

In November 2007, the Environmental Practice Specialty (EPS) surveyed its membership to better understand how members balance their safety, health and environmental responsibilities and how this has affected their career.

Of its nearly 2,000 members, EPS received close to 90 responses. Members' comments are listed below.

Q: What is your job title and how did you end up in your current position?

“Director, Scientific and Technical Initiatives...long story.”

“Safety Manager. I found out through employees who work for the company that an EHS position was open and decided to interview.”

“Vice President for an environmental remediation firm.”

“Safety Manager. Position responsibilities began with developing a hazcom program and evolved into present duties as EH&S Program Administrator.”

“Environmental Coordinator. Promoted when previous employee left.”

“EHS Manager. I began as Safety Coordinator (EHS Coordinator). The company is relatively young, and the previous person in position did not effectively push all EHS programs or procedure development. After a few months, the new executive leadership group realized value and promoted me to manager status so I would have signature authority for purchase approval.”

“Regional Manager, Safety & Environmental Affairs. I have been at my current position for approximately 13 years and have more than 18 years' experience in EHS (with the greatest concentration in the environmental field).”

“Risk Control/EHS Manager. I was recruited from a master's EHS program. I also pushed EHS issues fervently, resulting in advancement to Corporate Director.”

“Vice President. Progressive career growth and goal-oriented execution.”

“HSE Manager. I applied for a new position with a new company.”

“Senior Environmental and Safety Specialist.”

“Environmental, Health and Safety Manager. I was hired into the position about 13 months ago.”

“I am a consultant, CSP and degreed chemical engineer. I started with OSHA in 1983 and had many safety jobs. I started environmental work in 1986. I have managed industrial hygiene programs and have worked consulting, government and corporate.”

“Senior Environmental Scientist. After graduating from college with a bachelor of science degree in science and math (major in microbiology), I worked as an Environmental Specialist nine years ago, and after a few changes, am now where I am today.”

“Project Loss Prevention Supervisor. I teach first-aid and safety classes for an apprenticeship program as well as for a journeymen upgrade (continuing education) training program. Over the years, various employers asked for assistance with safety responsibilities, although I was employed as a tradesman. My current employer approached me when they learned of my background and asked me to take over the jobsite safety program. They eventually offered me a permanent position as Project Loss Prevention Supervisor.”

“Safety and Environmental Manager.”

“Director of EH&S. I was selected from a national search.”

“President. Bought the company.”

“Environmental Health and Safety Coordinator. I attained a bachelor of science degree in industrial safety. This is my first job out of college.”

“Director, Labor Relations.”

“EHS Program Manager/EHS Group Supervisor. I saw that the employer needed an EHS program and rolled with it.”

“Director, Safety and Compliance. My current position is the result of external review of corporate governance. Identified resource gaps led to the splitting of my previous portfolio into four positions—Director, Health Services; Director, Field Support; Director, Program Delivery; Director, Safety and Compliance.”

“Manager of Health and Safety. I was manager of Environmental, Health and Safety until April 2006 when a post-merger reorganization separated ‘E’ from ‘H&S.’”

“EHS Manager. Worked my way up through the ranks.”

“Senior Project Manager. I networked at a Greater Houston Industrial Hygiene Council meeting with one of the owners of an EHS consulting firm. Since I have an extensive environmental background and am also a CIH, I showed I could add value, as the firm did not have a strong environmental practice but was asked by its long-term health and safety clients to take on environmental projects.”

“Vice President, Business and Corporate Development. I was promoted from Vice President, Safety Services.”

“President. I founded the firm in 1979.”

“Director, Safety and Environmental. This position was created after the safety and environmental departments combined.”

“Safety and Environmental Director. I worked for my current employer in an unrelated capacity when this position was created and I was offered the job.”

“By education, I am an Environmental Engineer. I started out working in solid waste for an environmental consulting firm. I later transferred to industry where I worked in an environmental compliance department that provided a multidisciplinary exposure (i.e., process control, hazardous waste management, air and water monitoring, wastewater treatment, etc.). Afterwards, I made the transition to safety and embarked on a five-year experiment that culminated in my becoming a CSP. Now, I am attempting to transition to industrial hygiene.”

“Vice President for a consulting company. I have known my boss, the Senior Vice President, for more than ten years. When he learned I was out of work, he hired me.”

“Hazardous Substance Scientist. I spent many years as a EH&S Manager at a nonhazardous waste landfill. Based on that experience, I was able to apply for and obtain my current position.”

“President/CEO. I started my corporation five years ago.”

“Project Director, Safe Schools/Healthy Students.”

“Corporate EHS Director. I was promoted from a company-level EHS Director position within the same organization.”

“Environmental Health and Safety Consultant.”

“Environmental, Health and Safety Manager. I started in this field in the mid-1980s due to increased federal environmental regulations. I enjoy the EHS field tremendously, as there is always something new to challenge you.”

“Environmental Health and Safety Manager. I was hired as an air pollution specialist after working for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and at a consulting firm where I earned my CIH in air pollution specialty. I was promoted to Environmental Manager one year later. Two years later, I acquired safety and loss prevention.”

“Director of EHS.”

“Safety and Health Officer.”

“HSE Manager. I passed through the ranks from HSE Officer to HSE Facilitator to HSE coordinator and eventually to HSE Manager.”

“Consultant. I would not shut up about problems!”

“Manager of Safety. I was interviewed, and based on my previous experience, I was offered the position.”

“Senior Environmental and Safety Coordinator. I began in safety with environmental responsibilities added during a job transfer.”

“EH&S Engineer. When I moved into a quality manager’s role, safety was passed along. Since then, I have worked in both environmental and safety.”

“Environmental, Health and Safety Manager. I responded to an advertisement in the area paper after my EHS Coordinator job at another company was eliminated when they were sold.”

“Safety Program Administrator. The company contacted me and asked if I wanted the position.”

“Senior HES Specialist. After almost 20 years of environmental regulatory experience, I returned to school and picked up a second master degree in industrial health and safety (my first master’s is in environmental science). My current employer is leveraging my background in all fields.”

“Senior H&S Specialist. Someone announced that he was looking for this position at an AIHA meeting.”

“Safety Coordinator. I returned to the safety profession after a three-year absence.”

“Senior Environmental and OSH Specialist. I was hired as an environmental specialist. When my company realized I had a dual background, I started taking over OSH responsibilities.”

“Director, Regulatory Management by promotion within the department.”

“Safety Officer. I am a chemist, and for 14 years, I ran an industrial pretreatment program. My second hat was safety. My boss decided that our department needed a dedicated safety person. I received a title change, and my priorities changed so that safety takes up almost all of my time.”

“Environmental Health and Safety Manager. I gradually acquired knowledge about EHS, first at another company and then here. I attended seminars, conferences and graduate-level courses, read regulations and learned on the job.”

“Manager, Corporate Quality Assurance and Environmental, Health and Safety. I worked for many years in quality assurance, which also fell under the EHS manager (at that time, EHS relied heavily on outside consultants). My manager decided to take a transfer to Florida into a technical position. My Vice President asked if I could do safety. I said ‘yes,’ but they would have to back me up with extensive training. They did. I spent two years in a workplace health and safety program, took many private EHS training courses, attended meetings, shadowed consultants and obtained my CSP. The company spent much on my training, but I think they got their money’s worth.”

“Consultant in own business. After years of working for others and gaining experience, I decided it was time to go it alone.”

“Corporate Director, Safety, Health and Environmental Affairs. I was recruited to the company from an environmental engineering position with the U.S. Air Force. I became Assistant Director and learned about the company/position for 20 months until my predecessor retired.”

“Resource Protection Division Head. I started my career in shipboard environmental research and development. In the same organization, I moved to manage part of the facility’s environmental program, managing the lifecycle of hazardous materials. I added related hazardous materials/waste safety responsibilities and then expanded to manage more safety programs. I took over the combined safety and environmental program office as Resource Protection Division Head.”

“Environmental Engineer. My previous position with the company was in a research area. One area I worked in involved reducing stack emissions and waste treatment plant improvements.”

“HSSE Manager due to workload at corporate level.”

“Safety and Environmental Coordinator. I was a research and development chemist up until this job. I took this job to get back home.”

“Environmental Manager. An insurance consultant recommended that the company add an industrial safety management position to coordinate with agencies such as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). As hazardous waste management and the Clean Water Act came to the forefront, those duties were assigned to the industrial safety position. Eventually, the time spent on environmental issues became great enough that management agreed to split the position into one overseeing environmental issues and one overseeing worker safety issues.”

“EHS Manager. I started out training our emergency response team since I was certified at the Firefighter II level, an emergency response technician, and became trained in hazardous materials response. That led to me health and safety. Our plant engineer, who was a professional engineer, retired and I became responsible for environmental affairs. I also handle the workers’ compensation program. I am also the environmental management representative for the ISO 14001 program.”

“Division EH&S Manager. Through hard work, experience and a willingness to learn how to help others.”

“Consultant. My degree is specific to environmental, and I have more than 27 years’ work experience within EPA Region 6 and the private sector.”

“Corporate Health and Safety Manager. I was promoted internally after the initial hire.”

“CEO/President. I started my own consulting company after 30 years in EH&S management with one major international company.”

“Corporate EH&S Manager. I was first hired as the Corporate Safety Manager, but because of my past environmental management experience, I was asked to take over environmental as well as safety.”

“Senior Industrial Hygienist. My academic studies were toward environmental, but I could get into health and safety easier and without waiting to complete my degree. Once in health and safety, the local career opportunities were better. Since it is virtually impossible to get an engineering degree without going back to school full-time and most environmental firms require engineering, that exclusive career path is basically closed unless you choose to focus on it from the beginning.”

“Environmental Health and Safety Manager.”

“Safety and Security Coordinator.”

“EH&S Coordinator. I moved to a different state and applied for the position.”

“Health, safety and environment manager. I was promoted internally and transferred from an overseas location.”

“Safety Coordinator. I applied for this position four months after graduating college and was hired within one week.”

“Environmental, Health and Safety Engineer. I applied for the position online.”

“Safety Manager. This new position was created and offered to me.”

“Principal Risk Services Consultant. I have 32 years’ EHS experience in private and public organizations.”

“Senior Safety Specialist. I obtained this position because the company for which I worked in the past combined their environmental and safety departments together. I currently work in construction safety.”

“Regional Health and Safety Manager. I was hired into the position through a recruiter.”

“Corporate Manager, Safety and Security. A search firm recruited me for this position.”

“Corporate Safety Specialist. I started as an EHS Director for an onsite project. When the previous corporate safety specialist left company, I was laterally transferred into the position. Prior to that, I was a senior environmental trainer at a large military installation.”

“HS&E Specialist. I pursued a safety career after college.”

“Environmental Engineer. I started out as an environmental technician and worked my way up. I also earned a master degree along the way.”

“Safety Specialist. I applied for the job 20 years ago and was hired.”

“Senior Safety and Environmental Specialist. I started out as an Environmental Coordinator. Through mergers and acquisitions in industry, I received safety responsibilities as well as health and human resources.”

“Senior Advisor, EH&S. I let it slip that I knew something about environmental issues.”

Q: How do you meet or manage the competing expectations of upper management to ensure compliance for both the health and safety discipline and environmental discipline?

“I try to prioritize action items based on SUG—Seriousness (potential outcome), Urgency (how soon do we need to react?) and Growth (what happens if we do not react in time?). It is the only way I have found to keep everything in front of me. You cannot be successful without setting up this type of priority system.”

“Expectations are complimentary, not competing.”

“This is the biggest challenge I face. Compliance frequently shifts from one arena to the other. Management expects compliance without understanding the complexity of the issues.”

“Push back when possible for safety issues when they are not compliance-driven. Encourage management to obtain needed expertise from staff and not to 'make do' with current staff.”

“It is tough to say at this point. Focus has been on basic policy and program development, as there was little to nothing in place when I came on board. It is a foreign-owned company, and my expectations were significantly different from theirs. However, they now realize that everyone must be treated exactly the same, and I hold foreign guests/contractors to the same accountability as American workers. How things can change in six months when this happens!”

“My greatest challenge is convincing management that EHS compliance is part of doing business.”

“You must be very tenacious and develop angelic patience. Stay focused on world-class goals and always speak the truth to power positions. Never relent or give weak facts.”

“Provide recommendations based on broad, technical and business analysis and documentation.”

“I make sure management understands the implications if the environmental side of HSE is not considered—it could close the facility. Also, many environmental projects have a safety (exposure) reduction benefit.”

“Work as a team—we all have the same goals.”

“EHS staff.”

“They are all related when you are able to work all programs. Once you fully understand the ins and outs, you gain efficiency and are better able to manage what initially appears to be disparate programs.”

“Stress that environmental compliance is just as important as health and safety.”

“I am fortunate to work for a company that embraces safety at the upper-management levels. My biggest challenge is finding practical ways to implement programs to educate and change practices based on misconceptions/myths that field personnel have accepted as fact (some for many years).”

“Networking, electronic subscriptions and magazine subscription.”

“I do not find the expectations competing. We have a mission statement in support of the employer’s mission. We establish annual goals in support of our mission based on program deficiencies identified in the previous year’s quality assurance assessments and program growth.”

“Since I am upper management, both requirements are addressed from the start of all projects.”

“Work closely with TCEQ in conjunction with thorough education in safety practices, safety culture, safety regulations, etc.”

“By managing labor contracts.”

“Persistence and sticking my neck out (not without risk). As a seventh-level manager in a top-heavy organization, it is important to cultivate a personal business relationship with a front-office mover (with regard to EHS oversight). This works well until the mover moves on.”

“Issues are not competing. All losses affect productivity. The degree of intervention is based on risk assessments.”

“There is some overlap between ‘E’ and ‘H&S.’ However, ‘E’ is more permit-driven whereas ‘H&S’ is more process-driven. We have been the most successful when we have been able to integrate both ‘E’ and ‘H&S’ into the design and planning phases of work.”

“I talked to them about expectations and rolled out a roadmap to achieve OSHA VPP and ISO 14001.”

“I am trying to bring in more environmental work while addressing existing clients’ requests to handle existing needs. I have helped the firm’s younger industrial hygienists complete some long-delayed reports on IH projects and helped them learn how to draw supportable conclusions from the data they generated.”

“HES compliance remains the top priority for our company if we are to continue to be successful and compete against our competition.”

“I do not think there are ‘competing’ expectations. We have robust safety and environmental management systems that allow us to meet expectations. The challenge will be to combine the two systems into one management system.”

“I do not have any conflicts with local upper management. At the corporate level, H&S and environment are separate departments and these departments do not communicate much, at least at my level. As a result, corporate H&S and environment do not realize that I have other responsibilities and cannot devote 100% of my time to their issues.”

“I walk a very fine line between production and environmental/safety, and I use a persistent and non-confrontational approach. This seems to work for me. It may not be the best approach, but I believe every organization is unique and requires its own unique solution. I measure my progress by the evolution of the company’s safety behavior and culture. When I look at the past five years, I can see considerable progress and change, but the work is never-ending and requires persistence and dedication to move forward.”

“I do this for my clients since my background is in both safety (CSP) and environmental (CHMM).”

“Clearly communicate to upper management that both disciplines expose the company to different types of liability. An ineffective safety program exposes the company to liability inside the plant (the workers), while an ineffective environmental compliance program exposes the company to liability outside the plant (the community).”

“I am a consultant; therefore, different companies have varying expectations. It is not so difficult with ISO 14001 or OHSAS 18001 companies. On the other hand, you must show Upper Management that you can affect the bottom line.”

“Relationships and documentation.”

“We focus on safety with environment a close second. It is just a matter of prioritizing, organizing and periodically reviewing requirements for each operating location.”

“By getting buy-in as much as possible and by talking to people like they are people, not robots. I try to get them to understand why they need to do something. Our upper management is very supportive of our EHS programs.”

“Both environmental and safety professionals work for me. I also have sought education specifically in safety and industrial hygiene, earning a CSP and CIH.”

“I outline expectations for safety, industrial hygiene and environmental. We strive to meet those goals throughout the year. We treat them as three disciplines.”

“I attend both safety and environmental conferences and workshops, and I also subscribe to JJ Keller online.”

“Most times, the key environmental management is contracted out or a direct environmental specialist is employed to handle that aspect of HSE.”

“We have developed specific objectives in both areas. Only the COO can override a safety and/or environmental directive, best work practice or compliance directions. These were based on our written philosophy statement and commitment in these areas.”

“Time is always short and priorities must be made. Because of higher visibility, fine potential and regulatory inspection frequency, environmental issues often win out over safety. However, both are accomplished to a high degree of compliance.”

“Talk and show the data. I have learned the old concept that if we do not do this or that, OSHA or EPA will send you to jail. I save that for a real battle to be fought. Have your facts straight before you begin the conversation and know when to shut up and sit down.”

“Prioritize and communicate your plans.”

“Prioritize goals and follow industrial hygiene, safety, and environmental recommendations as well as regulatory agencies’ recommendations and laws. Also follow company policy.”

“My current employer does not have a system whereby environmental competes with health and safety. They are seen as an integrated whole.”

“I mostly do health and safety but would prefer to do more environmental.”

“I take care of the safety issues and have a consultant take care of the environmental issues.”

“Patience and a squirt gun filled with water! Just kidding, except for the patience part. Most of the time, I must show management and personnel that safety and environmental can coexist together without additional cost. I stress educating personnel on safety requirements while completing their environmental activities. I have realized that some upper management are not trained on either safety or environmental, and with just a little supervisor/management training on the safety requirements, I get more support.”

“Risk management and prioritization. Health, safety, process safety, distribution, environmental and any number of other regulatory risks are identified and assessed. Assessments consider likelihood, impacts and safeguards. Plans and efforts are then focused at higher-risk items.”

“First, no lies. Ever. This makes it simple to remember that if it is unsafe, it is not worth doing. Environmental compliance takes a distant second seat.”

“Prioritize needs and address issues according to that priority. Consultants are used when needed.”

“I am in a very unique situation. Very autonomous, no one micromanaging me. I have a steady, robust budget, and everyone takes what I say seriously. All I need to do is stay in honest, factual communication with upper management and with all employees.”

“Very strict set of compliance and continuous improvement metrics, peer comparison of metrics and comparison with outside aspiration companies.”

“I do not believe there is competition among compliance programs.”

“You must be able to prioritize needs and be able to grasp resources as they become available. You often must think outside the box to be the most effective.”

“I use two manuals, which are now part of corporate-wide documents to manage HSE. I also use agency and association newsletters for updates. I am a member of a business roundtable HSE committee, which holds monthly meeting to discuss issues and concerns.”

“I struggle with this all the time. I try to convince our attorney to back me up or to bring up an important issue to get something done or launched. EHS is not a priority in my company, so it is a constant struggle.”

“Our company split the responsibilities between an Environmental Manager and an Industrial Safety Manager. There is some overlap involve both positions jointly.”

“It is very difficult some days. I could be doing environmental reports or research and someone gets injured and needs care. Then I need to do reports for the injury.”

“Plan with measurable goals, work long hours and prioritize the tasks to be done.”

“Compliance with the regulations when management allows and budget surplus exists.”

“We are an environmental consulting organization, so my actual exposure to environmental regulation has been limited. We help clients with environmental concerns, but we do not have significant issues within the company.”

“I must meet and manage these with my clients’ upper management, which is more difficult than if in a single entity. Be straightforward, explain ramifications of non-compliance and lead by example.”

“Many long hours and hard work. Setting priorities and maintaining focus is critical. It is easy to get overwhelmed, so you must work closely with other departments and work through others. You cannot do it all by yourself, so look for others who are willing to take on some responsibilities. Push daily air, water and waste inspection requirements down to the plant level. The bottom line is to leverage resources and technology to your advantage.”

“I set priorities or manage the priorities dictated to me.”

“Careful calendar organization.”

“Separate environmental from safety and health since both areas are increasingly different and require expertise and time that one person alone cannot normally provide.”

“The expectation is that we do not have any violations from OSHA or Notice of Violations from EPA. Ignorance of standards is not an option. First, you must understand what standards exist and what the repercussions are for non-compliance. Management needs education (just the need to know, not a detailed course). They must have a cost analysis so they can weigh the cost of compliance. After that, it is implementation and enforcement. Of course, enforcement is the most difficult part.”

“I have chosen to use the ISO standard framework to integrate the two disciplines. Presenting a consistent approach to both seems to make it easier for management to understand and support.”

“As the first safety coordinator, not ES&H, managing both areas is not in my grasp. The programs are subpar, so that is my priority for now.”

“By setting goals and getting management to agree to and visibly support them. This includes incentivizing these goals.”

1. Have good people who will work with you to help you accomplish the environmental inspections.
 2. Install a good recordkeeping system.
 3. Use computer programs for reminders, updates, etc.
 4. Install/use computer programs for recordkeeping as well.
 5. Try to incorporate environmental requirements into the normal job tasks of others so that records are just part of what they already do.
 6. Report directly to the site manager and keep fully informed of the status of safety and environmental issues.”
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“Establish credibility in both disciplines and work closely with stakeholders in each field to ensure that both sides see each other’s interests and find common ground on which to proceed.”

“I perform field assessments, perform training, attend training and have trainers visit our facilities to train our employees.”

“Our core values include both health and safety for our employees and care for the environment so I do not see them as competing expectations. The real competition comes between protecting employees and the environment versus profitability. Managing this situation requires that I ensure that requirements make sense and that management and employees know and understand what the requirements are and why they must be in compliance.”

“Network with government agencies, subscribe to environmental monitoring publications and use environmental consultants to audit and advise on requirements and non-compliance.”

“Unfortunately, I seldom have a chance to practice the environmental aspects of my background. I now am limited to advising onsite clients. I maintained the environmental discipline because that is where my true passions lie.”

“It is a difficult responsibility, but I am able to outsource some environmental work to a third party.”

“Working together daily, reading e-mail updates from various websites and consulting firms and keeping current on training classes and updates.”

“It is all under one umbrella in preventing injuries.”

“Do not sweat the small stuff. Ensure compliance in both arenas and do not worry about the lack of creativity in safety training.”

“In our company, they do not compete. EH&S is a core value, and it is part of all projects.”

Q: What suggestions do you have for those entering the environmental practice from the safety side?

“Be competent in hard science and math. Environmental is much more numbers- and engineering-driven than some safety areas.”

“Read and research. Do not get overwhelmed. Give yourself time to find out the things you do not know. If in doubt, act on the side of caution.”

“The more you know, the better off you are.”

“Specialize in a finite number of areas. Do not be seen as a general practitioner. Have an understanding of the ‘whole’ with extensive knowledge of a select few.”

“Be willing to start from scratch, like I did when learning safety. Do not assume you can figure it out on your own—you must ask questions. The fines on the environmental side far outweigh the safety fines.”

“Do not expect grand things! Expect small, incremental changes. Do not try to change the world your first year. Book knowledge is not the same as real-world experience and practical approaches to problem solving, especially when you must deal with budgets and accounting. You may even be in a market that is struggling to make ends meet. This only increases the challenge for an EHS professional. You will need to learn to prioritize your objectives and to work from there (mine has been to stop serious workplace injuries and to prevent catastrophic leaks and spills.) You must be reactive while planning proactive (corrective actions) at the same time. Then again, with my 20+ years’ experience and having worked for some of the best and worst companies, I might first want to ask why they want to enter the EHS profession. It is definitely a stressful occupation, and I often wonder why I got into it and how do I get out of it!”

“Environmental practice is more demanding and challenging than safety. Science education is extremely helpful, particularly when assessing remediation/treatment systems.”

“It is much more difficult for owners to digest cumbersome environmental politics and policies. One should realize that any organization can improve over 1, 5, 10, 20 years; the speed of improvement will be your greatest asset and curse (curse if you cannot get owners to agree).”

“Prioritize and develop a relationship with each regulator one at a time.”

“Sometimes environmental is less emotional than safety. Therefore, you must make the numbers talk and show the environmental and business benefits.”

“My master and bachelor degrees are in environmental health, so I went into safety from the environmental side. I would say I have learned the most by participating in corporate audits.”

“Take some training classes.”

“If you do not have a technical degree, you will be unprepared for environmental issues. In particular, chemistry and geology are mandatory. It is much easier to go from environmental to safety. In either field, communication skills are imperative, written and verbal.”

“Study the federal and state (and sometimes county/city) regulations.”

“Use your investigative skills and hazard assessment tools to identify and determine waste stream activities.”

“Study safety research from a systems implementation.”

“Plan to do the work safely from the start, and fewer problems will arise.”

“Safety takes creativity and personality; environmental takes tedious paperwork and attention to detail. These positions can be filled by one person, but they are very different jobs.”

“Obtain environmental certifications.”

“Practice and develop direct people skills. Be humble around workers.”

“Take some core environmental courses and mentor under an environmental specialist.”

“Be open to learning new things, but do not try to manage the two fields separately. They can be managed together, but philosophically, differences may exist. When I first took over as manager of the two groups (‘E’ and ‘H&S’), I found it interesting that ‘H&S’ folks felt that environmental was the ‘sexier’ of the two fields, and the ‘E’ folks felt that ‘H&S’ was the ‘sexy’ one getting the lion’s share of management’s attention.”

“My first boss taught me back in 1995 that if you are afraid to give a 110% everyday because of the company mindset (money, do not rock the boat, etc.), quit because they just want someone to blame for accidents.”

“Remember that much of environmental problem solving is mass balance while keeping track of exactly which chemical species are regulated and which are not. Learn as much about chemistry as you can.”

“Be open. Let the environmental people tell you their thoughts, process the information and begin dialogue. Take short courses based on current hot issues within your company.”

“Bring yourself up to date with environmental regulations and practices applicable to hazardous waste, underground storage tanks, waste minimization for both hazardous and non-hazardous waste, water quality, which includes storm water runoff, air quality (for both indoor and outdoor applications) and lead and asbestos abatement.”

“Figure out early where the regulatory expertise resides (people inside the organization or outside the organization). Depending on available resources, the safety person may or may not need to learn the

details of environmental compliance. Safety skills will help on the proactive side of environmental impact reduction.”

“Be aware that environmental regulations are not as easily accessible as health and safety regulations. I operate in a state with a state environmental regulatory agency. The state agency has various divisions that regulate certain aspects of the environment. Sometimes different divisions have unique authority over the same operation. These divisions do not always communicate with each other and/or educate the regulated entity that other environmental provisions may apply. For example, gasoline storage tanks are regulated under oil control (water pollution) programs and air emission (air pollution) programs. The water regulators may not tell you that air regulations also apply.”

“Learn how to deal effectively with people. Behaviors toward safety are not always positive and forthcoming, and you must convince people that it is in their best interest to comply with and implement good safety practices into the work culture to protect human health and property.”

“Read, read, read. Get involved with the local CHMM group and build up your network. Sometimes it is not what you know but who you know.”

“Be prepared to work more closely with frontline workers and less with regulators.”

“Network at chapter meetings, matriculate in a certificate program or master’s in environmental studies program.”

“Read. Environmental laws are, if laid page by page, higher than the U.S. tax code. I would also recommend working with a mentor until comfortable. A misplaced telephone call or e-mail message could be disastrous.”

“Know the rules and regulations and obtain experience in various areas.”

“People skills are paramount in both of these fields. Knowing how to talk with people and getting them to see why they need to do something is of prime importance for buy-in.”

“You cannot master everything. Know what you need for each day and what you need help on initially. There is greater complexity in things like new source air permitting versus filing reports. EPA inspections are much more frequent. Know your inspector and your history.”

“Broaden your horizons as soon as possible in preparing to take on the responsibilities of both disciplines.”

“Join ASSE and become an actively engaged Environmental Practice Specialty member.”

“Environmental practice is a broad aspect of HSE. It is better to specialize in environmental and not to mix the two aspects.”

“Be prepared for some political letdowns.”

“Go to the closest regulatory agency office and meet with the regulators face to face. Ask them to concur with your interpretations of how the requirements impact your operations and understand how to make the required submittals. The first few times, you should hand-carry all submittals to them and establish relationships. Buy an environmental tracking software program that allows you to track your permits, generate best practice programs, record all training and conduct internal auditing. Put the agency on distribution of your ‘official’ correspondence. Invite the agency to tour your facilities and participate in any training you conduct. Get them involved as a ‘partner.’”

“Keep perspective. Although management attention and value are often weighted toward the environmental side, safety is the protection of people, whereas environmental duties are often regulatory-driven and may not add protection to people or to the environment.”

“Listen to old EH&S folks like me and know that we have ‘been there and done that’ and have the scars to show for it. Too many of the new folks think they already know it and can get it across. Know your audience before you give a presentation.”

“I came from the environmental side to the safety practice, but I would suggest participation in a local organization like ASSE so you can meet peers and build professional contacts.”

“Stay true to yourself and practice the Code of Ethics for each specialty.”

“Safety is much more risk-based with regulations designed to decrease a hazard, whereas environmental regulations in the U.S. often present much more detailed requirements on how to comply, how to report, when to train, etc.”

“Environmental is easier.”

“Take environmental courses offered by local schools and by state and local governments.”

“Check that environmental scientists wear the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) when sampling. My biggest concern is that many environmental personnel do not realize that certain PPE is not universal. Most environmental scientists will wear a 4-gauge nitrile for all sampling jobs, not realizing that 4-gauge nitrile does not protect you from all of the analytes you are sampling for. They will also not wear the appropriate foot, eye or body protection. If you are a consultant, make sure you realize that when you remind them of the safety rules/regulations, they are not suggestions—they must actually follow them.

In consulting, I find few personnel who have any actual training in safety, and since they are also used to giving clients suggestions, some feel that when you give them a safety rule or regulation, they only need to follow it if they want to.

Ensure that personnel who write and certify HSPs are actually qualified to do so. I have professional engineers, geologists, etc. who feel that because they hold that designation, they can write a HSP. Most of the ones I have reviewed are from templates and are missing information or do not cover all of the job hazards.

After years of doing both disciplines, I have found that when you are educating people on safety and trying to get them to follow the rules and regulations, many will think you are taking it ‘too personally,’ especially when personnel repeatedly do not follow what you know is a policy, rule or regulation. I just remind them about what regulation, policy or procedure I am referencing and move on. Let it roll off your back because in 17 years that has never changed. As a safety professional, people will always be irritated with you even if they like you as a person. I just smile, talk in a straight tone and repeat myself. Repeating yourself is actually a good tool because it helps you retain policies and regulations. After a while, you will be a walking, talking safety encyclopedia.”

“It is much like safety: learn quickly the areas of exposure and risk (air, water, waste or other) and understand the systems and standards around those items first. Transfer the basis of good programs—plan, do, check, act—into the environmental arena just as you have done with safety.”

“No lies. Ever. This includes no shading the facts or lies by omission. A good aphorism is that ‘it isn’t the crime that kills you, it’s the cover-up.’”

“Read a lot and attend seminars.”

“Take any courses you can on environmental regulations. Ask questions of consultants who knock on your door. Network with others in the practice at meetings and ensure that any position you take has a decent budget and includes people to assist you. If you are in charge, start your tenure with an EHS employee attitude/perception survey so that you can see where you are when you start and can chart how you will go over the years. Repeat the survey every year or two.”

“Obtain a solid educational background in environmental regulations and procedures.”

“Take courses in basic engineering/geology principles and mathematics if you are not experienced in those areas.”

“Get educated. Pay attention to compliance first, especially permits or anything that could result in a fine. Know what goes on in your organization.”

“Regulatory changes directly drive the environmental discipline. Industry standards do not affect compliance. The environmental discipline is more technically oriented whereas safety is more people-oriented.”

“Learn to interpret the legalese in regulations and treat your jobsite like your home and the employees as family members. If you would not do it at home or accept conditions at home, have the same attitude at work. Protect your employees and co-workers as you would your own family and be proactive.”

“Environmental is different from safety. Environmental compliance has more self-reporting and inspections. It is more black and white and tends to have more enforcement activities.”

“Many state environmental agencies have workshops concerning discharge permits, waste regulations, etc. and hold an annual trade fair/conference for which you must obtain management support to attend. Although many consultants provide training workshops, you can often get more support from management to attend an agency-sponsored session. You will not learn environmental compliance overnight—you need a two- to two-and-a-half-year learning curve. You will also need copies of all pertinent regulations. Plan to spend one hour per day reading regulations to become familiar with what applies to your company. Most state agencies have their regulations available online.”

“Become educated about your environmental area. Depending on the size of the company, you may need to know about every thing or just a single aspect. Do not try to memorize—know what resources are available and what works for you.”

“Go to school and learn the basics of regulatory law, historical development and current expectations from state authority.”

“Unless you have a specific degree or have attained environmental registration, do not do it.”

“Get involved and meet with group members as much as possible.”

“Realize that OSHA is the minimum requirement for compliance and that the standards are subject to interpretation. EPA Acts are mandatory and are not subject to individual interpretation; therefore, non-compliance with an Act carries serious consequences. Learn to communicate with all reviewers by telephone, fax, e-mail and in person, if possible.”

“I would recommend that they get as much knowledge as possible by attending specific seminars on various topics. Start with a broad-based environmental seminar. Then attend more focused air, water and waste training seminars. I would recommend working with consultants on complex air permit issues until they feel comfortable handling them. Then I would recommend attending additional college-level courses.”

“Learn from examples. Too often regulations and other guidance do not provide adequate details on what is really required or expected. A previous example can be far more instructive.”

“Pay attention to your calendar, sample early and mail all reports two weeks before deadline.”

“Treat things holistically. Do not lose sight that we are dealing with people. You must touch the intellect and heart of people to do the right thing, whether it is protecting themselves or the environment.”

“A range of options on education and development are now available. Look into their company’s development assistance program (if it has one) and use it to develop the environmental competency. When looking at a degree or course, choose health and safety with an environmental aspect included if possible.”

“With a dual degree in safety and environmental, I have the ability to link, understand and apply all concerns to a specific problem, should it arise.”

“Determine what processes generate air or water waste streams. Find out how the wastes are currently managed by talking to department managers and determine if any existing permits are in place. Then have a third-party environmental audit to ensure that nothing was missed. If at all possible, see if you can get management to agree to ISO 14001 certification. This is a great program that can help ensure environmental compliance while taking a proactive approach to lessening your facilities’ impacts, which has many advantages (i.e., great for your company’s public relations, reduced spending on waste generation, less likely to violate regulations/receive fines and penalties and good for employee morale).”

“Attend a general environmental regulations course to get a feel for how they may or may not coincide. Then get specific in-depth training on regulations, e.g., hazardous waste, air, water, transportation, etc., for which you are responsible.”

“Understand that a gradual learning curve must take place in both disciplines to allow integration of safety concepts into environmental practice.”

“Do not forget what you know; safety and environmental compliment each other. Just as we strive to save the environment in which we live, we are also trying to save a life.”

“Study up and expect to do it on you own. In these days of tight budgets and competing demands for available funding, most of our technical training is through self-study rather than through company-funded training. Network. Go to society meetings. Develop a team you can rely on to give you good advice.”

“Seek a fundamental understanding of the implication of your particular industry’s environmental compliance aspects. Subscribe to environmental publications to keep abreast of standards. Monitor environmental agency websites and become familiar with their resources. Attend workshops and seminars on the various regulations.”

“It is really the same principles; investigate, observe, research and advise in writing. However, many good environmental classes are available—everyone should have a solid understanding of air, water and RCRA.”

“Enroll in a few courses on environmental regulations and reporting. Also, try to pair up with an environmental consultant for a few months to learn.”

“Take as many classes as possible, sign up for as many newsletters that apply to your job, rely on co-workers for knowledge and shadow someone to learn from him or her.”

“I do both in my position. During audits, I look for environmental as well as safety concerns.”

“If you like people and want them to thrive in their chosen occupations, be ready and be careful. The environmental side of the business is impersonal and is likely to be the gorilla in the room.”

“Take advantage of all the learning opportunities that are available to you. Spend some time in the field with your consultants, talk to others in your department and participate in industry environmental organizations.”

Q: How has taking on the full scope of EH&S helped or hindered your career?

“Started as an environmental engineer. In the 1980s, my employer found it easier to train an environmental engineer in safety than to train a safety person in environmental engineering. Industrial hygiene was the last iteration.

Marketing, marketing, marketing—getting those credentials is all about personal marketing and opening up new pathways. Without my CSP and CIH, I would not be in my current position. The QEP was just a bonus for my employer.”

“It has helped because now I feel I can step into any situation at any organization and perform. Also, having both environmental and safety has helped me see how the two regulations are in fact sets of linked regulations.”

“As a remediation contractor, we have always done both, so I do not have this perspective. This perspective may apply more to fixed-based manufacturing facilities.”

“At first, it helped being a general practitioner. As each specific area became more complex, keeping up with the latest was difficult.”

“It is tough to have the expert role without any expertise. It has kept me employed, but I spend much time conducting research.”

“It has helped as far as the overall knowledge and respect you gain with co-workers and upper management. They really like to go to one person for answers and solutions. However, in my experience, companies with a single EHS person pay much less than companies that have specialized positions. This seems illogical to me. My lowest-paid positions have been with three companies where I did it all. My highest-paid positions were when I was exclusively a safety engineer or an industrial hygienist. I will take the safety-only aspect with more pay over the total EHS package.”

“Being a full-scope EHS professional has allowed me to be more of a generalist in the field, instead of a specialist in one area. This type of experience can hinder my future career path if the industry changes and companies revert back to hiring multiple disciplinary professionals.”

“It is a huge amount of work to keep up with the tsunami of regulations, but you will be considered an organizational leader when you can condense the regulations into business action opportunities for your company. You will also be exposed to people from all levels of all organizations, thus gaining savvy and experience. CEOs will rely on you for advice.”

“It has allowed me to speak to clients and regulators from a broader basis, thus increasing my creditability for giving solutions for systems rather than answering problems.”

“It has helped me. All three elements of EHS go hand in hand; there is overlap.”

“It has only helped. My degree is in environmental, but safety was an expected portion of my first job, which I learned by doing.”

“In a previous job, I started out as a Safety Specialist and ended up as the Corporate ESH and Security Manager. It actually hurt me because I became the dumping ground for all sorts of things without receiving the resources to get things done.”

“It has helped me. I can talk the talk in each area and fully understand how we can work together to reduce competing interests and demands on others’ time. Use of industrial hygiene data in particular has made a huge difference in how I manage environmental.”

“It has broadened my knowledge, making me more of an asset to the business.”

“My employer recently revised job descriptions and now incorporates an environmental scope in my job requirements. To progress within my company at this point, I must first demonstrate proficiency in this arena.”

“A general practice is necessary at the director level to communicate between my technical staff and our clients on the breadth of their responsibilities.”

“EH&S is my career.”

“It helped prepare me for contract management.”

“I like the variety. I think I am a ‘sociable engineer,’ so it is a nice fit.”

“It has given me broader employment opportunities and access to senior management. Environmental issues are very public versus occupational safety and health, which tend to be very internal.”

“It truly was a lot to keep up with, but I think it helped me grow tremendously. If the reorganization ‘bug’ comes around again, I am now one of only a few managers who have managed both areas. Since we all ultimately report up to a Vice President of EHS, I think it has helped me become more promotable.”

“It is been the best thing that ever happened to me—I love this field.”

“It has helped my career. Although I enjoy industrial hygiene the most, environmental work has always been more lucrative.”

“Taking on the full scope of EH&S was a tremendous boost that opened up broader opportunities in industry.”

“Helped—it is a crucial part of any consulting practice.”

“It helps keep me employed with my current employer.”

“I was not in the health and safety field when I accepted my current job. As such, I took on health and safety and environmental responsibilities at the same time. Regardless, having responsibility for environmental issues, along with health and safety, has been good for my career. The additional knowledge and experience makes me more marketable.”

“I believe that as an EH&S professional, my experience has enhanced my career. Today, I am a well-rounded professional with a good understanding of environmental and safety standards and their inter-relationships. Some people may think I am a generalist, but it all depends on your dedication to work and your breadth of knowledge.”

“I did not know any better and did what I had to do.”

“It has helped make me a more marketable professional. I am able to pursue jobs in the environmental or safety discipline.”

“Typically, environmental is higher compensation.”

“It has helped me become much more knowledgeable, and I am in a position to add value to the organization. However, the focus is diluted.”

“It has brought me more opportunities within the company as well as more interesting work and variety.”

“Becoming proficient in two disciplines has helped my career.”

“Most of the time, you will find yourself doing more safety than environmental. However, with an HSE management system, the whole can be managed together with the same strategy.”

“It takes all the support you can get to be successful—ASSE has been a great resource.”

“It is typically a wide-open arena that, if you go after it, will drastically improve your career. Many areas of direct crossover impact can assist in strengthening the other areas of your responsibilities. It has you communicating with executive management, and you are considered a member of senior management.”

“The broad base of knowledge tends to give me a broader view of the corporate objectives risks and opportunities for improvement. It has also given me more credibility within the corporation, in both the safety and environmental areas.”

“It is my path, my choice. I have been in purchasing manufacturing and quality. When it is all said and done, I enjoy what I do.”

“I think it has helped my career. EH&S are related in so many ways that it is difficult to separate them. Having the broad background and skills provides value to my career and for whom I work.”

“I would say it does not necessarily help or hinder. Each company is looking for expertise in different areas, and it is difficult to satisfy each company’s needs. Most job descriptions rarely validate what the company really needs. Apply for everything. It is not always what you know but how you would fit into the company.”

“Broadening from ‘E’ to ‘HES’ has made me much more marketable, and I think more able to contribute effectively to all three disciplines. Few people have advanced degrees in ‘E’ and ‘H&S.’ In future career moves, I will stand out from those who only have ‘E’ or who only have ‘H&S’ experience/training.”

“It helped because it forced me to learn the environmental side of the profession.”

“It has helped because, as a consultant, I have a wider range of projects I can work on than other personnel. My utilization is always high. It has hindered because some people know me as either environmental, safety and health, just environmental or just safety and health. I have been looked over for some jobs that interested me.

It has hindered me because in one job I have received both the safety and environmental responsibility, so my workload is much higher. Sometimes that is good because it helps with the cost of a project, but the 70+ hour weeks trying to do both jobs is not.”

“It has helped by broadening my exposure to all aspects of regulatory management and to an even larger audience and group of contacts within the company. It has not hindered my career at all.”

“I entered a field that promises to keep growing. I have the go-ahead to pursue additional certifications and training as long as they are in line with my employer’s interests.”

“It has not hindered me much. The environmental side does seem to take more research time, and I feel it is less ‘people-oriented.’ I can only ever hope to be a generalist.

It has helped me greatly with visibility, respect and the ability to work within every area of the company.”

“It has given me a broad spectrum as to what people need and expect.”

“As an early convert to the belief in the need for ‘full-scope’ management of these disciplines, I have been able to see the whole picture and often solve problems by arguing/using the environmental benefits when some managers were not convinced by the safety argument alone (and vice versa). The benefits of adding fire prevention/protection to the other two has given us additional leverage to achieve world-class SH&E performance.”

“I believe it has helped my career.”

“It has given me the opportunity to grow in several different areas and has reduced the possibility of burning out on one job category.”

“My career path within my organization is limited. I have only a narrow promotion path.”

“I do not know if it has helped or hurt, but now I feel type-casted as a long-term EHS professional. I cannot imagine being able to successfully change careers at this point without a lot of hardship.”

“By becoming well-versed in both environmental and safety regulations, I was better able to establish my value to the company.”

“I think it has helped, but you need to look at the whole picture. For example, indoor air quality, which is an industrial hygienist/OSHA issue, may become an EPA issue once it leaves the building.”

“Hindered. Too much to do, minimal resources and unqualified professionals performing tasks for which they have no skills or experience.”

“It has helped me network and expand my knowledge.”

“It has helped by exposing me to the differences in each and has allowed me to grow professionally.”

“It has helped my career considerably. It has made me more valuable and marketable, not limiting me to pure safety positions. I can apply for more senior positions, which often encompass safety and environmental.”

“I only have peripheral responsibilities for environmental compliance but having diverse knowledge in all three subdisciplines adds value. More and more, employers are looking for people who can handle all aspects of EHS compliance.”

“It definitely keeps you busy. You get to be well-known by the regulatory community, which fosters networking.”

“Because EHS requires very specific training and experience for people responsible for these areas, they become ‘pigeonholed’ into the career path and are often overlooked for higher management opportunities since their expertise is lopsided. They become too valuable to be allowed to move out of that role. In my opinion, this is a travesty since the EHS professional is probably one of the most intuitive persons on staff but is never seen outside the context of this position.”

“Having broad-based knowledge and experience in EH&S has only helped my career.”

“As an environmental scientist who moved into health and safety, it has been beneficial to tie the two together. I have effectively used the ISO standards as a framework to integrate the development and implementation of health and safety programs that are tied with environmental programs. At different times, environmental issues can be leveraged to drive health and safety improvements and vice versa.”

“It has helped because it provides broader experience, especially since there has been a shift toward EHS personnel rather than toward individual environmental, health or safety personnel.”

“It has helped from the perspective that more companies are looking for individuals who can do it all. Two hindrances come to mind: 1) After many years, it is possible to be so good or needed that moving into other areas may not be possible and 2) It keeps you extremely busy (forget 40-hour weeks!).”

“Practicing EHS in a competent manner over time has coincided with earnings and recognition in these fields. However, the traditional risk management community seems to pay little attention to hands-on efforts and appears to limit opportunities for EHS in upper management.”

“It has allowed my career to go places that I had never thought about.”

“I love it. I have an exciting and fulfilling career. As a consultant, every job is different and every client is different. HSE is a career that ties into my personal value system very nicely. I would not want to do anything else.”

“It has expanded my involvement by broadening my knowledge base and has helped me address tax, financial and customer concerns.”

“Well, I started in environmental but managed to transfer into safety with a higher salary. Flexibility in EHS means we are more marketable.”

“It has hindered my career because it has given me additional responsibilities but not additional resources.”

“As far as I am concerned, the more you know the better. Education can never hurt you. Obtain certifications, get the required degrees and learn from other departments like human resources.”

“It is an ongoing job. Doing both has not helped or hindered my career—it has just given me extra work. This is like the electronics technician or administrative clerk in some companies who have safety as an additional duty. But in my position, I have the training and concentrate on these aspects where the additional duty person concentrates on his/her primary job.”

“It has helped, unless you are working for a large corporation with distinct safety and environmental staffs. Having the ability to work in both realms will help small to mid-size companies with few or no HSE professionals.”

“It has helped because I now have a better handle on the entire regulatory process.”

Q: If you had to do it over again, how would you have better prepared yourself for handling both safety and environmental responsibilities?

“I should have gotten my P.E. when I had the chance. Other than that, I am pretty happy with the outcomes. Just taking advantage of opportunities when they arise and not fearing a new adventure worked for me.”

“I would have taken more environmental courses in college and not just the few that my major required.”

“I would have recognized my limitations earlier. Instead of quantity, I would have worked to improve quality within each arena.”

“I would have said ‘no’ or would have demanded a full-fledged training program to get me up to speed. Do not try to learn it as you go.”

“I would have stayed in the agricultural laboratory research environment and looked for a career in the private market rather than in a government research laboratory. The private market pays significantly more than the government. The government had more flexibility and project ownership but paid nothing. I got into EHS because someone who knew my laboratory experience had overexposure issues. This person made me the industrial hygienist and everything went from there. The company began filing for bankruptcy, and the next thing I knew, I was investigating workplace accidents and taking people to the hospital. The company asked that I pursue a safety certification instead of an industrial hygiene certification.”

“I would have gone back to school to get my master degree before having children.”

“I would do it the same way. I worked in the field for many years and earned double bachelor degrees in management and business finance before earning a master degree in EHS. People in the field respect my experience, organizational intellects respect my university education and owners respect that I have blended all of these together while raising a family. We are respected by many people, therefore, in our past, present and future, we must be compassionate, persistent and wise to execute effective EHS practices in the organizations and families we represent. After all, we represent our EHS profession.”

“I would have taken thermodynamics in school.”

“I feel I am well-prepared.”

“I would have worked toward a CHMM certification or something similar.”

“I just lucked out starting with OSHA and having a great technical background. I also consider myself fortunate to have worked in environmental when the Superfund, CAA and EPCRA laws first passed.”

“I would have taken more applicable classes in college or other post-graduate training courses.”

“I would have built a case for staff, had a separate budget and improved my skills in financial matters (ROI, etc.).”

“I would have taken more chemistry courses.”

“I think I did fine—I would not change anything.”

“My education would have had slightly more environmental and slightly less safety.”

“I would have taken courses and completed the CSP requirements.”

“I have an industrial hygiene and EC background; traditional safety has been picked up along the way. I think I should have aimed for a true CSP credential.”

“I would have supplemented my education with a master degree in business administration and had greater exposure to six sigma and lean concepts.”

“If I had time, I would have taken the “Environmental Bootcamp” to better prepare myself for the ‘E’ side. I had to learn a lot on the fly. But I did do everything I could to learn the areas in which I was deficient. I felt I owed this to the ‘E’ professionals I managed and to the customers I supported.”

“I would do everything the same except focus on upper management instead of on middle and employees. Upper management drives the culture.”

“I would have obtained my P.E. license as soon as possible after receiving my environmental engineering degree.”

“Transitioning through an overall company audit program that reviewed both safety and environmental issues was the greatest benefit. I would not change anything.”

“I would have become more involved in environmental issues earlier in my career.”

“As I started in this field, I was basically self-taught. If I had known that I was going to enter the EHS field, I would have prepared with more formal education.”

“I am more or less self-taught, so I would have taken a different course of study that would have exposed me to the health and safety field. When I first entered safety, I knew very little and was extremely overwhelmed and intimidated by my lack of knowledge. I still feel as if I know very little, and it sometimes seems that the more I learn, the less I know. Also, I would have asked management for a larger staff.”

“When I started, they did not have any college classes for these disciplines. I would have taken the college courses and gained practical experience.”

“I would have completed an EH&S degree program.”

“I hold bachelor degrees in biology and chemistry as well as a master degree in environmental studies. I plan to take the CHMM exam soon. Increasing site responsibility in the environmental arena is great.”

“I believe I was fully prepared when the position came along. Most importantly, I knew someone with expertise in every area that I knew little about—a big plus!”

“Nothing. I have more than 40 years of varied engineering, governmental and administrative experience.”

“My strengths have been in the safety field, so I would have attained more formal education in the environmental field. I continue to attain education in this area whenever possible.”

“No way could I have prepared for safety in my career. I never intended to get into safety—my goal was environmental.”

“I would have been more involved in environmental. My passion is to work with people to help them be safe. I am blessed to have a great environmental manager.”

“I would have specialized in environmental alone because it is a very broad subject.”

“I would not have waited so long to get involved. I also would have worked closer with outside consultants when performing environmental assistance projects instead of asking agency representatives for assistance.”

“I would not have fallen so hard for the attention derived from the environmental side of my work. I let too many safety issues skate and did not keep up with regulations as I should have. I deeply enjoy both duties, but I fell into the ‘glamour’ or attention that environmental work gives over the grind of safety responsibilities and coaching.”

“I wish I had taken the time to study for some of the accreditations. Now with about seven years left before fishing time, I believe it is too late. Some may say to do it anyhow, but too many years have passed between math and me. I have other things that take up my time, and pouring over math questions and study guides are not on the list. So I wish I had applied myself more to getting the credentials that many young people already bring to the table with them.”

“I really do not know how I would do anything different. On-the-job learning, conferences, technical training seminars and participation in the local ASSE chapter have all helped prepare me. Of course, the science and math courses in high school and college gave me a good foundation.”

“I would have completed my CSP and CIH as soon as feasible. Look at your first job or two as to how those experiences will help you advance in your career and get better jobs in the future based on the experience acquired during your tenure.”

“I would not have waited so long to pick up academic training in health and safety. As an environmental professional, I should have taken more opportunities to learn from my health and safety colleagues. In industry and consulting, I see HES merging and an increased need for professionals who can operate within the three arenas.”

“I would have stayed with environmental.”

“I would have taken more environmental classes in college to prepare myself.”

“During my environmental training, I would have asked more questions of what personal protective equipment (PPE) is required to do my job. I do not remember my instructors ever discussing which PPE to wear or how to even make that determination. All of that was in my safety training courses.”

“If I had to do it again, I would have become a lawyer instead of a regulatory manager.”

“I would have taken more engineering courses before getting married.”

“I would get some management training as well as training in project management.”

“I would have fought to drop the quality assurance (QA) part of my responsibilities. I am spread too thin over these three parts of my job. I am slowly trying to move out of the QA area, but I have already been working on this for five years.”

“I would have spent some time in a geology classroom.”

“I would have obtained a degree in safety or in a related field.”

“I would have obtained my master degree in environmental management and international environmental management, instead of a master degree in business administration.”

“I would have obtained more upfront training on the daily responsibilities of my job.”

“I have been doing this for 25 years. I had the advantage of learning new regulations as they came into effect. For someone just starting out, visit with each line supervisor in your company to determine how things are handled. Then as you review various regulations, you will be able to identify areas that need attention. You will need to get the line supervisors to see the merit of any changes you try to implement. Otherwise, they will resist change no matter if it benefits their people or not.”

“I would have worked on my bachelor degree in health and safety earlier in my career.”

“I would have restricted my career to engineering tasks only based on profit generation. Due to lack of enforcement, business ethics and community intelligence, both safety and environmental are dead-end careers.”

“I do not have significant environmental responsibilities, but I would have taken additional environmental coursework in college.”

“I would have attended more quality seminars and started my membership in ASSE and AIHA earlier.”

“I would have taken more formal college courses in environmental issues and not have limited myself to seminars.”

“I should have worked harder in school.”

“I would have taken more environmental classes in college.”

“I would not have chosen this area. I would have pursued an operations-engineering angle to this industry.”

“With a functional major in industrial safety and an emphasis in industrial hygiene, I have had environmental and safety duties since the beginning of my career.”

“I have worked in health, safety and environmental throughout my entire career, so my development has been consistent and appropriate to my needs.”

“I would have been more thorough in screening potential employers to ensure they were truly committed to EHS rather than simply hiring for that position because of corporate mandate.”

“Having a good background in safety, e.g., safety degree, would be a huge help. Some engineering principles would have improved growth in the environmental area. Safety seems to take the most time because it is people-oriented whereas environmental addresses air, water and dirt. People take priority over environmental, yet both are important. People skills can be a huge advantage since you must work with people.”

“I would have earned a master degree in business administration. This appears to be what management is interested in rather than technical and functional competence.”

“I would have taken courses strictly related to safety and health instead of just environmental.”

“I would have taken a few environmental management classes.”

“I would have actively attended more seminars and classes on regulations.”

“I wish I had a better understanding of engineering principles.”

“I would have pursued a graduate degree in environmental to compliment my bachelor of science degree in industrial safety.”

“No, because I think I have done everything in my power to prepare myself the best I could.”

“No, I began with safety and then worked into environmental. It was a gradual move.”

“Get a degree, love what you do and prepare to read a lot. Be open to new ideas and be flexible.”

“I would have participated more in industry organizations. I tried to do too much on my own.”