

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2013 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 400

(Senator Glassman)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Health and Government Operations

Environmental Health Specialists - Licensure Examinations - Applicant
Qualifications and Waiver

This bill clarifies the course work requirements for an individual seeking licensure as an environmental health specialist from the State Board of Environmental Health Specialists and alters the circumstances under which the board may waive any examination requirement for an applicant, including requiring an applicant for a waiver to have performed at least 24 months of compensated work as an environmental health specialist or its equivalent in any other state.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill largely clarifies existing law and does not materially affect State finances or board operations.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: An individual seeking licensure as an environmental health specialist who holds a master's degree in public or environmental health science must have obtained 30 semester (or 45 quarter) credit hours of physical, biological, or environmental science. The bill clarifies that these credits must be *obtained at the baccalaureate or master's level*.

The board may waive any examination requirement for an applicant who is licensed *or registered* as an environmental health specialist or its equivalent in another state. An applicant may qualify for a waiver of the examination requirement if he or she became licensed *or registered to practice as an environmental health specialist or its equivalent* after passing *in that state* an examination as *a condition of licensure or registration*. The examination no longer has to be similar to the examination for which the applicant is seeking the waiver. To qualify for a waiver, an applicant must also have performed at least 24 months of compensated work as an environmental health specialist or its equivalent in the other state.

The bill repeals language relating to the board making a reciprocal agreement with any other state to waive the examination requirement and specifying that the other state must waive the examination of licensed environmental health specialists of this State to a similar extent.

Current Law/Background: Chapter 667 of 2012 (HB 511) transferred the State Board of Environmental Sanitarians from the Maryland Department of the Environment to the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and changed the name of the board to the State Board of Environmental Health Specialists.

Environmental sanitarians perform inspections and investigations to secure compliance with environmental and health laws and regulations to ensure that people do not become sick because of their environments. Environmental sanitarians' comprehensive responsibilities include inspections, collection and analysis of data, risk assessment, nuisance complaint investigations, education, and emergency response. The diverse practice areas of the profession include food safety; air quality; disease investigation and prevention; animal, insect, and rodent control; and lead, well, septic system, swimming pool, and campground inspections. Most environmental sanitarians work for local health departments and State agencies.

To obtain an initial license as an environmental health specialist, an individual must first file an application for licensure with the board, accompanied by (1) an official transcript of the applicant's baccalaureate and post-baccalaureate studies or other evidence certifying successful completion of course work considered equivalent by the board; (2) verification of the applicant's relevant previous work experience, if any; and (3) the required application fee. There are currently four possible combinations of education and training that can lead to licensure, as shown in **Exhibit 1**. If an applicant meets the education and experience requirements, the applicant is eligible to take the qualifying examination. If the applicant passes the examination and pays the requisite fees, the board issues the applicant a license.

Exhibit 1
Education and Experience Requirements for
Licensure as an Environmental Health Specialist

<u>Option</u>	<u>Education Requirements</u>	<u>Related Experience Requirements</u>
1.	A baccalaureate degree in environmental health or environmental science.	12 months of experience in an environmental health specialist-in-training program approved by the board.
2.	A baccalaureate degree in the physical, biological, or environmental sciences that includes (1) at least 60 semester credits of physical, biological, or environmental sciences, including at least one laboratory course in two of the following: chemistry, physics, or biology and (2) a course in mathematics.	12 months of experience in an environmental health specialist-in-training program approved by the board.
3.	A baccalaureate degree that includes (1) at least 30 semester credits in the physical, biological, or environmental sciences, including at least one laboratory course in two of the following: chemistry, physics, or biology and (2) a course in mathematics.	24 months of experience in an environmental health specialist-in-training program approved by the board.
4.	A master's degree in public or environmental health science that includes the course work described under option 3 above.	3 months in an internship approved by the board (if not previously completed).

Source: Department of Legislative Services

Alternatively, the board may issue a license to an applicant who has not passed the qualifying examination if the applicant meets a condition for waiver of the examination. To qualify for waiver, an applicant must be licensed to practice in a state that has a reciprocal agreement with the board and have passed an examination in another state that is substantially equivalent to the examination given in Maryland. In practice, waivers of examination are rare. Currently, applicants from other states seeking waiver of the qualifying examination are reviewed on a case-by-case basis as the board has never had any reciprocal agreements with other states.

Board regulations published in the *Maryland Register* on January 25, 2013, authorize the board to waive any examination requirement if the board considers the applicant to be recognized as outstanding in the field of environmental health.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Department of Legislative Services

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