

Agency Points of Contact

Indian Health Service

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Centers for Disease Control & Prevention

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US Coast Guard

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Food & Drug Administration

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USDA Food Safety Inspection Service

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Environmental Health Officer: Securing Your First Assignment



Welcome Aboard!

Congratulations on becoming boarded in the United States Public Health Service (USPHS). You have been found to meet the high standards of the Environmental Health Officer (EHO) Category.

Bravo on this excellent achievement! You will now need to find a position with one of the Department of Health & Human Services agencies or another branch of the federal government that hire USPHS Environmental Health Officers.

Search Advice

Be Proactive. Review the agencies listed below and call their points of contact where you may be interested in working. Vacancies can be found at USAJOBS.gov and the agency contacts may also have information on vacancies not yet posted. Successful officers manage their careers, and this will be the first of many opportunities to show initiative.

Be Adventurousome. The primary focus of the USPHS Commissioned Corps is:

1. Service to underserved and vulnerable populations
2. Service in locations that are difficult to fill
3. Positions that require rapid response
4. Positions that regularly engage with other uniformed services
5. Positions that meet a critical public health need

In fact, new calls to duty must fit one of the aforementioned five criteria. So be willing to take an assignment that will challenge you and make you grow.

Be Persistent. The federal application and selection process can be complex. In some cases, the candidate may apply, interview and be hired within a few weeks. However, many times the process takes much longer. We encourage you to be patient, but persistent along the way.

Agencies

Indian Health Service (IHS)

Whether assisting an Alaska Native village with a water treatment system in the interior of Alaska, teaching food safety in a Navajo chapter house, or coordinating a reservation-wide vector-borne disease outbreak response, your experience in IHS will be valuable and rewarding. The IHS has entry level opportunities for EHOs to work as community-based officers providing critical services to under-served native populations. Many EHOs serve their entire USPHS careers in the IHS.

United States Coast Guard (USCG)

EHOs provide both ship- and shore-based industrial hygiene and general environmental health services as uniformed Coast Guard officers. Most entry level assignments are found in Norfolk, VA with second assignments located in coastal cities throughout the US. USCG prefers officers in their second assignment, but some entry level positions are available.

Agency for Toxic Substances & Disease Registry (ATSDR)

EHOs investigate the health effects of hazardous materials from superfund sites. Officers also make health recommendations for protecting the public from harmful environmental exposures. Officers are based out of Atlanta, and in Regional Offices throughout the US. ATSDR offers both entry and senior officer assignments.

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC)

The CDC consists of 14 world-renowned Centers, Institutes and Offices. Two areas where most EHOs work are the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and the National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH). EHOs at NIOSH conduct research to prevent workplace injury and illness, and at NCEH work within an array of emergency and environmental health service programs such as Chemical Weapons Elimination, Healthy Homes, Environmental Health Services and Vessel Sanitation. Most officers are Atlanta-based, and some are assigned to Washington, D.C., Ft. Collins, CO and Fort Lauderdale, FL.

National Park Service (NPS)

Officers assigned to the NPS may inspect a public water system in Zion National Park one day and evaluate the food safety of river raft guides in the Grand Canyon the next. EHOs are typically based out of regional offices in cities including Atlanta, Denver and Washington, D.C.

Extensive overnight travel is common. The NPS offers a few entry level positions but prefers experienced officers.

National Institutes of Health (NIH)

Located on the wooded campus of America's premier medical research facility in Bethesda, MD, EHOs provide industrial hygiene, radiation protection and complex hazardous waste management to labs and clinical environments. NIH prefers officers in a second assignment, but some entry level positions are available.

Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

The FDA ensures safety of food, pharmaceuticals and medical devices. EHOs serve as Consumer Safety Officers inspecting medical device manufacturers and food products bound for interstate commerce. Along with the IHS, the FDA accounts for a significant level of entry level positions. Assignments can be found in most major cities in the U.S.

USDA – Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS)

The Food Safety Inspection Service provides America a first line of defense against diseased and adulterated food products. EHOs serve as Consumer Safety Inspectors at food processing plants or Import Inspectors at ports or other points of entry. The FSIS employs over 7,000 inspectors nationwide.

All Other Agencies – USAJobs.gov

While the above mentioned agencies hire the majority of USPHS Environmental Health Officers, EHOs can be found throughout the federal government including the Environmental Protection Agency, Bureau of Prisons, Occupational Safety and Health Administration and Immigration & Customs Enforcement. The best way to find these positions is to conduct an advanced search of USAJobs.gov by title and series using the following:

Job Title	Series
Food Inspection	1863
Safety & Occupational Health	0018
Sanitarian	0688
Environmental Health	0601
Consumer Safety	0696
Industrial Hygiene	0690

Note HHS, DOI, EPA and USCG routinely hire PHS Officers. Other agencies state if the position is open to officers in the announcement.