

# **New Perspectives on Environmental Health**

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The National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) recently approved newly-revised definitions of the terms “Environmental Health” and “Environmental Health Professional” at their July 2013 meeting in Crystal City, Virginia. The approval was the culmination of a year-long process of reviewing previously published definitions, proposing revisions to the NEHA board of directors, publishing draft definitions for public comment, conducting an opinion survey, incorporation of public comment, and final revision.

## **Definition of Environmental Health**

Environmental health is the science and practice of preventing human injury and illness and promoting well-being by:

- identifying and evaluating environmental sources and hazardous agents; and
- limiting exposures to hazardous physical, chemical, and biological agents in air, water, soil, food, and other environmental media or settings that may adversely affect human health.

## **Definition of Environmental Health Professional or Specialist**

An environmental health professional or specialist is a practitioner with appropriate academic education and training and registration or certification to:

- investigate, sample, measure, and assess hazardous environmental agents in various environmental media and settings;
- recommend and apply protective interventions that control hazards to health;
- develop, promote, and enforce guidelines, policies, laws, and regulations;
- develop and provide health communications and educational materials;
- manage and lead environmental health units within organizations;
- perform systems analysis;
- engage community members to understand, address and resolve problems;
- review construction and land use plans and make recommendations;
- interpret research utilizing science and evidence to understand the relationship of health and environment; and,
- interpret data and prepare technical summaries and reports.

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