

California Department of Public Health Registered Environmental Health Specialists

Training & Experience

Environmental Health Specialist Trainees generally are trained and gain experience through employment with local environmental health departments. Employment opportunities are listed on county web sites and at [CEHA](http://www.ceha.org/employmentjobs.html) (<http://www.ceha.org/employmentjobs.html>) and [CCDEH](http://www.CCDEH.com/jobs/env-health-haz-mat-jobs) (www.CCDEH.com/jobs/env-health-haz-mat-jobs). Training is counted in hours per program and all applicants shall complete basic training in at least 6 program elements. Experience is measured in months of full time employment. Specific job related training and experience are required prior to admittance into the REHS exam.

The first three elements must be selected from the following:

- Food Protection
- Solid waste management
- Liquid waste management
- Water supply
- Housing and institutions
- Vector control
- Hazardous materials management
- Blood borne Pathogens (Body Art)
- Bathing places
- Underground storage tanks

The second three elements may include any of the elements not selected above or any of the following:

- Air sanitation
- Safety and accident prevention
- Land development and use
- Disaster sanitation
- Electromagnetic radiation
- Milk and dairy products
- Noise control
- Occupational health
- Rabies and animal disease control

There are five combinations of education and experience that provide avenues for entrance to the REHS exam. The options vary depending on the specific course work completed by the applicant. Only graduates from an approved university program are eligible for Option V.

OPTION	Total Experience	Training Hours in 3 Primary Elements /1	Training Hours in All Secondary Elements/2	Total Training Hours/3
I	18 months	120 each	240 total	600
II	12 months	90 each	180 total	450
III	9 months	60 each	120 total	300
IV	6 months	40 each	81 total	201
V	None			

/1 Each of the primary elements shall equal 20% of the training hours.

/2 Total training hours in the secondary elements shall equal 40% of the training hours.

/3 Field instruction with direct supervision will be provided by a REHS for a minimum of 150 hours.

All training is counted as part of the experience requirement. Experience shall be full time work for a governmental or non-profit agency. Experience in a private company may be applicable for 6 months in Option I. Previous training and experience may be credited toward the experience or training requirement if determined by the Department to be equivalent to a local environmental health jurisdiction. Training is accomplished by assignments chosen by the employer under the supervision of a REHS. Trainees are limited to a three -year appointment after which they must pass the REHS exam or be dismissed as a trainee. Training **shall** consist of a minimum of 20 hours per month field instruction with direct supervision by a REHS in the first 6 months and independent time with adequate supervision and guidance. Training **may** include office training, pre-testing and post-testing, lectures, and office time for study and review.

Training Activities

The EHS trainee assumes progressive responsibility for conducting inspections and investigations. Training opportunities provided by private companies, such as “HAZWOPPER”, food safety certification, or Manager of Landfill Operations (MOLO) are acceptable training options, as are training venues provided by public entities such as the California Integrated Waste Management Board; Cal EPA; Mosquito Abatement Districts; University of California Extension; Air Resources Board; or the Regional Water Quality Control Boards.

Training activities may consist of the following inspection and reporting techniques:

- joint initial inspections to observe the inspection process;
- conducting inspections with direct one-to-one REHS supervision;
- conducting independent inspections followed by review and consultation with REHS oversight;
- collecting environmental samples;
- operating monitoring equipment, including calibration and cleaning;
- documenting conditions with properly identified photographs;
- reviewing facility records for required documentation;
- writing reports and formal correspondence;
- phone calls and personal interviews;
- use of “chain of custody;”
- issuing Notices of Violation, Compliance Orders and Citations;
- making referrals to other agencies;
- researching and reviewing statutes, regulations and code sections;
- conducting disease surveillance; and
- investigating nuisance, public or environmental complaints.