

## Health and Safety Officer

Health and safety officers ensure that the organisation they work for follows health and safety regulations to provide a safe work place. They aim to prevent injuries, accidents and health problems.

They are also known as safety officers or health and safety advisers.

### The Work

You could be:

- doing risk assessments and audits, checking that machinery and equipment are safe and that management systems and working methods meet current legal standards
- explaining regulations in areas such as occupational health; noise, dust and fumes; fire safety and moving and storing dangerous materials, and making sure that everyone follows them
- identifying possible dangers and unsafe working methods and suggesting ways to tackle them
- working with managers, employees and trade unions to make policies and take action to encourage safe working practices and get rid of possible dangers
- consulting the Health and Safety Executive, local authorities and fire authorities, to check that premises meet current legal health and safety standards
- running training courses to encourage and promote safe working practices
- keeping a record of accidents or complaints, unsafe procedures or equipment and any action taken
- testing safety equipment and advising on its use
- investigating accidents and writing up reports, recommending improvements to prevent accidents happening again.

### Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Actual pay rates may vary, depending on:

- where you work
- the size of company or organisation you work for
- the demand for the job.

Starting salaries for newly qualified safety officers are in the range of £25,000 to £34,000 a year. With experience this rises to between £30,000 and £60,000 a year. Jobs in some sectors such as the oil and gas industries are more highly paid.

### Conditions

- You would work in an office, but also spend time in other working areas, carrying out risk assessments and routine inspections, and talking to staff.
- You might have to work outdoors, in a noisy or dirty environment, at heights, or in dangerous places.
- Working hours may be regular or you may have to work shifts, with periods on call.
- You might be able to work part time.

- Protective clothing may be required when carrying out risk assessments.

## Getting In

- You normally need an HND (SCQF Level 8) or degree (SCQF Levels 9-11), usually in occupational safety and health, engineering, technology, building, physics or chemistry.
- Entry to a degree programme normally requires 4-5 Highers.
- The University of the West of Scotland offers a BSc Hons in Occupational Safety and Health. For entry you need 4 Highers at ABBB including Biology or Human Biology plus English and Maths at National 5.
- If you have a degree in another subject you can take a postgraduate course in risk, safety and health through distance learning.
- You should have experience in industry.
- Entry without a degree is possible if you have the relevant health and safety qualifications and some experience.
- For some entrants it is a second career, often after a job in which they have had some responsibility for safety.
- You might have to work at heights or in confined spaces.

There are jobs in local government, construction, engineering, manufacturing and the food, chemical and oil and gas industries.

## What Does It Take

You should be:

- willing to keep up to date with changes in the law and technological changes
- observant
- able to explain scientific or technical information in simple terms
- confident enough to make unpopular decisions
- tactful and able to get on well with people from all backgrounds
- willing to consult others when necessary
- able to negotiate.

You should have:

- excellent written and spoken communication skills
- an enquiring mind
- sound judgement
- attention to detail
- a flexible approach to work.

## Training

- Training is on the job.
- You will study for the NEBOSH Certificate and Diploma.
- You would then apply for membership of [Institution of Occupational Safety and Health \(IOSH\)](http://www.iosh.org). You would

join as an Affiliate member, then depending on qualifications and experience, you would be awarded Associate, Technician or Graduate membership, then work up to Chartered.

- You could also apply for full membership of the International Institute of Risk and Safety Management (IIRSM).
- Alternatively you would work towards Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQ) while you are working: Occupational Health and Safety at SCQF Level 7 or Occupational Health and Safety Practice at SCQF Level 9.

## Getting On

- You may start as a health and safety assistant, in a manufacturing company or local authority, and become a health and safety officer after gaining NEBOSH qualifications.
- With experience you could move on to be a supervisor or manager, or into a high level technical job.
- You could set up your own business as a consultant.

## Contacts

### Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

Website: [careers.hse.gov.uk](https://careers.hse.gov.uk)

X: @H\_S\_E

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/hsejob](https://www.facebook.com/hsejob)

### SHP4Jobs

Tel: 0207 921 8345

Email: [info@shp4jobs.co.uk](mailto:info@shp4jobs.co.uk)

Website: [www.shp4jobs.co.uk](https://www.shp4jobs.co.uk)

X: @SHPOnline

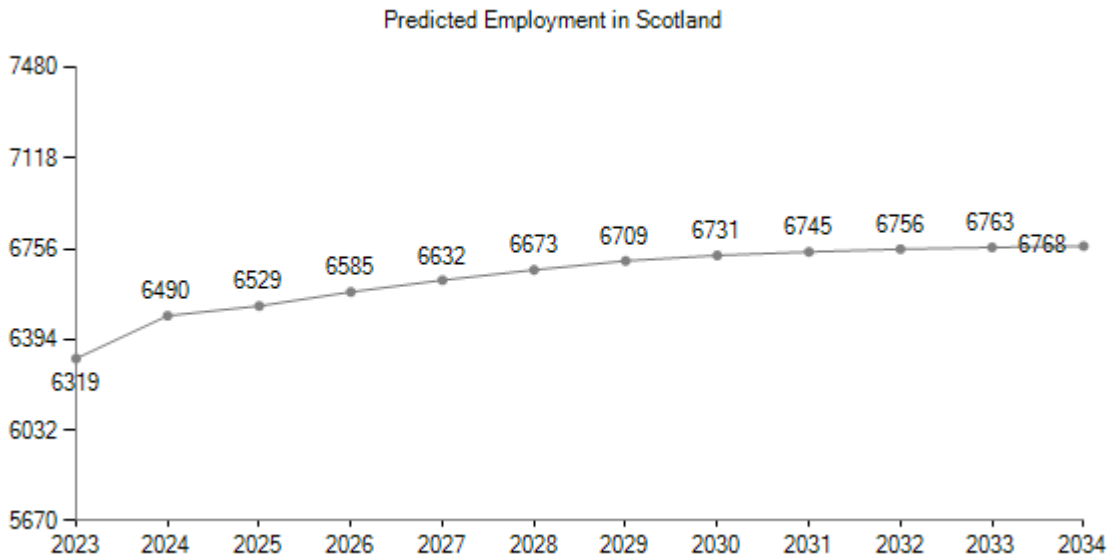
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/SHPMag](https://www.facebook.com/SHPMag)

**Statistics**

Employment Status : Not available this career.

**Past Unemployment - Scotland**

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.



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