



## Environmental Health and Safety Careers

In any environment, health and safety are of major concern. That's why **environmental health and safety jobs** are so important. Safety and environmental jobs occur in recreational, commercial, industrial, and residential settings, as such they occur in every sector of society. People who work in **environmental safety jobs** are called titles such as "health inspector" or "safety inspector," or even "health and safety specialist." In every case, those who work in environmental health and safety management have as their primary duty to make sure that the surrounding environment is as safe as possible. If health hazards or safety hazards are found, they take steps to correct the situation immediately.

### Where can you find environmental health and safety jobs?

As an environmental safety specialist, for example, you might work for government agencies that keep track of environmental regulations on the local, state, and federal levels. That means that you might check factories or plants to make sure that they're not producing too much industrial waste and pollution. You might inspect restaurants to make sure that they're clean enough, and you might inspect day care centers, schools, nursing homes, and hospitals to make sure that lead paint, radon, and other contaminants are not in that particular environment.

You might also keep track of how hospitals handle contaminating waste products such as blood or body fluids to make sure that they're disposed of properly, and you might make sure that swimming pools and other places of recreation are safe for people to use.

As an environmental safety specialist or someone of similar title, you might be in charge of issuing certificates or permits that state that a particular business, residence, or place of recreation has met the minimum needed requirements for safety and health.

### Measuring pollutants, contaminants, and the like

As health and environmental specialists make inspections, they may also collect samples such as from the surrounding soil, water, and air. These samples are then tested to make sure that minimum cleanliness standards are being met and that levels of contaminants are at or below minimum standards. If they do discover dangerous levels of banned substances, they then must determine where the contamination is coming from.

To do this, they may set up equipment at the side of inspection to monitor water quality, order quality, or they

may check previous records to make sure the previous standards were met. Once the contamination is found, those in environmental health and safety management set forward steps to solve the problem and make sure that they are followed. If necessary, they come up with alternative plans as well.

### Environmental safety jobs for private companies

Environmental health and safety jobs are found in private companies, too. Those who work for private companies make sure that affected facilities are kept up to government standards. Government inspectors monitor the company and make sure that no problems or violations have occurred.

Those in health and safety have as their main goal the actual prevention of problems, not just fixing the ones that are found. Therefore, they also work to predict where health or safety problems might occur and help companies develop plans so that employees are not likely to violate specific procedures, which can lead to problems. Those in **safety and environmental jobs** therefore must be aware of industry and governmental regulations pertaining to the particular area they're working in.

### Education

To work in an environment of health and safety, you'll need a least a bachelor's degree. Coursework includes the physical sciences, chemistry, biology, and public health. Sometimes, an **environmental engineering** background is also needed. For government-based environmental health and safety jobs, a certification course is also necessary and is administered by the local, state, or federal agency as applicable. Most states also have licensing boards that review those wishing to work in the field and give certification to those who are qualified. Training and certification depends on the type of job and inspection being done, as well as the facilities in question. The National Environmental Health Association also



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offers credentials to those who are qualified. In addition, if you're going to be dealing with hazardous materials as an environmental specialist, you'll need specialized certification.

### Looking for jobs

Private companies usually offer their jobs through newspaper classifieds and on Internet job sites. The government will usually have specific federal, local or state listings at government offices.

### Job outlook and salary

When you begin as a health specialist or in a similar capacity at a government agency, you'll receive salary increases according to a specific schedule. Supervisory positions are also available to those who are qualified, although these

have quite a lot of competition for them. Salary ranges from about \$40,000 year to about \$60,000 a year.

### Conclusion

Those who work in environmental health and safety jobs make sure that local, federal, and state businesses, residences and facilities such as hospitals, nursing homes, and recreational centers are meeting mandated health and safety standards. For those that are not, steps are taken to remedy those areas that are lacking in proper standards. This is a very challenging career but can be very rewarding because of the obvious benefits it gives to the public at large, and to the individuals in [environmental health and safety management](#) service.

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