

Occupational Health and Safety Professional

■ Job Description

Occupational health and safety professionals are responsible for the prevention of work-related accidents and diseases, injuries from unsafe products and practices, property losses from accidents and fires, and adverse effects of industrial processes on the environment. Occupational health and safety professionals have a variety of responsibilities, which fall into four basic areas: (1) identification and evaluation of hazardous conditions and practices, (2) development of ways to control hazards, (3) communication of hazard-control information to workers and management, and (4) continual measurement of hazard-control systems.

■ Job Settings

City, county, state, and national public health offices; hospitals; research laboratories; industry; and colleges and universities

■ Projected Need

Average growth in the employment of occupational health and safety professionals is expected nationwide through 2010. Demand for these specialists will be created by the public's interest in safety in the workplace. Despite the expected growth, government funding determines the number of jobs in this occupation. Funding is likely to be affected by the economy and by the popularity of health and safety programs.

■ Salaries

Wages vary by employer, specialty, and the worker's level of experience.

Nationally, the median wage for occupational health and safety specialists is \$21.56 per hour. Half of all health and safety specialists earn between \$16.11 and \$27.33 per hour.

In Illinois, salaries range from \$15.58 per hour for entry-level health and safety specialists to \$26.14 per hour for experienced workers. Median wage is \$21.68 per hour.

■ Related Careers

Physician, pharmacologist, toxicologist, and engineer

■ Differences in Training

Occupational health and safety professionals must have at least a bachelor's degree in engineering or in one of the physical or biological sciences. Employers usually prefer a bachelor's or master's degree specifically related to occupational safety and health, such as safety engineering or management, industrial hygiene, fire-protection engineering, public health, or health physics.

■ Related Educational Programs

The programs of study listed below are the recommended areas of study to pursue for this occupation. Clicking on these will lead to files that show in-state and national schools that offer these programs.

The following link(s) will take you to CIS for more information. CIS requires an ID and password that can be obtained at <http://cis.ilworkinfo.com/loginhelp/>. You must log into CIS prior to clicking on the links below.

[Occupational Safety and Health](#)

■ Resources

Society for Public Health Education
750 First Street NE, Suite 910
Washington, DC 20002
Phone: 202.408.9804
E-mail: info@sophe.org
<http://www.sophe.org>

U.S. Department of Labor
<http://www.osha.gov>
Click on "Search/A-Z Index." Select "Occupational Health Professionals."

American Industrial Hygiene Association
2700 Prosperity Avenue, Suite 250
Fairfax, VA 22031
Phone: 703.849.8888
E-mail: infonet@aiha.org
<http://www.aiha.org>
Click on "About AIHA" in the left side bar. Select "What is Industrial Hygiene?"

The AIHF annually awards scholarships to graduate and doctoral students studying industrial hygiene.

