Environmental Health
Career Guide

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Have you ever wondered who makes sure the food and beverages you buy in your community are safe to eat? Did you ever think about what laws protect your health and safety at an apartment pool or the spa at a fitness center? What about at festivals, farmer’s markets, outdoor concerts and summer camps? How about used oil and trash? Hazardous Materials emergencies? Water well monitoring? All of these public concerns are regularly inspected by the County of Riverside Department of Environmental Health. We are Environmental Health Specialists (EHS) and Hazardous Materials Management Specialists (HMMS) and the job we do is tremendously important.

As an EHS or HMMS, we work hard to protect the public in Riverside County and to provide a safe place to work, live and play. Being an EHS or HMMS in Riverside County is a fun and rewarding career. This guide offers information about the opportunities as well as step by step instructions on how to apply.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- Do you have a bachelors degree or are you working towards a bachelors degree with a background in physical science courses?
- Are you interested in a career that will stay interesting and challenging?
- Do you want a job where you won’t be stuck in an office or lab?
- Are you interested in a career that can make a difference?

If you answered yes to any or all of these questions, then a career in Environmental Health may be just what you’re looking for!

**What is Environmental Health?**

The Department of Environmental Health’s mission is to enhance the quality of life in Riverside County by implementation of effective and efficient environmental health programs to protect the public health, safety and the environment. Our principal responsibility is to monitor and enforce the regulatory requirements of the California Health & Safety Code, federal, state and local Ordinances. Inspectors in Riverside County work in one of two Divisions: Environmental Protection and Oversight (EPO), District Environmental Services (DES).
Environmental Protection and Oversight (EPO)

EPO has a dynamic role in reducing the incidence of illness and injury in Riverside County through oversight of hazardous materials, liquid/solid waste and land use management. This is accomplished through routine and complaint inspections by inspectors in the various EPO programs. These programs include Hazardous Materials Management, Solid/Liquid Waste Management, Land Use, Environmental Clean up, and Water Resources Engineering.

Daily Activities include a combination of the following:

- **Conducting routine inspections** of permitted waste facilities (Hazardous Materials, Medical, Liquid and Solid), waste hauling vehicles and the facilities generating the wastes. Also inspecting petroleum underground storage tanks (UST’s)

- **Plan approval** and inspection of subsurface waste systems and UST’s

- **Supervising** small water systems and the construction and demolition of individual, community water and monitoring wells. Providing oversight to other Environmental Health Programs and certification of backflow device testers

- **Overseeing** sites contaminated with petroleum from leaking underground storage tanks. Mandating and monitoring clean-up efforts at contaminated sites

- **Responding** to Hazardous Materials emergencies on a 24 hour basis

- **Prosecuting** entities that violate laws set forth in the California Health & Safety Code through the Environmental Crimes Task Force

- **Investigating complaints** regarding permitted and unpermitted facilities as well as illegal activities by non-business entities

- **Preparing and participating** in legal proceedings including office and court hearings
District Environmental Services (DES)

DES works to reduce the incidence of illness or injury in Riverside County by focusing on food, water, and vector borne diseases. This is accomplished through routine and complaint related inspections of sites where food is served, sold, or given to the public, as well as public swimming pool and spas. During these inspections we use a combination of education and compliance notices to ensure that public health is protected and the California Health & Safety Code is enforced.

Daily activities include a combination of the following:

- **Conducting routine inspections** of permitted food facilities (restaurants, markets, bars, public school cafeterias, food vehicles, vending machines), temporary public events, swap meets, public/semi public swimming pools and spas (apartments, schools, health clubs, water parks), summer camps, mobile home parks, tobacco retailers.

- **Investigating complaints** regarding permitted and unpermitted facilities, food or water borne illness, vector problems and residential sewage/trash issues.

- **Impound** unsafe food or equipment, issue citations, place liens on properties and administer facility closures when necessary.

- **Monitoring and treating** for vectors that carry pathogens and cause disease (ex. Hantavirus, West-Nile Virus, etc.).

- **Preparing and participating** in legal proceedings such as office hearings and court related actions.
Application Process

What should I do first?

You must have completed at least a bachelor's degree to be considered as an Environmental Health Specialist (EHS) or Hazardous Materials Management Specialist (HMMS).

If applying for an EHS Position:

Once you have your bachelor’s degree you will need to apply for and obtain a certification letter from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), Environmental Health Registration Program. This letter will be required before you can be hired as an EHS (level I) trainee with the County of Riverside or any other jurisdiction in the state. In order to receive this letter you must complete the Environmental Health Specialist Registration application and have your college transcripts evaluated. CDPH uses CPS Human Resource Services for domestic transcript review. CPS will review each candidate’s college transcript to verify that they have satisfied the minimum educational requirements* needed to become an EHS. At minimum level, CDPH requires 30 semester or 45 quarter units in basic science.

- As a general reference, the state’s minimum requirements are listed on page 10 of this guide, see CDPH’s website for a current list of requirements.

Contact the State Environmental Health Specialist Registration Program:

California Department of Public Health
Environmental Health Specialist Registration Program
P.O.Box 997377, MS7404
Sacramento, CA 95899-7377
Phone: (916) 449-5663; Fax: (916) 449-5665
Email: REHSprog@cdph.ca.gov

Download applications and detailed instructions directly from the state website:
www.cdph.ca.gov/CERTLIC/OCCUPATIONS/Pages/REHS.aspx
How do I get the certification letter?

- Application – fill out the Environmental Health Specialist Registration application available on the CDPH website and send it with the non refundable $95.00 application fee to the following address:

  California Department of Public Health  
  Environmental Health Specialist Registration Program  
  P.O.Box 997377, MS 7404  
  Sacramento, CA 95899-7377

- Transcript Evaluation – CPS Human Resource Services currently reviews all transcripts for CDPH. The fee for the evaluation is $245.25.* The application can be downloaded from the CPS website listed below. Mail an official copy of your transcripts along with the completed application and evaluation fee (credit card, cashier’s check, or money order) to:

  CPS Human Resource Services  
  Attn: EHS transcript Evaluation  
  241 Lathrop Way  
  Sacramento, CA 95815  
  www.cps.ca.gov/takeatest/envhealth  
  E-mail: ehs@cps.ca.gov  
  Phone: (916) 263-3600

*Note: Fees are subject to change, see CDPH’s website for current fee information.

The results of each transcript evaluation will be sent to CDPH to be incorporated into the certification letter. The state will then send you the certification letter stating under what terms you may be employed as an EHS. This letter will list what, if any, educational and/or training requirements you must complete before you can take the Registered Environmental Health Specialist (REHS) exam required by CDPH. The certification letter is valid for 30 months from the date of receipt.

The state letter and REHS is not required upon hire for an HMMS I. However, in order to promote to an HMMS III you must obtain your state letter as listed above and pass the REHS exam.
What was that part about a state exam?

The REHS Exam covers information from all areas of Environmental Health that fall under the jurisdiction of an EHS. When you receive your certification letter from the state, you will notice that it has some specific requirements noted on it. These requirements are determined on an individual basis but will generally follow the “Experience and Training” chart listed on the last page of this guide. This chart outlines the estimated amount of job experience and training that you will need before you can take the State REHS Exam. This chart is not considered a substitution for the State Certification Letter. In most cases, with the exception of additional courses required, the experience and training needed to meet the state requirement will be completed on the job as part of your duties as a new employee. Once you pass the REHS exam you will be considered a Registered Environmental Health Specialist. It is mandatory that each DES applicant pass this exam and become registered within 36 months of being hired by an Environmental Health Department. Failure to pass the exam within 36 months of hire as a DES inspector will result in termination (California Health and Safety Code Section 106625).

Does it cost money to take the exam? Can I get reimbursed?

Yes. And Yes!

REHS FEES

- State Registration Exam - Entrance fee for the exam is $126.00* and is due at the time of the exam.
- Registration and Renewal - Once you have passed the State Registration exam you must send $175.00* to CDPH in order to get your registration certificate. The State then collects the same amount as a renewal fee every two years. If the bi-annual fee is not paid by the specified deadline and the registration is allowed to lapse, the REHS exam must be retaken in order to remain registered with the state.
- The EHS is also required to obtain 24 continuing education contact hours approved by an accrediting agency over a 24 month period in order to renew the REHS certification.

*Fees are subject to change, see CDPH’s website for current fee information.

FEE REIMBURSEMENT

Riverside County EHSs are eligible for the following reimbursements:

- Application fees paid to CDPH and CPS Human Resources Services
- REHS Exam fees
- REHS Registration fees
- Bi-annual renewal fees while you are employed with Riverside County

Note: Fees are subject to change, see CDPH’s website for current fee information.
Note: If you voluntarily terminate employment within two years of receiving a reimbursement you will be responsible for paying 50-100% of the amount that was reimbursed.

Once you have obtained your certification letter or have at least applied for it, you can submit your application and resume to the County of Riverside Department of Environmental Health through our online resume submittal system.
How do I apply to the County of Riverside Department of Environmental Health?

To streamline the process, follow these tips:

- Create or update your resume. Since the County of Riverside uses an online system, you must have a current resume to submit in order to start the process.
- To be considered for this position access the County of Riverside Human Resources Job Gateway system [http://www.rc-hr.com/Careers/JobOpenings.aspx](http://www.rc-hr.com/Careers/JobOpenings.aspx) At this link you may search for job openings or, if no openings are presently posted, submit a job interest request as follows:
  - Choose the “careers” link at the top of the navigation page to access a drop down menu and choose “Job Descriptions”
  - Jobs are listed alphabetically; look for “Environmental Health Specialist I, II, or III” or “Environmental/Hazardous Materials Specialist I, II, or III” description
  - Click on the link at the upper right hand corner “Email me when jobs like this become available”
  - Fill out a Job Interest Card and press the “submit request” button at the bottom
  - You will be emailed when the job has an opening, so that you may apply.
  - Your will stay current for 12 months, though it is always advisable to keep checking back to see if the job has any openings.

What should I expect if I am hired?

Most of the first year for the EHS or HMMS is spent learning the job and preparing to take the REHS examination. You will be assigned to one of our eight area offices. Following approximately three months of general training you will begin to work independently within a specific geographical area, or district. Inspections and complaint investigations of the facilities in your district will be your responsibility. You will be expected to be fully independent after the first year.
County Benefits

Mileage
This rate is based on the Federal Government mileage reimbursement rate for business travel.

Medical/Dental/Vision
Choice of several medical and dental plans. Vision coverage is also available.

Pay
Employees are paid every two weeks.

Important Note: The first pay check for a new employee will not be paid until four weeks after date of hire.

Vacation
0-3 years, 80 hours/year; 4-9 years, 120 hours/year; 10 or more years, 160 hours/year. Accrual of vacation hours is limited to three times the current rate.

Sick
Four hours accrual per pay period with unlimited accrual.

Holidays
Normally, county employees will get twelve paid holidays per year.

4/10 Work Schedule
Environmental Health staff have either Friday or Monday off every week. Your standard eighty hour/two week work week is spread out over the remaining eight days. This is also known as a 4/10 work schedule, working 10 hours a day, 4 days a week.

Deferred Compensation
Two voluntary deferred compensation 457 plans are available

Retirement
Riverside County’s primary retirement program is the Public Employee Retirement System (PERS). During your employment 8% of your pay is taken as a pre-tax deduction from your pay check and paid into PERS. The retirement formula used by Riverside County is *2% at sixty. This means that if you retire from Riverside County at age sixty your total number of years on the job is multiplied by two to get the percentage of pay that you will receive from the PERS program. The amount you receive is based on your highest twelve months of earning while working under the PERS program.

*Retirement information subject to change depending on the current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).
Environmental Health Opportunities

Salary Range (approximate)

Environmental Health Specialist:
- EHS I – $50,470 - $79,626
- EHS II – $52,298 - $77,896
- EHS III – $53,803 - $84,808

Hazardous Materials Management Specialist:
- HMMS I - $45,442 - $71,645
- HMMS II – $49,421 - $77,896
- HMMS III - $53,803 - $84,808

Promotional Opportunities

Environmental Health Specialist:
After all education and experience requirements obtained while working as an EHS I have been completed, you will be permitted to take the REHS Examination. The exam is given three times a year in Sacramento and Los Angeles. In Riverside County, once you have passed the REHS Exam you will promote to the EHS II level. After another year on the job you will be eligible, with the approval by your supervisor, for advancement to the EHS III level. All positions beyond that, such as EHS IV (senior level) and Supervising EHS, are promotional and based on a competitive interview process.

Hazardous Materials Management Specialist:
After a year and all education and experience requirements have been obtained while working as an HMMS I, you will be eligible to become an HMMS II with the approval of your supervisor. Once promoted to a HMMS II, and after obtaining the necessary training hours to take the REHS exam (see above sections for details), you may then take the REHS exam. Once the REHS exam is passed you will be promoted to the HMMS III position. All positions beyond that, such as a HMMS IV (senior level) and supervising HMMS IV, are promotional and based on a competitive interview process.
## ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SPECIALIST TRAINEE
### EDUCATION, EXPERIENCE, AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Requirements</th>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Training</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. 30 semester or 45 quarter basic science units including each of the following: General Chemistry Lecture/Lab, General Microbiology Lecture/Lab, General Biological Science Lecture/Lab, Calculus or College Algebra, and General Physics Lecture/Lab.</td>
<td>18 Months</td>
<td>600 Hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>II. 45 semester or 68 quarter basic science units including the following: Three of the required science courses shall include a laboratory: General Chemistry, Organic Chemistry, General Physics, General Microbiology, General Biological Science, Calculus or College Algebra.</td>
<td>12 Months</td>
<td>450 Hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>III. 30 semester or 45 quarter basic science units including each of the following: General Chemistry Lecture/Lab, General Microbiology Lecture/Lab, General Biological Science Lecture/Lab, Calculus or College Algebra, and General Physics Lecture/Lab or Organic Chemistry Lecture/Lab. Three semester or four quarter unit courses in each of the following: Epidemiology, Statistics, Public Administration or Environmental Health Administration and 10 semester or 15 quarter units in environmental health science, including one or more of the following: water quality, waste management, food and consumer protection, housing and institution sanitation, vector control, recreational health, air quality, milk and dairy products, occupational health, electromagnetic radiation, noise control, toxicology, soil science, or land use development.</td>
<td>9 Months</td>
<td>300 Hours</td>
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<td>IV. 45 semester or 68 quarter basic science units including each of the following: General Chemistry Lecture/Lab, General Microbiology Lecture/Lab, General Biological Science Lecture/Lab, Calculus or College Algebra, and General Physics Lecture/Lab or Organic Chemistry Lecture/Lab. Three semester or four quarter unit courses in each of the following: Epidemiology, Statistics, Public Administration or Environmental Health Administration and 10 semester or 15 quarter units in environmental health science, including one or more of the following: water quality, waste management, food and consumer protection, housing and institution sanitation, vector control, recreational health, air quality, milk and dairy products, occupational health, electromagnetic radiation, noise control, toxicology, soil science, or land use development.</td>
<td>6 Months</td>
<td>200 Hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>V. Possess a minimum of a bachelor's degree in environmental health from an institution approved by the Registration Committee, which includes: One year of lecture and laboratory coursework in each of the following: General Chemistry, General Physics, General Biological Science. One semester course in Calculus or College Algebra, Organic Chemistry, General Microbiology with Lab, Public Administration or Environmental Health Administration, Epidemiology, Statistics, and a Field Orientation Course in Environmental Health. Fifteen semester units of environmental health science courses shall be selected from: water quality, waste management, food and consumer protection, housing and institution sanitation, vector control, recreational health, air quality, milk and dairy products, occupational health, electromagnetic radiation, noise control, toxicology, soil science, or land use development.</td>
<td>None Required</td>
<td>None Required</td>
</tr>
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Please visit our website for information on all Environmental Health Programs, health and safety information, and employment opportunities.

www.rivcoeh.org

County of Riverside
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

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