

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Registered Environmental Health Specialists (REHS), also known as *Sanitarians* or *Health Inspectors*, are key members of communities ensuring public health protection by enforcing local, state and federal environmental health laws. Environmental Health is an ever-growing and challenging field that requires the REHS to have a multi-faceted skill set to ensure communities have clean water, clean air and safe food.



In this wide-ranging and complex profession, environmental health specialists regularly inspect restaurants, drinking water systems, public pools and waste water systems to prevent outbreaks of infectious disease and other public health or environmental problems.

*Waste water specialists perform duties in the field of waste water treatment, disposal and re-use where soil is used in the final stage of treatment. (*this is a separate registration)

DID YOU KNOW?

As of 04/2016 Oregon had
235 REHS, 26 EHS Trainees
and 9 Waste Water Specialists.

REHS' are persons who by education, training and experience in the sanitary, biological and physical sciences are qualified to perform duties in environmental sanitation, including but not limited to scientific investigation, counseling, education and enforcement.

Environmental sanitation is the art and science of applying sanitary, biological and physical science principals and knowledge to improve and control the environment and factors therein for the protection of the health and welfare of the public.

EDUCATION

To become a Registered Environmental Health Specialist you must have at least a bachelor's degree with a minimum of 45 quarter hours in science courses related to environmental sanitation (biology, chemistry, soil science, physical science, etc.). In addition, applicants must apprentice for 3840 hours under the supervision of a REHS, pass a comprehensive exam and maintain 20 hours of CEUs every 2 years.

REGULATION

REHS' frequently work for public agencies such as county health departments, Oregon Department of Agriculture, Department of Environmental Quality, Oregon Health Authority or Federal agencies at the CDC, EPA, FDA, and USDA.

REHS' also work for industry, academia, non-profits and the armed forces. Whenever human health and the environment intersect, you will find REHS professionals working to keep people and communities safe.

In Oregon, Environmental Health Specialists must be registered by the Health Licensing Office (HLO) which is a state department of licensing and regulation that protects the public from unauthorized, unqualified or unprofessional practice.

