

What Is an Industrial Hygienist?

Industrial Hygiene: *Science and art devoted to the anticipation, recognition, evaluation, prevention, and control of those environmental factors or stresses arising in or from the workplace which may cause sickness, impaired health and well being, or significant discomfort among workers or among citizens of the community.* Industrial hygienists are scientists and engineers committed to protecting the health and safety of people in the workplace and the community.

A professional industrial hygienist is a person possessing either a baccalaureate degree in engineering, chemistry, or physics or a baccalaureate degree in a closely related biological or physical science from an accredited college or university, who also has a minimum of three years of industrial hygiene experience. A completed doctoral in a related physical, biological or medical science or in related engineering can be substituted for two years of the three-year requirement. A completed master's degree in a related physical or biological science or in related engineering can be substituted for one year of the three-year requirement. Under no circumstances can more than two years of graduate training be applied toward the three-year period. While this definition does not include certification, the American Industrial Hygiene Association recognizes the need for such certification by every professional industrial hygienist as an appropriate hallmark by one's peers and strongly urges all eligible members to obtain American Board of Industrial Hygiene certification.

The [American Board of Industrial Hygiene](#) has established that successful candidates for certificates shall attain the status of Diplomate of the American Academy of Industrial Hygiene subject to compliance with requirements established by the American Board of Industrial Hygiene.

The active ABIH certification requires that the person be admitted to examination based upon academic training and 4 years experience for the Certified Industrial Hygienist (CIH), successfully pass a one day examination, and maintain active professional involvement by re-certification on a 5-year cycle following first certification.

Protecting People

The goal of the industrial hygienist is to keep workers, their families, and the community healthy and safe. They play a vital part in ensuring that federal, state, and local laws and regulations are followed in the work environment.

Typical roles of the industrial hygienist include:

- Investigating and examining the workplace for hazards and potential dangers
- Making recommendations on improving the safety of workers and the surrounding community
- Conducting scientific research to provide data on possible harmful conditions in the workplace
- Developing techniques to anticipate and control potentially dangerous situations in the workplace and the community
- Training and educating the community about job-related risks
- Advising government officials and participating in the development of regulations to ensure the health and safety of workers and their families
- Ensuring that workers are properly following health and safety procedures

Industrial Hygienists Work With the Issues That Concern Us All

Industrial hygienists deal with the health and safety challenges facing people everywhere including:

- Indoor air quality (sick building syndrome, second-hand tobacco smoke)
- Evaluating and controlling environmental lead exposure
- Emergency response planning and community right-to-know
- Occupational disease (AIDS in the workplace, tuberculosis, silicosis)
- Potentially hazardous agents such as asbestos, pesticides, and radon gas
- Cumulative Trauma Disorders (repetitive stress injuries, carpal tunnel syndrome)
- Radiation (electromagnetic fields, microwaves)
- Reproductive health hazards in the workplace
- Setting limits on exposure to chemical and physical agents
- Detection and control of potential occupational hazards such as noise, radiation, and illumination
- Hazardous waste management