



Health Career Directory

Environmental Health Officer (Public Health Inspector)

Overview

Environmental Health Officers (also known as Public Health Inspectors) investigate, evaluate, and deal with health-related complaints that are connected to environmental factors. To make sure there is compliance with public health legislation and regulations.

Public health inspectors also educate the public about regulations and the need for proper health protection. For example, they may be involved in injury prevention programs, tobacco control programs or other health promotion programs.

Public Health Inspectors are highly skilled individuals whose training generally includes four-year university degree in Environmental Health and certification by the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors. To become nationally certified, public health inspectors must complete a field training practicum, submit a number of reports, and pass the Institute's exam. Some inspectors have extra training in areas such as biology, toxicology, and epidemiology.

Main Roles:

Public health inspectors do some or all of the following duties:

- Inspect the sanitary conditions of restaurants, hotels, schools, hospitals and other public facilities or institutions
- Conduct surveys and monitor the natural environment to identify sources of pollution
- Collect samples of water for analysis
- Measure physical, biological and chemical workplace hazards. Also, conduct safety and environmental inspections
- Investigate health and safety related complaints, spills of hazardous chemicals, outbreaks of diseases or poisonings and workplace accidents
- Inspect workplaces to ensure that equipment, materials, and production processes do not present a safety or health risk to employees or to the general public
- Develop, implement, and evaluate health and safety programs and plans
- Put into practice procedures to fine or to close an establishment that break municipal, provincial or federal regulations
- Provide advice and give training programs to employers, employees and the general public on issues that relate to public health, environmental protection or workplace safety.

They inspect public and private facilities such as:

- food processing, preparation, and service establishments

- waste management systems
- workplaces
- rental housing
- hotels, motels, and other public accommodations
- schools
- child care facilities
- Long-term care facilities
- animal facilities
- private and public water supplies
- swimming pools, whirlpools, and water spray parks
- public beaches and recreational camps
- places people go to be entertained
- personal services facilities (for example, tattoo shops)
- work camps.

In general, public health inspectors assess the situation, provide advice, and ensure compliance with policies and regulations regarding:

- food and waterborne communicable diseases
- insect and rodent control
- food problems and institutional cleanliness
- public health complaints
- outdoor and indoor air quality
- polluted land.

Who is suited to become an Environmental Health Officer?

Public health inspectors are most effective when they have the following skills and characteristics:

- good social skills
- good written and oral communication skills
- good time management skills
- good problem solving and decision making skills.

Who employs Environmental Health Officers?

Most public health inspectors are employed by local public health authorities. Some are employed in:

- regional, provincial and national health departments
- environmental and pollution control departments
- sewage and water treatment plants
- agencies interested in industrial health and hygiene or food sanitation
- solid waste management agencies.

Salary

Salary Range - \$53,198 - \$75,043

Required Training and Education to become an Environmental Health Officer

British Columbia Institute of Technology Program Environmental Health (Public Health Inspector) Program:

- The aim of the program is to prepare students to enter the field of environmental health as professional and effective members of a multi-disciplinary health team. Graduates will be able to recognize, evaluate, and manage environmental factors that impact human health. Graduates will also have the knowledge and skills needed to meet a growing range of environmental health roles and responsibilities. The main goals of the program are to:
 - prepare graduates with the expanded knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to meet the existing and evolving needs of employers, the profession, and the community
 - foster in graduates a commitment to life-long learning and professional development
 - provide an appropriate combination of specialty, research, and multi-disciplinary courses that will encourage the development of critical thinking, problem solving, decision making, and communication skills.

The cross-disciplinary curriculum includes general studies in health and the health engineering sciences, liberal studies, health care management, math and the physical and social sciences. Students learn about the many health hazards in the environment. They then develop skills to measure, evaluate, and recommend controls for these hazards. Instructional modes include lectures, labs, guided learning, field trips, directed studies, and practical experiences. The program provides a firm foundation of education and experience in the sciences and relates to reducing injuries and the protection of human health.

Industry (Practical) Experience

Practical experience is a significant component of this educational program. It consists of field trips, projects, and hands-on activities. It also includes three months of off-campus and directly related experience in an appropriate agency (i.e. Practicum). Additional information for the Practicum:

- This course is required for graduation.
- You need a valid driver's licence and access to a vehicle.
- The program usually assigns students to practicum sites.
- The Vancouver area offers a limited number of positions, so you may have to go somewhere else.
- The positions are not paid.
- You are responsible for any relocation costs (if applicable), accommodation, and transportation costs to the practicum location.
- A criminal record search may be required.

Certification Process in Public Health Inspection (Canada)

The Certificate in Public Health Inspection (Canada), CPHI(C), is granted by the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors to those candidates who fulfill the requirements set forth in the Regulations Respecting the Certificate in Public Health Inspection (Canada) and Governing the Board of Certification of Public Health Inspectors. This Certificate is a certificate of qualification and is intended to meet the needs of the provinces, municipalities, federal government, and other employers of qualified Public Health Inspectors.

Career Advancement

A growing number of public health inspectors are employed in the private sector. Some work as private consultants.

Experienced inspectors may progress from staff inspector positions, to environmental health specialist and senior inspector positions. It is also possible for experienced inspectors to advance to chief inspector or director positions.

Resources

Education Programs

[British Columbia Institute of Technology](http://www.bcit.ca/study/programs/8500dbtech), Burnaby, BC
<http://www.bcit.ca/study/programs/8500dbtech>

[Ryerson University](http://www.ryerson.ca/sophe/), Toronto, ON:
<http://www.ryerson.ca/sophe/>

[Concordia University College of Alberta](http://concordia.ab.ca/public-health-graduate-certificate/), Edmonton, AB
<http://concordia.ab.ca/public-health-graduate-certificate/>

[Cape Breton University](http://faculty.cbu.ca/publichealth/home.asp), Sydney, NS
<http://faculty.cbu.ca/publichealth/home.asp>

[First Nations University of Canada](http://www.fnuniv.ca/programs), Regina, Saskatchewan
<http://www.fnuniv.ca/programs>

Financial assistance and bursaries

For information about Canada student loans and grants, please visit:
http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/learning/canada_student_loan/index.shtml

Associations

Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors:
<http://www.ciphi.ca/home>

Environmental Health Foundation of Canada:
<http://www.ehfc.ca/>