

An Environmental Health Specialist (also referred to as Environmental Health Inspector, Environmental Health Officer, Environmental Health Professional, Environmental Health Sanitarian, Environmental Health Scientist and/or Sanitarian) plans, develops, implements, and evaluates standards and systems to safeguard the health, safety, and welfare of the public from adverse environmental factors and to improve the quality of the physical environment as it affects health. They may collect, synthesize, study, report and take action based on data derived from measurements or observations of air, food, soil, water, and other sources. They manage environmental health problems and promote public awareness of the need to prevent and eliminate environmental health hazards. They may also conduct inspections and take enforcement actions for local, state, and federal environmental health laws and regulations. Specialists within this field may concentrate on food protection & defense, radiological health, environmental health, environmental medicine, risk control, outbreak control and communicable disease, bio-terrorism, on-site wastewater management, water quality/resources, air pollution/resources, noise pollution, lead investigation & remediation, toxicology, methamphetamine control, vector control, solid waste management, and research. A successful specialist responds to requests for service and ensures compliance and must be able to communicate effectively in providing guidance, consultation, and education with the public and other professionals. Currently, there is a great need for Environmental Health Specialists in many states. While it is a well paid profession, not many people are aware of this industry.

**Areas of Specialization:**

- Air and Industrial Hygiene- Child-Care Centers - Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention - Environmental Chemistry and Biology - Environmental Management – Food, Lodging and Institutions - Food Protection - Migrant Housing - On-Site Wastewater - Private Wells - Public Swimming Pools – Tattoos - Water Resources

**Work Environment:**

Environmental health specialists work in a variety of settings (both inside and out of doors), including public health departments, government agencies, universities and private industry.

**Academic Requirements:**

A licensed environmental health specialist in a public health department must have a bachelor's degree in environmental health or a related field (with a minimum of 30 semester hours or its equivalent in the physical and/or biological sciences), complete a supervised training and internship period of one to two years on the job at a health department and pass a licensure examination given by the North Carolina State Board of Sanitarian Examiners. Environmental health specialists involved in research, administration, environmental protection and resource management earn at least a master's degree, and some earn doctoral degrees in areas such as water resources engineering, air and industrial hygiene, environmental management and related fields. To enter a graduate program, you should have a bachelor's degree or substantial course work in science and engineering.

**Educational Programs:**

Bachelor's Degree  
East Carolina University  
Meredith College  
University of North Carolina - Asheville  
University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill  
Western Carolina University

Master's/Doctoral Degree  
East Carolina University  
University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill

**Salary Range:** \$30,000.00 - \$61,000.00

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