

New York State Department of Civil Service
DIVISION OF CLASSIFICATION & COMPENSATION

Classification Standard

Occ. Code 4414100

Public Health Specialist 1, Grade 18 4414100
Public Health Specialist 2, Grade 23 4414200
Public Health Specialist 3, Grade 27 4414300

Brief Description of Class Series

Positions in this title series enforce the provisions of Public Health Law (PHL); New York Codes, Rules, and Regulations (NYCRR); and other State and federal laws, rules, and regulations relating to community environmental health, sanitation, safety, and healthcare facilities. Incumbents conduct on-site inspections and surveys to evaluate environmental health conditions and/or regulatory and code compliance to improve the health, safety, and wellbeing of individuals and the public; and to provide technical assistance to local health departments/units (LHU), healthcare facilities, and other organizations. Positions also conduct investigations and assessments of environmentally contaminated sites.

Public Health Specialists are classified in regional and Central Office settings within the Department of Health's (DOH) Center for Environmental Health (CEH), within the Office of Public Health.

Distinguishing Characteristics

Public Health Specialist 1: full performance level; independently performs inspection and environmental health technical assistance functions requiring in-depth knowledge of laws, rules, and regulations; and may supervise Public Health Specialist Trainees and other staff.

Public Health Specialist 2: first supervisory level; supervises Public Health Specialist 1 and other professional staff; and plans, directs, and reviews work.

Public Health Specialist 3: managerial level; serves as a section head; directs environmental health, sanitation, and safety programs; develops, implements, and evaluates programs, policies, and procedures; and supervises Public Health Specialist 2 and other professional and clerical staff.

Illustrative Tasks

Public Health Specialist 1

Performs functions to support environmental health, sanitation, and safety programs.

Under supervision of a Public Health Specialist 2, conducts on-site inspections of facilities and sites to ensure the health, welfare, and safety of the public, and compliance with regulations and standards, and records observations. Examples of facilities and sites include food service establishments, hotels, campgrounds, schools, parks, residences, hazardous waste sites, and beaches.

Evaluates observations and drafts finding reports to cite deficiencies, recommend correction action to program management, and inform facility operators of deficiencies and corrective action.

Conducts follow-up visits to ensure that deficiencies are resolved.

Reviews permit applications for compliance with environmental health requirements and recommends issuance of permits.

Trains facility operators and LHU staff on environmental health, sanitation, and safety issues.

Presents findings at enforcement proceedings.

Conducts environmental sampling; collects food, water, and environmental samples for laboratory testing; and interprets laboratory reports.

Investigates and responds to complaints and public health emergencies at assigned facilities and sites, including illnesses, lead poisoning, asbestos, hazardous waste, drownings, fires, floods, power failures, and unsanitary conditions.

Reviews environmental health data submitted by LHUs to ensure that departments meet electronic reporting requirements and confirms results with LHU staff.

Reviews non-engineering components of facility and site plans to determine their compliance with environmental regulations, standards, and patient safety and care standards, and to advise on required approvals; obtains assistance from DOH engineering, architectural, and management staff for approvals.

May supervise and train Public Health Specialist Trainees.

Public Health Specialist 2

Performs the duties of a Public Health Specialist 1.

Supervises a team of Public Health Specialist 1 and other professional staff in the performance of on-site inspections, and the provision of technical assistance to facility operators, LHUs, and other organizations.

Conducts site visits for issues that require special attention.

Follows up on uncorrected deficiencies reported by staff, and ensures deficiencies are resolved.

Presents inspection and survey findings at enforcement proceedings requiring an extensive knowledge of environmental regulations and standards.

Provides technical consultation and training to LHU staff and other organizations to ensure uniform application of regulations, provides feedback on submitted reports, and evaluates departments' progress towards achieving performance goals and objectives.

Reviews and proposes revisions to local codes to ensure they are consistent with statewide directives and requirements.

Reviews and provides comment on proposed environmental health regulations, manuals, and policy and guidance documents.

May function as a regional coordinator for community environmental health, sanitation, and safety programs, by overseeing a program in an assigned geographic region, which includes evaluating program performance, reporting outcomes to management, and supervising Public Health Specialists 1 and other staff.

Public Health Specialist 3

Develops, implements, and monitors statewide environmental health, sanitation, and safety programs; and develops program budgets for review by fiscal management staff.

Supervises a Central Office section of Public Health Specialist 2 and other professional and clerical staff.

Establishes and evaluates program priorities and goals; provides progress reports to Environmental Health Program Managers and management.

Develops statewide procedures for evaluating facility and site compliance with codes, rules, and regulations; develops guides, and policy and procedural documents; and communicates with regional staff to ensure uniform inspection and enforcement practices.

Proposes changes to PHL and State and local codes, rules, and regulations; implements approved changes statewide.

Assesses statewide training needs for LHUs and DOH staff and develops and implements training programs.

Represents DOH at meetings and conferences as a program expert and reports outcomes to management.

Minimum Qualifications

Public Health Specialist 1

Open Competitive: a bachelor's degree, including or supplemented by 30 semester credits in the natural or applied sciences, and two years of experience in environmental health protection.

Substitution: a master's degree, including or supplemented by 30 semester credits in the natural or applied sciences may substitute for one year of experience.

Public Health Specialist 2

Promotion: one year of permanent competitive service as a Public Health Specialist 1.

Public Health Specialist 3

Promotion: one year of permanent competitive service as a Public Health Specialist 2.

Note: Classification Standards illustrate the nature, extent and scope of duties and responsibilities of the classes they describe. Standards cannot and do not include all of the work that might be appropriately performed by a class. The minimum qualifications above are those which were required for appointment at the time the Classification Standard was written. Please contact the Division of Staffing Services for current information on minimum qualification requirements for appointment or examination.

Date: 10/2024

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Parenthetic Attachment

Public Health Specialist (Environment) investigate and evaluate the impact of environmental contamination on public health; assess human exposure to hazardous chemicals; develop, coordinate, and evaluate regulatory programs and remedial activities; recommend measures protective of public health; and communicate health assessments to the public and other government agencies. Positions are classified in DOH's CEH, within program areas that investigate, inspect, and work to remediate environmentally contaminated sites.

Public Health Specialist 1 (Environment): full performance level; conducts comprehensive investigations and assessments of environmentally contaminated sites and may supervise Public Health Specialist (Environment) Trainees.

- Conducts preliminary public health investigations of suspected circumstances that could adversely affect the environment.
- Assembles technical data on the environmental fate of pollutants through the review of files, environmental health inspection reports, and other data available on a site, water supply, or other environmental contamination issue.
- Assists in the planning of expanded laboratory capabilities through the evaluation of program needs, and makes recommendations on the need for analysis of specific compounds in different media.
- Assists in the determination of sampling and lab analyses through the review of manufacturing processes and/ or waste streams of industries under investigation.
- Compiles relevant data on human exposure pathways to be used in the impact assessment of possible public exposure to contaminants.
- Reviews remedial action and remedial design plans initiated by other agencies or responsible parties for hazardous waste sites, voluntary clean-up sites, or brownfield sites, and makes recommendations to ensure that public exposures are mitigated.
- Analyzes and interprets environmental data to prepare technical reports for use in negotiations, litigation, and the ranking of sites.
- Responds to public inquiries related to environmental concerns and provide technical support and guidance to LHUs on hazardous waste sites, chemical spills, indoor air quality molds, and other environmental hazards to public health.
- Develops technical training programs for LHUs on environmental exposure and hazard assessments based on established policies and procedures.

- Investigates emergency incidents of indoor air contamination in accordance with established policies and procedures.
- Oversees field inspections to determine if work plans are implemented in a manner protective of public health.
- May independently represent DOH at public meetings, provide technical support, and explain policies and positions.

Public Health Specialist 2 (Environment): first supervisory level; serves as a supervisor for a section within a geographic region, or for a particular class of investigations; and supervises Public Health Specialist 1 (Environment).

- Investigates hazardous waste sites and reviews investigations initiated by the Department of Environmental Conservation, LHUs, and other responsible parties to ensure that environmental data is sufficient to assess public exposures to contaminated media.
- Identifies program trends, accomplishments, or issues for Public Health Specialists 3 (Environment).
- Makes recommendations or decisions based on the analysis and interpretation of environmental data.
- Works with LHUs to perform investigations and sampling of environmentally contaminated sites.
- Performs field inspections to determine if work plans are implemented in a manner protective of public health, to assess actual site conditions, and collects samples of environmental media.
- Represents DOH at meetings with various stakeholders to discuss investigations and remedial activities, and with the public.

Public Health Specialist 3 (Environment): managerial level; serves as section head; manages investigations for geographic region or for a particular class of investigations; supervises Public Health Specialist 2 (Environment), and other support staff.

- Investigates various environmental problems, addresses public health concerns, and oversees the activities of lower-level Public Health Specialists (Environment) within a defined geographic region.
- Informs management of and discusses potential ramifications of highly sensitive and political issues related to environmental contamination.

- Interacts with DOH program managers, LHUs, and other State and federal agencies to coordinate workloads, delineate responsibilities, and develop policies and procedures related to new environmental health issues.
- Oversees staff assignments and reassignments; evaluates performance, monitors time and attendance, and approves the use of overtime.
- Prioritizes the work of subordinate staff, ensures that resources are allocated to the highest impact areas, prepares workload analyses, and monitors progress to ensure that work is completed in accordance with established timeframes, policies, and procedures.
- Identifies staff training needs and allocate resources efficiently to address those needs.
- Reviews staff comments regarding proposals, data, draft reports, final reports, remedial designs, investigations, and feasibility studies prepared by consultants or other responsible parties to ensure appropriateness and adherence to conditions of negotiated orders to contain sites and mitigate human exposure and potential public health concerns.
- Reviews and approves community health and safety plans to be used during investigations and remedial activities.
- Monitors the implementation of health and safety plans during remedial construction to ensure the protection of public health.
- Represents DOH at interagency, public, and private meetings.
- Provides consultation and technical assistance to local health units to address public health concerns associated with environmental contamination.
- Coordinates regional activities and objectives related to hazardous waste sites with Central Office and other involved State and federal agencies.

Minimum Qualifications

Public Health Specialist 1 (Environment)

Open Competitive: a bachelor's degree in biology, chemistry, biochemistry, geology, engineering, geochemistry, industrial hygiene, or environmental sciences; and two years of experience assessing the impact of toxic substances on public health.

Substitution: a master's degree in a health or human services area may be substituted for one year of the experience.

Public Health Specialist 2 (Environment)

Promotion: one year of permanent competitive service as a Public Health Specialist 1 (Environment).

Public Health Specialist 3 (Environment)

Promotion: one year of permanent competitive service as a Public Health Specialist 2 (Environment).