



The Environmental Health Specialist: A Job Profile

Environmental health is a field concerned with the monitoring and evaluation of the health and safety of the working and living conditions of persons. Thus, practice in environmental health examines the living conditions in residential as well as recreational areas and examines the safety conditions in industrial and commercial areas. Persons in this field must have well-developed observation and analytical skills.



Persons in the field are referred to as environmental health specialists or inspectors. In the course of carrying out monitoring and evaluation, the specialists are required to examine the potential health hazards likely to be posed in any residential or working place,

and subsequently take the appropriate measures to mitigate the potential risk.

For a person to be considered fit to practice as an environmental health specialist, the person must have earned, at minimum, a bachelor's degree in biology, chemistry, physics or geology from a recognized university. In addition, study in the field of sanitary engineering or environmental engineering qualifies one for a career in environmental health. For career advancement, a postgraduate degree in a specialized field is recommended. For certification as an environmental specialist, a person is expected to have undergone a two-year experience under the direction of a qualified, certified person. An environmental health specialist is a person who is engaged in the practice of environmental health pursuant to the specialist's possession of a certificate of registration commonly issued by a regulatory board at the state level or pursuant to national certification standards.

The job description of an environmental specialist entails the inspection of facilities and equipment to ascertain that they are in compliance with stipulated regulations relating to

the protection of environmental health. The specialists are also charged with assessing environmental conditions that may adversely impact the public, and prepare mitigation incentives such as the issuance of health permits. Due to the regulatory nature of this work, most environmental health specialists work in government agencies to monitor public safety pursuant to environmental regulations. Environmental specialists inspect of plants and factories for pollution or production of industrial waste and inspect schools, restaurants and daycares for the identification of harmful substances. They also issue permits and certificates to verify that institutions have met required criteria. In conducting the foregoing, a health specialist is expected to apply the knowledge and training to identify environmental hazards, the solutions to mitigate the problems identified, and the health risks that may result from any identified problems. Reports are compiled which contain observations, conclusions, and recommendations. Collection of samples is at times required for measurement and verification tests. It can thus be concluded that the primary responsibility of the environmental health field is the determination of existing health-related hazards and the identification of corrective measures to resolve any existing or expected problem.

Salaries and benefits are dependent upon an individual's education level, specific training and experience. Salaries range from \$37,000 to \$57,000 in general terms, in the public as well as the private sector, and other benefits may be provided pursuant to contract provisions.

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