

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 10, 2025

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2025–26 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 1288

Introduced by Assembly Members Addis and Valencia

February 21, 2025

An act to amend Sections 106615, 106625, ~~106635~~, 106665, ~~and 106675~~ 106670, 106675, 106680, 106685, and 106690 of the Health and Safety Code, relating to public health.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1288, as amended, Addis. Registered environmental health specialists.

Existing law provides for the certification of registered environmental health specialists by the State Department of Public Health, *Health* and establishes application, examination, and renewal fees for this certification. Existing law ~~defines~~ *prescribes educational requirements for the registration of an environmental health specialist and requires all basic science coursework to be equal to what is acceptable in an approved environmental health degree program. Existing law provides that only a person who meets those educational and experience requirements is eligible for admission to the environmental health specialist examination. Existing law prohibits an applicant who fails to pass the written examination twice from taking the examination additional times unless specified time periods have elapsed. Existing law prohibits a person from taking the examination more than once in a 2-year period. Existing law requires the department to maintain a current registry of all registered environmental health specialists and environmental health specialist trainees in the state.*

Existing law defines the scope of practice for a registered environmental health professional to include, but not be limited to, the prevention of environmental health hazards and the promotion and protection of the public health and the environment in specified areas, including, among others, food protection, housing, and hazardous materials management. Existing law authorizes a local health department to employ a registered environmental health specialist to enforce public health laws, as specified. Existing law authorizes an environmental health specialist trainee to work under the supervision of a registered environmental health specialist for a period not to exceed 3 years. Existing law defines “environmental health specialist trainee” as a person who possesses a bachelor’s degree, as specified, and who is engaged in an approved environmental health training plan. Existing law requires an environmental health training plan to include specified elements.

*This bill would instead prohibit an applicant from being reexamined for 90 days after failing to pass the written examination. The bill would revise the educational requirements for the registration of an environmental health specialist, as specified, and would delete the requirement that basic science coursework be equal to what is acceptable in an approved environmental health degree program. This bill would extend ~~that~~ the period of required supervision to instead not exceed 5 years. The bill would include body art and medical waste in the scope of practice of registered environmental health ~~specialists~~ *specialists and would revise the environmental health training plan elements, as specified. The bill would require the department to make its registry of registered specialists and trainees publicly available on its internet website within 90 days of the administration of an exam.**

Existing law requires an Environmental Health Specialist Registration Committee to be appointed to advise and to make recommendations to the department. Existing law prescribes the membership of the committee, including 2 members with experience as local directors of environmental health, as specified, 2 members from environmental health faculty from California universities and colleges, 2 public members who have not been engaged in the field of environmental health in the 5 years preceding their appointment, and the Chief of the Environmental Planning and Local Health Services Branch, who serves as executive officer in a nonvoting role. Existing law prohibits a committee member from serving no more than 2 successive terms and requires a committee member to serve until the appointment and

qualification of their successor or until one year after their term has expired, whichever occurs first.

This bill would instead make the State Environmental Health Director serve as the executive officer of the ~~committee~~. *committee and would revise the committee membership, as specified. The bill would delete the prohibition on a committee member serving more than 2 consecutive terms. The bill would delete the requirement that a committee member serve until one year after the expiration of their term.* The bill would make clarifying technical changes to the terminology used in those and related provisions to distinguish local directors of environmental health from the State Environmental Health Director.

Existing law requires the committee to meet at least twice annually and defines a quorum for these purposes as 6 members of the committee. Existing law requires the committee to keep a record of its proceedings.

This bill would require the committee to meet at least quarterly, in person or virtually, and would redefine a quorum of the committee to mean a simple majority of the filled committee seats. The bill would authorize the chairperson to cancel a committee meeting, as specified. The bill would also require the committee to keep a record of its meetings.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

- 1 SECTION 1. Section 106615 of the Health and Safety Code
- 2 is amended to read:
- 3 106615. For purposes of this article, the following definitions
- 4 apply, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:
- 5 (a) "Department" means the State Department of Public Health.
- 6 (b) "Committee" means the Environmental Health Specialist
- 7 Registration Committee.
- 8 (c) "Registered environmental health specialist" means an
- 9 environmental health professional educated and trained within the
- 10 field of environmental health who is registered in accordance with
- 11 the provisions of this article.
- 12 (d) "Environmental health specialist trainee" means a person
- 13 who meets both of the following requirements:
- 14 (1) Possesses a minimum of a bachelor's degree, including 30
- 15 semester units of basic sciences, from a department approved

1 educational institution or an educational institution of collegiate
2 grade listed in the directory of accredited institutions of
3 postsecondary education compiled by the American Council on
4 Education, but who has not completed the specific coursework
5 and experience requirements in the field of environmental health
6 as required by Section 106660 for registration.

7 (2) Is engaged in an approved environmental health training
8 plan.

9 (e) “Scope of practice in environmental health” means the
10 practice of environmental health by registered environmental health
11 specialists in the public and private sector within the meaning of
12 this article and includes, but is not limited to, organization,
13 management, education, enforcement, consultation, and emergency
14 response for the purpose of prevention of environmental health
15 hazards and the promotion and protection of the public health and
16 the environment in the following areas: food protection; housing;
17 institutional environmental health; land use; community noise
18 control; recreational swimming areas and waters; electromagnetic
19 radiation control; solid and liquid waste and hazardous materials
20 management; underground storage tank control; onsite septic
21 systems; vector control; drinking water quality; water sanitation;
22 emergency preparedness; body art; medical waste; and milk and
23 dairy sanitation pursuant to Section 33113 of the Food and
24 Agricultural Code. Activities of registered environmental health
25 specialists shall be regulated by the department upon the
26 recommendation of the committee.

27 (f) “Certificate of registration” means a signed document issued
28 by the department as evidence of registration and qualification to
29 practice as a registered environmental health specialist under this
30 article. The certificate shall bear the designation “registered
31 environmental health specialist” and shall show the name of the
32 person, date of issue, registration number, and seal.

33 (g) “Experience requirement” means on-the-job training and
34 experience, as stated in this article, that all environmental health
35 specialist trainees shall complete prior to obtaining eligibility for
36 the environmental health specialist examination.

37 (h) “Approved environmental health training plan” means a
38 training program in an organization that plans to utilize
39 environmental health specialist trainees and has on file with the
40 department a copy of its training plan that conforms with the

1 requirements of Section 106665, and that has been approved by
2 the committee.

3 (i) “Examination” means a written professional examination
4 prescribed by the department, administered in person or online,
5 for registration in accordance with this article.

6 SEC. 2. Section 106625 of the Health and Safety Code is
7 amended to read:

8 106625. The governing body of a local health department may
9 employ on a full-time basis one or more registered environmental
10 health specialists, each of whom shall be a registered environmental
11 health specialist as provided for in this article, for the purpose of
12 the enforcement of statutes related to public health, the regulations
13 of the department, and any local ordinances of a local health
14 department that relate to activities pursuant to subdivision (e) of
15 Section 106615. However, any person who is known as an
16 environmental health specialist trainee may be employed to work
17 under the supervision of a registered environmental health
18 specialist, until the trainee is qualified by examination pursuant to
19 Section 106670, for a period that shall not exceed five years. Prior
20 to employment, the trainee shall have a current evaluation letter
21 from the department stating that the education qualifications
22 specified in Section 106660 have been met.

23 SEC. 3. Section 106635 of the Health and Safety Code is
24 amended to read:

25 106635. The requirements for registration of environmental
26 health specialists shall be a minimum of a bachelor’s degree from
27 a department approved educational institution or an educational
28 institution of collegiate grade listed in the directory of accredited
29 institutions of postsecondary education compiled by the American
30 Council on Education, with coursework prescribed as follows:

31			
32	Basic Requirements	Experience	Training

- 1 I. 30 semester or 45 18 months 600
 2 quarter basic science units hrs.
 3 including each of the following: units from
 4 science
 5 courses designated by the educational
 6 institution for science or clinical health
 7 care degrees.
 8 Three of the required science courses
 9 shall include a laboratory.
 10 General Chemistry ~~Lecture and Laboratory~~
 11 General Physics ~~Lecture and Laboratory~~ or Organic
 12 Organic Chemistry ~~Lecture and Laboratory~~
 13 General Microbiology ~~Lecture and Laboratory~~
 14 General Biological Science ~~Lecture and Laboratory~~
 15 Calculus or College Algebra
- 16 II. 45 semester or 68 one year 450
 17 quarter basic science hrs.
 18 units including the following:
 19 Three of the required science
 20 courses shall include a laboratory: units
 21 from
 22 science courses designated by the
 23 educational institution for science or
 24 clinical health care degrees.
 25 Three of the required science courses
 26 shall include a laboratory.
 27 General Chemistry
 28 Organic Chemistry
 29 General Physics
 30 General Microbiology
 31 General Biological Science
 32 Calculus or College Algebra
- 33 III. 30 semester or 45 9 months 300
 34 quarter basic science hrs.
 35 units units from science courses with
 36 laboratories
 37 designated by the educational
 38 institution for science or clinical
 39 health care degrees including each
 40 of the following:

1 Fifteen semester units of environmental health science
 2 courses selected from:
 3 water quality, waste management, food and consumer
 4 protection, housing and institution sanitation, vector control, recreational
 5 health, air quality, milk and dairy products, occupational health,
 6 electromagnetic radiation, noise
 7 control, toxicology, soil science, or land use development.

8
 9 ~~All basic science coursework including mathematics shall be~~
 10 ~~equal to that acceptable in an approved environmental health degree~~
 11 ~~program.~~

12 ~~SEC. 3.~~
 13 *SEC. 4.* Section 106665 of the Health and Safety Code is
 14 amended to read:

15 106665. An approved environmental health training plan shall
 16 include program elements in the training, duration of training, and
 17 types of training.

18 (a) Program elements, duration of training, and experience are
 19 as follows:

20 (1) All environmental health specialist ~~trainees; trainees~~ shall
 21 complete a basic training period in an approved program. The
 22 training period shall include training in at least ~~six elements, with~~
 23 ~~three of the elements selected from the following basic following~~ *following*
 24 *primary* elements:

- 25 (A) ~~Food protection; safety.~~
- 26 (B) ~~Solid or liquid waste management, or both; waste.~~
- 27 (C) *Liquid waste.*
- 28 ~~(C)~~
- 29 (D) ~~Water supply; quality.~~
- 30 ~~(D)~~
- 31 (E) *Housing and institutions.*
- 32 ~~(E) Bathing places.~~
- 33 (F) *Recreational health.*
- 34 ~~(F) Vector control.~~
- 35 (G) *Body art.*
- 36 ~~(G)~~
- 37 (H) ~~Hazardous materials management or underground tank~~
 38 ~~program, or both; or other Certified Unified Program Agency~~
 39 ~~elements.~~

1 ~~The remaining three elements~~ *Additional training content* may
2 include any other ~~basic~~ *primary* element or any of the following
3 *secondary* elements: air sanitation, safety and accident prevention,
4 land development and use, disaster sanitation, ~~electromagnetic~~
5 radiation, milk and dairy products, noise control, occupational
6 health, *medical waste*, and *vector control, including rabies* and
7 animal disease control.

8 (2) Training in each of ~~the three basic~~ *selected primary* elements
9 shall not be less than 20 percent of the total required training hours.
10 Time spent in the remaining ~~three primary and secondary~~ elements
11 shall be not less than 40 percent of the total required training hours.
12 The employer shall designate the methods, elements, and types of
13 training or experience for the remaining part of the time required
14 for entrance to the registered environmental health specialist
15 examination as specified in Section 106670. The specified training
16 may be cumulative and scheduled at the discretion of the employing
17 agency over this period.

18 (3) The training may be accomplished by assignments chosen
19 by the employing agency and under the supervision of a registered
20 environmental health specialist.

21 (4) For those environmental health specialist trainees requiring
22 more than one year of experience, the additional experience will
23 be in one or more elements of environmental health listed in this
24 section and may be outside of a local environmental health
25 program.

26 (5) Training and experience gained working for a governmental
27 or a nonprofit entity, or both, may be counted toward the first-year
28 training experience requirement if the training and experience is
29 determined by the department to be equivalent to what would be
30 gained in a local environmental health jurisdiction.

31 (b) Types of training:

32 The training program shall be integrated into the environmental
33 health specialist trainee's job assignment and shall include the
34 items described in paragraphs (1) and (2) and may include the
35 items described in paragraphs (3), (4), and (5):

36 (1) A minimum of 20 hours per month of field instruction with
37 direct supervision by a registered environmental health specialist
38 for the first six months of employment. The total minimum
39 requirement in this area shall be 150 hours.

40 (2) Independent time with adequate supervision and guidance.

1 (3) Office training with pretesting and posttesting.

2 (4) Lectures.

3 (5) Adequate office time to review and study.

4 (c) Requirements for certification of training:

5 (1) Environmental health specialist trainees shall receive their
6 training from the department or agency that has a training plan
7 approved by the committee.

8 (2) A ~~daily~~ log for the certification of the environmental health
9 specialist trainee shall be maintained by the local ~~director~~ *director*
10 *or their designee*.

11 (A) A ~~daily~~ log covering elements and hours spent of all training
12 shall be kept by the environmental health specialist trainees, and
13 verified by the trainer or ~~supervisor on a weekly basis~~ *supervisor*.

14 (B) Short narrative reports or copies of the monthly schedule
15 of the environmental health specialist trainee's training and
16 progress shall be submitted by the training coordinator to the local
17 director every month throughout the traineeship.

18 (C) The local ~~director~~ *director, or their designee*, shall review
19 the trainee's records on a monthly basis and shall certify on a
20 quarterly basis that the records of training are accurate.

21 (D) The local ~~director~~ *director, or their designee*, shall notify
22 the department within 30 days of the date an environmental health
23 specialist trainee is hired or terminated.

24 (E) Copies of the environmental health specialist trainee's log,
25 as well as the narrative reports or copies of monthly schedules
26 shall be retained in the personnel file of the environmental health
27 specialist trainee for at least one year after the environmental health
28 specialist trainee successfully completes the registered
29 environmental health specialist examination.

30 (3) When an environmental health specialist trainee completes
31 the training program, the local director shall forward certification
32 to the department. This certification shall include the program
33 areas, length of time, dates for the areas of training, and a statement
34 that the environmental health specialist trainee followed the
35 approved training plan.

36 (d) Those jurisdictions that cannot provide the required training
37 elements within their jurisdictions shall initiate a program of
38 training exchange with another jurisdiction having an approved
39 training program.

1 (e) For purposes of this section, “local director” means a local
 2 director of environmental health or the director’s designee.

3 *SEC. 5. Section 106670 of the Health and Safety Code is*
 4 *amended to read:*

5 106670. (a) On and after January 1, 1989, only persons who
 6 meet the educational and experience requirements as established
 7 under Section 106635 shall be eligible for admission to
 8 examination for registration as an environmental health specialist.

9 (b) The professional examination shall be prescribed by the
 10 department with the concurrence of the committee, and a passing
 11 score on the examination shall be required prior to registration.

12 (c) An applicant who ~~twice~~ fails to pass the written examination
 13 shall not be eligible to be reexamined ~~a third time until at least one~~
 14 ~~year has until 90 days have~~ elapsed from the date of the ~~second~~
 15 ~~previous~~ examination. ~~An applicant who fails the third examination~~
 16 ~~shall not be eligible to take the examination a fourth time until two~~
 17 ~~years have elapsed from the date of the third examination.~~
 18 ~~Thereafter, the examination may not be taken more frequently than~~
 19 ~~once in two years.~~ Reapplication *and reexamination* shall be made
 20 by submitting a new application with the required fee.

21 ~~SEC. 4.~~

22 *SEC. 6. Section 106675 of the Health and Safety Code is*
 23 *amended to read:*

24 106675. (a) (1) An Environmental Health Specialist
 25 Registration Committee shall be appointed to advise and to make
 26 recommendations to the department with respect to, and to take
 27 other actions as described in this article for the establishment of
 28 rules and regulations necessary to ensure, the proper administration
 29 and enforcement of the registration of environmental health
 30 specialists whose duties in public health and environmental health
 31 require knowledge and skills in the physical, biological, and
 32 environmental health sciences and whose performance of
 33 professional duties is necessary for the promotion of life, health,
 34 and the well-being of the public.

35 (2) The members of the former Sanitarian Registration
 36 Certification Committee shall serve as members of the new
 37 committee until the expiration of their terms.

38 (b) The committee shall consist of the State Environmental
 39 Health Director or the director’s designee who shall serve as

1 executive officer but who shall not vote, and the following 10
2 members who are residents of the state:

3 (1) Two members appointed by the State Environmental Health
4 Director from the California Conference of Directors of
5 Environmental Health who shall be environmental health specialists
6 with at least two years of experience as local directors of
7 environmental health in this state.

8 (2) Three members appointed by the State Environmental Health
9 Director, each of whom shall be a qualified, practicing
10 environmental health specialist registered in California for a period
11 of five or more years. For purposes of this subdivision:

12 (A) One member shall be employed in the public sector at the
13 time of appointment.

14 (B) One member shall be employed in the private sector at the
15 time of appointment.

16 (C) One member shall be from the California Environmental
17 Health Association.

18 (3) One member appointed by the State Environmental Health
19 Director from the California Conference of Local Health Officers.

20 (4) Two members appointed by the State Environmental Health
21 Director from the environmental health faculty of those California
22 universities and colleges with approved curricula leading to a
23 degree in environmental health or public health with at least one
24 from environmental health.

25 (5) Two public members who have not been engaged at any
26 time within five years immediately preceding their appointment
27 in pursuits that lie are not currently within the field of
28 environmental health or the profession regulated by the committee
29 of which they are members. The Senate Rules Committee shall
30 appoint one public member and the Speaker of the Assembly shall
31 appoint one public member.

32 *SEC. 7. Section 106680 of the Health and Safety Code is*
33 *amended to read:*

34 106680. ~~The terms of the members of the committee first~~
35 ~~appointed shall be determined by lot and shall expire as follows:~~
36 ~~two members on January 1, 1985; two members on January 1,~~
37 ~~1986; three members on January 1, 1987; and three members on~~
38 ~~January 1, 1988. Thereafter, appointments~~ *An appointment shall*
39 *be for a four-year term. Committee members* *A committee member*
40 *may serve no more than two successive terms. Each member shall*

1 serve on the committee until the appointment and qualification of
2 ~~his or her successor or until one year shall have elapsed since the~~
3 ~~expiration of the term for which he or she was appointed,~~
4 ~~whichever occurs first.~~ *Vacancies their successor. A vacancy*
5 occurring prior to the expiration of the terms shall be filled by
6 appointment for the unexpired term. The director, upon the
7 recommendation of the committee by a two-thirds vote, may
8 remove an appointee member for misconduct in office,
9 incompetency, neglect of duty, or other sufficient cause after due
10 notice and hearing.

11 *SEC. 8. Section 106685 of the Health and Safety Code is*
12 *amended to read:*

13 106685. (a) The members of the committee shall, annually,
14 in the month of April, elect from their number a chairperson and
15 a secretary.

16 (b) The committee shall meet at least ~~twice annually~~ *quarterly,*
17 *in person or virtually,* and at other times as it may determine to
18 evaluate applications for registration as environmental health
19 specialists, to review and update ~~examinations,~~ *examinations and*
20 *transcript review guidelines,* to prepare and recommend reports
21 relative to the administration of this article, and to transact all other
22 business as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this
23 article.

24 (c) The committee may hold informal hearings for denial,
25 suspension, refusal to renew, and revocation of registrations for
26 environmental health specialists as provided in Section 106715.

27 (d) The committee may hold informal hearings for the purpose
28 of administrative items, make the necessary determinations in
29 conjunction therewith, and issue recommendations to the
30 department consistent with the findings. The department may
31 designate the committee to appoint one or more of its members to
32 serve as a hearing agent. The agent or representatives shall conduct
33 hearings in the manner provided by law.

34 (e) ~~Six members of the committee~~ *A simple majority of the filled*
35 *committee seats* shall constitute a quorum and special meetings of
36 the committee shall be called by the executive officer upon written
37 request by two members of the committee.

38 (f) The members of the committee shall serve without
39 compensation, but shall receive their actual and necessary expenses
40 incurred in the performance of their duties on the committee.

1 However, no funds shall be disbursed for those purposes without
2 the prior approval of the department.

3 *(g) The chairperson may cancel a meeting if, in their discretion,*
4 *there is insufficient business to warrant convening a scheduled*
5 *meeting.*

6 *SEC. 9. Section 106690 of the Health and Safety Code is*
7 *amended to read:*

8 106690. (a) The committee shall keep a record of its *meetings*
9 *and proceedings.*

10 (b) The department shall maintain a register of all applications
11 for registration and retain examination papers and records
12 pertaining thereto for a length of time to be determined by the
13 department.

14 (c) (1) The department shall maintain a current registry of all
15 registered environmental health specialists and all environmental
16 health specialist trainees in the state.

17 (2) *The department shall make the registry required in*
18 *paragraph (1) publicly available on its internet website within 90*
19 *days of the administration of an examination.*

20 (d) Individuals registered under this article are responsible for
21 assuring that the department has a current mailing address for
22 them.