



## Finding Environmental Safety Health Director Jobs

Beyond “just” making sure that we all have safe air, water, and ecosystems, environmental health and safety is also an important part of today’s workplace. Environmental health and safety personnel study the effects of industry on both the workplace and the environment, gathering data, analyzing information, and designing programs to protect both workers and nature.

### Environmental Safety: A Challenging Career for Challenging Times

Are you looking for a job that can make the world a better place? If so, you can’t go wrong with a job in environmental health and safety. These important positions guard not only our air and water but also protect others against dangerous toxins or other threats within the workplace. In addition to making sure that data is collected and analyzed on-site, environmental safety workers make sure that companies and governmental agencies follow proper safety and environmental laws. With so many important regulations to follow, it’s not surprising that so many companies choose to hire dedicated personnel to handle the management and implementation of their environmental health and safety programs. With the increasing interest in protecting the environment, EHS careers promise to be an important and expanding part of our “greening” economy.

What areas are there in the environmental health and safety arena? EHS jobs that are primarily concerned with enforcement, reporting, and management are primarily desk jobs. These EHS workers write or file reports, analyze data, and provide testimony about various health and safety practices that may not be in compliance with federal and state laws. EHS workers also check on compliance or answer questions concerning current regulations. But don’t knock the idea of sitting at a desk — these EHS workers are at the forefront of setting and enforcing health and safety procedures and policy.

EHS researchers actually get out into the field and get their hands dirty. They gather information, take samples, and conduct experiments. The research can be out in the wild or on the factory floor, depending on the type of hazard or problem being monitored. Other situations may call for personnel who check sites physically, taking samples and assessing companies or groups to make sure that health and safety laws have been complied with properly.

Other environmental health and safety manager jobs work with decision groups to determine what regulations will be needed and the best ways to enforce compliance. They use the compiled data of field researchers and office reporters to make these decisions.

### Environmental Safety Health Director

An environmental safety director is responsible for making sure that a workplace or factory is following all required federal, state, and local safety regulations. They must analyze a workplace with an eye towards designing and implementing programs that can prevent possible injuries or disease. Those working in [safety director positions](#) look for all kinds of potential environmental hazards, including chemical, physical, radiological, and biological threats. They also must determine whether or not machines in the workplace are inherently safe and ensure that workplace tools and facilities are ergonomically safe so that repetitive injuries can be avoided. Safety director [positions in environmental health and safety](#) can be found in many companies and governmental agencies, where they advise management on the proper implementation of health and safety regulations or train workers in the proper ways to protect themselves from health and safety hazards.

### Working Conditions

EHS jobs move between the workplace or external environment and the office environment. The job often requires a lot of fieldwork and travel, and may expose the EHS agent to the same hazardous environments faced by the workers they are tasked with protecting. If there is an environmental component to the work, the EHS worker may need to work in mines, swamps, sewers, construction zones, and other outside places. Hours are sometimes long and irregular, but a standard nine-to-five schedule is more typical.

### Qualifications

If you are planning to enter this field, you may be expected



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to hold at least a bachelor's degree in occupational health and safety. Degrees in related areas — engineering, chemistry, and biology — are also useful. Specialists may need additional training in industrial hygiene. Most EHS workers are also given extensive training in EHS laws, inspection procedures, and other applicable skills. Since 2007, the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology has granted accreditation to nearly fifty health physics, industrial hygiene, and safety programs nationwide, as well as other associate degree and one-year certificate programs. Many employers also request additional certification through the Board of Certified Safety Professionals, the American Board of Industrial Hygiene, and the Council on Certification of Health, Environmental, and Safety Technologists.

### Earnings

As of 2006, median annual salaries for EHS directors and other related professional were approximately \$54,920, with a range between \$41,800 to \$83,720. Federal positions typically

paid around \$68,890; state and local salary averages were lower (\$52,110 and \$49,690, respectively).

### Advancement Potential

[Safety health specialists](#) working for the US government can find advancement through civil service grades, but supervisory positions such as environmental safety health director roles are highly competitive. Joining professional societies (as mentioned above) and pursuing advanced degrees can aid in advancement.

### Employment Outlook

As of 2006, EHS and related health and safety specialists held 56,000 positions, most in private sector jobs. The remaining positions were in local, state, and federal governments. Job growth is expected to remain equal to or somewhat higher than the national average of jobs.

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