and for whom work and passion go hand in hand.

By Josée-Ève Poulin  
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