

Environmental Health Officer Benchmark 2 Education, Training, & Professional Development Supplemental Guidance

The intent of this document is not to list every possible degree, credential, or training. The degrees, credentials, and trainings listed here are for examples and are in no particular order of importance/priority. EHOs may find other degrees, credentials/certifications and trainings useful in their jobs. This document should not discourage EHOs from pursuing Public Health areas of expertise not listed here. This document is to be used to assist EHOs throughout their USPHS careers.

Note: bold font in this document aligns with the 2021 ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICER (EHO) PROMOTION BENCHMARKS.

Factor: Degrees

Bachelor's degree and Master's/Doctoral degree (or pursuing) from a regionally or nationally accredited institution that contributes to current or future PHS assignments.

- **Examples of advanced degree fields include, but are not limited to: Public Health, Health Care Administration, Environmental Health, Industrial Hygiene, Information Systems and Technology, Health Physics, Emergency Preparedness and Response (MBA, MPA, MS, MPH or comparable master's degree; PhD, DrPH, or comparable doctorate degree).**
- **Additional Degrees should hold value to advance the mission of the agency and/or PHS. This can be demonstrated in the COER, OS, and/or CV.**

Why it is important: The new skills and knowledge you gain from your graduate education can improve your ability to do your best work and better position you for more opportunities for advancement in your career.

While getting a graduate degree is a solid step to advancing your career, it is also a valuable way to enrich your life. The experience of intensely studying a subject about which you are passionate not only enhances your knowledge, but it is also teaches you to focus and follow through with a long-term project. In fact, although it may seem cliché, the time, energy and intellect you apply to your education plays a large role in what you reap from the experience.

What is meant by “contributes to current or future PHS assignments”: EHOs represent a very diverse profession asked to perform a wide range of duties and tasks. Various degrees can hold value and can be specifically used to advance the mission of the particular agency, and the Public Health Service beyond your commissioning degree. If an obvious connection to your certification (or Degree on first page) and your current duties is not apparent, please offer further explanation how the additional certification(s) have helped you in your current assignment or will help you be successful in future assignments or emergency response deployments. Describe, if necessary, in your OS, ROS, and/or COER.

Factor: Certifications, Credentialing, and Licensure

Current (or pursuing) professional environmental health credential (REHS/RS) or industrial hygiene, safety, or health physics certification (CIH, CSP, or CHP). If officer has more than one of these credentials or certifications it will satisfy the additional certification noted below. Officer is also pursuing an additional professional certification or graduate certificate or specialization in environmental health, occupational health, or industrial hygiene from an appropriately accredited school of public health.

- **Examples of additional certifications can include, but are not limited to: CHMM, HEM, CPH, CEM, CICP, CP-FS, CCFR, NIMS SOFR Type I, OSHA 24- or 40-hr HAZWOPER, Healthy Homes Specialist, etc., or an agency specific certification (e.g., FDA certifications such as Certification in Medical Devices, Seafood, Blood Banks or Drugs).**
- **Additional Certifications should hold value to advance the mission of the agency and/or PHS. These can be demonstrated in the COER, OS and/or CV.**

Why it is important: We are the EHO Category. Corps (and Senior EHO) leadership expect EHOs to have basic knowledge and skills in Environmental Health (EH). This is especially true when it comes to potential Corps deployments during disaster responses. In previous response efforts, State Health Departments have specifically asked for Registered EH professionals, so having our officers registered lends credibility to the Corps. EH is the branch of public health protection that is concerned with all aspects of the natural and built environment that may affect human health. Credentialing is a process by which a non-government agency validates, based upon predetermined standards, an individual's qualifications and knowledge for practice in environmental health and protection. Many environmental health professionals hold credentials to perform their work in state and local agencies. Some credentials are for generalists and some are for specialists. Credentialed individuals are viewed as leaders, mentors, and role models in environmental health and protection. Studying for and maintaining a credential keeps you up to date on the latest developments in your specialty and demonstrates your commitment to life-long learning.

What is meant by “environmental health-related sub-discipline”: EH is a very diverse field where professionals perform a variety of tasks such as research, investigations, outreach and education, environmental cleanups and more. Various certifications can hold value and can be specifically used to advance the mission of the particular agency, and the Public Health Service, beyond that of Sanitarian. If an obvious connection to your certification and your duties is not apparent, please offer further explanation how the additional certification(s) have helped you (or will help you) be successful. Describe, if necessary, in your OS, ROS, and/or COER.

EH-related sub-discipline	Example credential/certification(s)	Credential/certification authority
General Environmental Health	REHS/RS (Registered Environmental Health Specialist/Registered Sanitarian) or State-specific/Professional designation**	National Environmental Health Association (http://www.neha.org); State Professional Examination Service (e.g. http://www.geha-online.org)
Air Quality	CIAQM (Certified Indoor Air Quality Manager)	National Registry of Environmental Professionals (https://www.nrep.org)
Built Environment	HHS (Healthy Homes Specialist)	National Environmental Health Association (http://www.neha.org) developed in partnership with the National Center for Healthy Housing (http://www.nchh.org)
Water (Recreational, Surface, Drinking, Ground)	CPO (Certified Pool Operator); AFO (Aquatic Facility Operator)	National Swimming Pool and Spa Foundation (http://www.nspf.org); National Recreation and Park Association (http://www.nrpa.org)
Hazardous Substances/Specific Hazards	24- or 40-hr HAZWOPER First Responder, CHMM (Certified Hazardous Materials Manager); Lead Inspector/Risk Assessor, Asbestos	Pro Board (http://www.theproboard.org) Certified NFPA 472; Institute of Hazardous Materials Management (http://www.ihmm.org); Environmental Protection Agency (http://www2.epa.gov/lead/epa-lead-safe-certification-program); States
Solid Waste/Hazardous Waste	SEO (Sewage Enforcement Officer)	States - PA (http://www.psats.org/subpage.php?pageid=SEOAcademy)
Toxicology	DABT (Diplomate of the American Board of Toxicology)	American Board of Toxicology (http://www.abtox.org)
Industrial Hygiene/ Institutional Environmental Health	CIH (Certified Industrial Hygienist)	American Board of Industrial Hygiene (http://www.abih.org)
Emergency Management	AEM/CEM (Associate Emergency Manager and Certified Emergency Manager); CHEP (Certified Healthcare Emergency Professional)	International Association of Emergency Managers (http://www.iaem.com); International Board for Certification of Safety Managers (https://www.ibfcsm.org/chep.php)
Injury Prevention	CPST (Certified Child Passenger Safety Technician); CPSI (Certified Playground Safety Inspector)	Safe Kids Worldwide (http://cert.safekids.org); National Recreation and Park Association (http://www.nrpa.org)
Epidemiology/ Infection Control	CIC (Certified in Infection Control)	Certification Board of Infection Control and Epidemiology, Inc. (http://www.cbic.org)

EH-related sub-discipline	Example credential/certification(s)	Credential/certification authority
Occupational Safety	CSP (Certified Safety Professional)	Board of Certified Safety Professionals (http://www.bcsp.org)
Food Safety	CP-FS (Certified Professional-Food Safety), CCFS (Certified in Comprehensive Food Safety), CPFM (Certified Professional Food Manager)	National Environmental Health Association (http://www.neha.org/professional-development/credentials)
	CPFM (Certified Professional Food Manager)	Prometrics https://www.prometric.com/en-us/clients/foodsafety/Pages/testing-cpfm.aspx
Vector Control	Certified Pesticide Applicator	Specific to individual States
Radiological Health/radiation	CHP (Certified Health Physicist)	American Board of Health Physics (https://www.aahp-abhp.org/abhp/home)
Ergonomics	CPE (Certified Professional Ergonomist), (CHFEP) Certified Human Factors Engineering Professional	Board of Certification in Professional Ergonomics (http://www.bcpe.org); Oxford Research Institute (http://www.oxfordresearch.org)
Public Health	CPH (Certified in Public Health)	National Board of Public Health Examiners (https://www.nbphe.org)

*Note – This list is not intended to be inclusive of all specialties or credentials/certifications.

**State vs. National certifications: Each State may have adopted standards developed from the current body of knowledge and accepted practices necessary to demonstrate competency and professional standards in the area of concentration. Each state may have its own rules and procedures for maintaining certification/licensure. Not all sub-disciplines have a national certification. Similarities and differences between the two processes of certification can create confusion and misunderstanding. What is clear is that both are intended to ensure quality and maintain professional competence in the area of certification.

Factor: Public and Environmental Health Training/Practicum Experience.

Note: Document in Continuing Education Summary in eOPF.

Course work, continuing education, or training experience in environmental health or relates to job and contributes to current or future PHS assignments.

- **Examples include, but are not limited to: Health Care Management, Information Systems Technology, Emergency Preparedness and Response, Management and Leadership Skills.**
- **All training should be documented in CE Summary in e-OPF.**
- **Additional Trainings should hold value to advance the mission of the agency and/or PHS. Value and purpose can be demonstrated in the COER, OS and/or CV.**

Why it is important: Training simply refers to the process of acquiring the essential skills required for a certain job. It targets specific goals, for instance understanding a process and operating a certain machine or system. Career development, on the other side, puts emphasis on broader skills, which are applicable in a wide range of situations. This includes decision making, thinking creatively and managing people.

EHOs are responsible for carrying out measures for protecting public health, including administering and enforcing legislation related to environmental health and providing support to minimize health and safety hazards. They are involved in a variety of activities, for example inspecting food facilities, investigating public health nuisances, and implementing disease control. Environmental health officers are focused on prevention, consultation, investigation, and education of the community regarding health risks and maintaining a safe environment.

EHOs bring to the position an understanding of microbiology, risk assessment, environmental science and technology, food science, as well as the skills and knowledge related to the tracking and control of communicable disease. They must also have strong investigative skills and a thorough understanding of the application of legislation related to public health and the environment. Working in partnership with Government Ministries (such as Health, Agriculture and Environment), local municipalities, businesses, community groups, other agencies and individual members of the community, the EHO plays a major role in protecting public health.

What is meant by “contributes to current or future PHS assignments”: EHOs represent a very diverse profession asked to perform a wide range of duties and tasks. Various trainings can hold value and can be specifically used to advance the mission of the particular agency, and the Public Health Service beyond your commissioning degree. If an obvious connection to your training and your current duties is not apparent, please offer further explanation how the training has helped you in your current assignment or will help you be successful in future assignments or emergency response deployments. Describe, if necessary, in your OS, ROS, and/or COER.

The following are some examples of specific training that may be useful to EHOs:

HAZWOPER – Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response refers to many types of hazardous waste operations and emergency services conducted to satisfy 29 CFR 1910.120 (OSHA)

IRCT – The purpose of the Incident Response Coordination Team Basic Course is to prepare you to respond effectively within the HHS framework when you deploy with an IRCT. The training materials and information in the IRCT Basic Course are intended to provide the analytical tools necessary for proper and effective coordination within the Federal government, within HHS, and within the IRCT. Key logistical responsibilities, including travel procedures, reimbursement, and equipment are explained to facilitate both deployment and demobilization tasks.

ICS – Incident Command System is a standardized on-scene incident management concept designed specifically to allow responders to adopt an integrated organizational structure equal to the complexity and demands of any single incident or multiple incidents without being hindered by jurisdictional boundaries.

SOFR (Safety Officer Training) – The Safety Officer oversees all health and safety aspects of a response while on a mission. This includes the anticipation, identification, and assessment of hazardous and unsafe conditions, the personal safety of members, all Areas of Operations, as well as patient’s safety.