

Sunshine

a NIOSH Education and Research Center  
at the University of South Florida



Graduate Degrees in Occupational Safety at the College of Public Health

## Why Pursue a Career in Occupational Safety?

Protecting the safety of workers and the community is a very important and rewarding field. Occupational safety professionals achieve these goals by evaluating and controlling occupational hazards to prevent work-related injuries and promote worker health. The field of Occupational Safety is devoted to promote occupational health and safety of workers in the organizations. Safety Professionals focus on identifying hazardous conditions, practices and processes that may cause injuries and diseases. Then they determine where controls need to be implemented to reduce or eliminate hazards and advise if a new program or practice is required. Safety professionals may conduct training sessions for management, supervisors, and workers on health and safety practices and regulations to promote an understanding of a new or existing process. After implementation, they may monitor and evaluate the program's progress, making additional suggestions when needed workers or citizens of the community.

**Sunshine Education and Research Center**

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# Learning about Occupational Safety

## If I decide to earn a degree in Occupational Safety, what will this degree actually prepare me to do?

You will be able to:

- Recognize physical, chemical, and psychological safety hazards that cause disease/injury associated with occupations;
- Apply basic scientific and engineering principles to anticipate and identify actual potential safety and health hazards in the workplace;
- Select, use, and maintain appropriate types of personal protective equipment for control of worker exposures to physical health hazards;
- Conceptualize, develop, manage and evaluate occupational safety programs in industry and elsewhere;
- Communicate verbally and in writing to professional peers, labor, management and diverse community populations about the nature, risks, and remediation of occupational health hazards;
- Interpret and assure compliance with applicable governmental regulations and standards pertaining to occupational safety and health.

## What would I actually do as an Occupational Safety Professional?

If you pursue a career in Occupational Safety, you will be called upon to recognize, evaluate and control hazards – chemical, physical, biological, or psychological. For example, you might have to develop a safety training program for construction workers so that they know proper use of the ladder to prevent falling. Or you could be hired to inspect and evaluate workplace environments, equipment, and practices to ensure compliance with safety standards and government regulations.

## Where do Occupational Safety Professionals typically work?

Occupational Safety Specialist may work in a wide variety of jobs such as power plants, industry and manufacturing of all types, public utilities and agribusinesses. They may also work in settings such as risk management, government, education, consulting, construction, healthcare, waste management, retail, and transportation. There are a wide variety of both types of jobs, and workplaces for Occupational Safety Professionals.

## How much money can I earn as an Occupational Safety Professional?

According to the Occupational Outlook Handbook (see <http://www.bls.gov/oco/>) the median annual earnings of occupational health and safety professionals were over \$50,000 in May 2004. Currently, entry level jobs pay about that much, and with 5 years experience and achieving Certified Safety Professional status, you can expect to earn \$75,000 to \$100,000 or more.

## How Can I learn more about Occupational Safety?

Easy! Simply contact us at the USF College of Public Health. Or go to the American Society of Safety Engineers website at <http://www.asse.org> for more information.

# The Occupational Safety Program at USF

## What can I do to prepare myself for the College of Public Health's Occupational Safety Program?

- Students with an undergraduate degree in science, engineering or psychology tend to perform well in the Occupational Safety program. Undergraduate courses in communications, humanities and social sciences highly recommended but not required.
- Applicants should have a minimum undergraduate GPA of 3.0 for upper division courses or GRE scores of at least 450 on the verbal portion and 550 on the quantitative portion to be qualified for admission.
- Occupational health related work experience is beneficial but not required.

## How can I learn about the application process?

Go to: <http://health.usf.edu/publichealth/degereqs.html> to view additional information pertaining to admissions, and applications requirements and procedures for the College

## Who can I contact at the College of Public Health/ERC?

Please contact Dr. Thomas Bernard at 813-6629 or [tbernard@health.usf.edu](mailto:tbernard@health.usf.edu).

## What types of courses will I take?

- Students will take the required COPH core courses in Epidemiology, Biostatistics, Principles of Health Policy and Management, Environmental and Occupational Health, and Social and Behavioral Sciences Applied to Health.
- Students will also take required concentration courses, including Occupational Safety Engineering, Safety Management Principles and Practices, Safety and Health Administration, Industrial Hygiene, Environmental & Occupational Toxicology, Industrial Ergonomics, Occupational Health Law, and Engineering System Safety.
- Students may select from an extensive array of elective courses, including: Occupational Health Risk Assessment, Environmental Health Law, Safety and Health Aspects of Plant Operations, and Community Air Pollution.

## What Makes the USF College of Public Health's Occupational Safety Program 'stand out'?

The program is widely recognized for its excellent curriculum and faculty. Students can obtain training support through the Sunshine ERC NIOSH Training grant. COPH OS graduates have had an excellent pass rate on the certification exam as well as success in obtaining employment after graduation.

**For more information, please see our website at:** <http://health.usf.edu/publichealth/eohsafetymph.html>