



Office of Local Public Health (OLPH) | New Jersey Public Health Licensure Examination

WHO IS A REGISTERED ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SPECIALIST?

A Registered Environmental Health Specialist (REHS) administers environmental health programs for both public and private organizations in food protection and safety, water protection, air quality, noise, industrial and land pollution, sewage disposal, hazardous and toxic substances, solid waste management, and institutional health.

PUBLIC HEALTH LICENSURE EXAMINATION FOR REGISTERED ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SPECIALIST

The **minimum** qualifications to be admitted to the Registered Environmental Health Specialist examination in New Jersey are as follows:

- 1) hold a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university which is recognized by the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education in a program accredited by the National Environmental Health, Science and Protection Accreditation Council, <https://www.nehspac.org/>; **OR**
- 2) hold a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university which is recognized by the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education. The degree must include a minimum of 32 credit hours in biology, chemistry, physics and/or environmental sciences and mathematics. Only up to six (6) of the 32 credits may be in college-level mathematics. At least one of the courses must be a laboratory course in biology, physics, chemistry, or the environmental sciences. Courses with grades less than 2.0 ("C") shall not be considered; **AND**
 - a) satisfactorily complete a minimum of one (1) year of post-graduate, full-time employment with a local health agency recognized as such by the New Jersey Department of Health. This employment shall be under the supervision of a New Jersey-licensed Health Officer or a New Jersey-licensed Registered Environmental Health Specialist; **OR**
 - b) satisfactorily complete a course in the environmental and public health which is conducted by an accredited college or university recognized by the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education and equivalent to that offered by Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey; and satisfactorily complete a field training course approved by the New Jersey Department of Health; **OR**
 - c) satisfactorily complete an additional five (5) undergraduate or graduate level courses in the following areas: (1) Environment and Health (including food safety); (2) Epidemiology; (3) Public Health Practice and Administration; (4) Microbiology or Communicable Diseases; and, (5) Soils. These courses must be worth a minimum of two (2) credits each. Courses with grades less than 2.0 ("C") are not acceptable. In addition to the course requirements, satisfactorily complete 200 hours of field training with a local health agency recognized as such by the New Jersey Department of Health. This training must also include five days of training with a New Jersey Department of Health Registered Environmental Health Specialist.

The New Jersey Registered Environmental Health Specialist examination (120 minutes) consists of 100 questions which are designed to assess competency in a fixed, multiple-choice format. The content includes topics, such as: administration, communicable disease, food protection and safety, water and wastewater, vectors, pests and weeds, epidemiology, potable water, air quality and noise, swimming pools and recreational facilities, statutes and rules, and hazardous materials.

The passing score or “cut score” for this examination is 70 percent and is based upon a minimum competence criteria as developed by practitioners in the field. The sole purpose of a licensing examination is to identify persons who possess the minimum knowledge and experience necessary to perform tasks on the job safely and competently – not to select “top” candidates or ensure the success of licensed persons. Therefore, licensing examinations are very different from academic or employment examinations. Academic examinations assess how well a person can define and comprehend terms and concepts. Employment examinations aim to rank order candidates who possess qualifications for a job.

APPLICATION FOR REGISTERED ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SPECIALIST EXAMINATION

Admission to the examination is dependent upon the information submitted in an application, which must be accompanied by documentary evidence in support of an applicant’s training, education, and experience. Letters verifying an applicant’s experience must list **in detail** all the duties, responsibilities, and length of time served in the particular field. An official transcript under seal must be submitted from an applicant’s college(s) or university(ies). Student copies are not acceptable. Any science course with a grade of less than 2.0 (“C”) shall not be considered as part of the required 32 credit hours. If an applicant was educated outside of the United States, an evaluation of their credential(s) must be submitted. The application must also include a copy of the course catalogue description of the required courses. Copies of certificates, awards, or other similar documents are appropriate documentation in support of an applicant’s training qualifications. Incomplete applications are rejected, and the application fee is non-refundable.

Applicants must forward completed applications and supporting documentation along with a check or money order in the amount of \$50.00 to:

New Jersey Department of Health
Office of Local Public Health
Public Health Licensure
P.O. Box 360
Trenton, NJ 08625-0360

An applicant’s check or money order must be made payable to ***Treasurer, State of New Jersey***. All fees are non-refundable and non-transferable. The fee that accompanies an application covers the cost of reviewing and processing the application; it cannot be refunded even if an applicant is found ineligible for the examination. Please note that if an applicant is found eligible to sit for the examination, an examination fee of \$100.00 is also collected.

Only applications which are complete and have been received by the published examination application closing date shall be reviewed by NJDOH OLPH and the New Jersey Public Health Licensure and Examination Board (Board). The deadline for application submission is enforced according to the postmark on the packet. Applicants are notified of their eligibility approximately one month prior to the examination date for which they applied.

RECOMMENDED COURSES FOR A REGISTERED ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SPECIALIST

One eligibility requirement for the Registered Environmental Health Specialist (REHS) examination in New Jersey is that a candidate must hold a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university. This degree shall include a minimum of 32 credit hours in biology, chemistry, physics and/or environmental sciences and mathematics. Only up to six (6) of the 32 credits may be in college-level mathematics. At least one of the courses must be a laboratory course in biology, chemistry, physics, or the environmental sciences. Courses with grades less than 2.0 (“C”) are not acceptable in fulfillment of the requirement. Please note that behavioral science subjects, such as psychology and social neuroscience, and social science subjects, such as sociology, economics, history, anthropology, and political science, are not acceptable.

The following list of courses is intended to serve as guidance in fulfillment of the requirements set forth at N.J.A.C. 8:7-1.10(b)1. It is therefore important to note that this list is not comprehensive. It is subject to periodic review and update to include additional courses. Courses that do not appear on the list may still be acceptable pending determination by the Board.

Air Pollution	Embryology	Mathematics *
Anatomy	Endocrinology	Meteorology
Animal Science	Entomology	Microbiology
Bacteriology	Environmental Science	Molecular Biology
Biochemistry	Epidemiology	Parasitology
Biology	Food Bacteriology	Pathology
Biostatistics *	Food Science	Physics
Botany	Genetics	Physiology
Calculus *	Hazardous Waste	Radiological Health
Cell Physiology	Health Science	Soil Science
Chemistry	Histology	Statistics *
Dairy Science	Hydrogeology	Toxicology
Earth Science	Hydrology	Virology
Ecology	Industrial Hygiene	

Please note: Only up to six (6) credits in the courses marked with an asterisk (*) may be used in fulfillment of the requirement for a minimum of 32 credit hours in biology, chemistry, physics and/or environmental sciences and mathematics.

RESOURCES

Access the REHS examination application, application checklist, and the examination schedule at the following webpage:

<https://www.nj.gov/health/lh/professionals/licensing/>

The [New Jersey Register – Free Public Access](#) website is maintained by LexisNexis®, the publisher of the **New Jersey Administrative Code**, and provides free public access to the public health licensure rules set forth at N.J.A.C. 8:7, Licensure of Persons for Public Health Positions.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE LICENSURE PROCESS

Contact NJDOH OLPH’s Public Health Licensure Program at OLPH.Licensure@doh.nj.gov.