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## What is an Environmental Health Officer?

Environmental health officers develop, regulate, enforce and monitor laws and regulations governing public health, building, and environmental management, in order to promote good health, hygiene and environmental practices.

## Roles of an Environmental Health officer

- Investigate complaints about food and make sure that food is hygienically prepared, stored, served and sold by inspecting places such as shops, cafes, food processing factories and dairies, and by collecting food samples for chemical and microbiological analysis
- Conduct food hygiene education seminars and other community health education programs for students and food handlers
- Monitor and control water, air and noise pollution and collect water samples for chemical and microbiological analysis to make sure that it complies with standards
- Prepare policy documents, guidelines, pamphlets and brochures relating to environmental health matters
- Undertake risk assessment for anything that might impact on the community's health
- Manage immunisation campaigns targeting infants, children and adults
- Prepare and conduct health promotion programs for students, community groups and industry
- Investigate and manage significant incidents concerning public health like outbreaks of infectious or communicable diseases such as hepatitis A, legionella or dengue fever
- Audit and license public entertainment areas by assessing fire safety, seating capacity and sanitary facilities
- Assess building and development applications to make sure that they comply with environmental and health standards
- Ensure that houses, caravan parks and other public buildings and locations are clean and not overcrowded, and have adequate ventilation, lighting, washing and toilet facilities and garbage disposal systems
- Inspect and license premises, such as tattoo parlours and acupuncturists, where skin penetration and body piercing occurs, and inspect hairdressing and beauty salons
- Provide communities with advice, reports and expertise regarding environmental health matters or anything that may affect the health and wellbeing of the community
- Initiate and conduct environmental health impact assessments
- Maintain records, prepare statistics, write reports, and give evidence in court cases where health or environmental regulations have been violated
- Investigate building blocks and proposed subdivisions in unsewered areas for suitability of on-site waste water disposal
- Assess the risks associated with poisonous materials within the local community
- Manage the collection and destruction of used syringes from doctors, dentists and nursing homes
- Supervise the exhumation of bodies and inspect mortuaries
- Design and develop public information campaigns using newspapers, radio and television and/or pamphlets, posters and other printed material.

## Career Opportunities

The main employers are local government councils. Environmental health officers are also employed by the Australian Defence Force, state and territory health and environment departments and area health services, major food corporations, international airlines and overseas aid organisations, with growing opportunities elsewhere in the private sector

## Qualifications Required

To become an environmental health officer it is necessary to study science or applied science at university with a major in environmental health.

## **Supervision Required**

A comprehensive orientation program is provided for all new staff members with ongoing support.

## **Personal skills required of an Environmental Health Officer**

- Good communication skills
- Good negotiation skills
- Tact and courtesy
- Able to be firm but impartial when making decisions
- Be resourceful
- Have initiative
- Good problem-solving skills
- Able to work as a part of a team
- Able to work independently.