

Career Success: Lessons Learned from a New CSP Salary and Demographic Survey

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Introduction

Many safety and health organizations conduct salary surveys and publish results of the surveys. Some survey studies involve in-depth studies and analysis and others involve brief surveys and limited analysis.

The Board of Certified Safety Professionals (BCSP) previously conducted salary surveys previously in 1998 and 2000. In January 2008, BCPS completed a new survey of individuals holding the Certified Safety Professional® certification (CSP®). This paper explains many of the key results.

Method

BCSP developed its own survey questionnaire. The survey operated electronically over the Internet using Snap Survey software on a web site established by BCSP for the survey. The survey operated for about two weeks in late January 2008. BCSP sent email invitations to participate to about 7,000 individuals holding the CSP. With 14 days, the survey generated 2,572 completed responses, a 37% response rate and representing about 23% of all CSPs. No reminders to participate were sent.

The questionnaire contained four sections. Section 1 sought information about the respondents themselves. Section 2 sought information about each respondent's employment. Section 3 covered information about the professional safety practice of individual respondents. Section 4 sought information about the salary and benefits of respondents.

Results

The Respondents

Of the 2,572 respondents, 13.3% were female and 86.7% were male. The average respondent was 48.9 years old, had been in safety practice for 25.2 years and had held the CSP for 11.7 years.

Table 1 lists the education levels of respondents. Over 45% held a masters or doctoral/professional degree as the highest level of education achieved. Only 3.9 % had less than a bachelor's degree, although a significant number with bachelor's degrees had started with an associate degree. 41% held one degree and 55% had two or more degrees.

Highest Level Achieved	Percent
High School	< 0.1
Some College	1.5
Associate Degree	2.4
Bachelor's Degree	48.8
Master's Degree	42.7
Doctoral/Professional Degree	2.6

Table 1. Level of Education

The average respondent held membership in 1.6 of the 55 professional membership organizations included in the survey. The main memberships appear in Table 2.

Organization	Percent
ASSE	75.7
AIHA	21.5
ACGIH	4.6
NFPA	10.0
NSC	13.4
AAIH	5.2
IHHM	3.5
RIMS	2.4
Air & Waste Mgmt Assn	1.0
Amer Chemical Soc	1.2
AIChE	1.8
Assn of Gen Contractors	1.4
CSSE	1.2
HFES	1.0
SSS	1.5
Other	9.4

Table 2. Where Respondents Hold Membership

All respondents held the Certified Safety Professional (CSP) certification. The average respondent held 1.7 certifications or licenses in the field from among the 135 included in the survey. The most frequent certifications and licenses are listed in Table 3.

Certification/License	Percent
Certified Safety Professional	100.0
Certified Industrial Hygienist	15.8
Associate in Loss Control Management	3.5
Certified Environmental Auditor	1.6
Certified Fire Protection Specialist	1.8
Certified Hazard Control Manager	1.6
Certified Hazardous Materials Manager	6.9
Certified S&H Manager	1.2
Certified Utilities Safety Admin	1.2
Emergency Medical Technician	1.2
Professional Engineer	5.8
Registered Environmental Manager	1.0
Safety Professional Certified	2.9
Texas Field Safety Representative	1.3
Other	9.6

Table 3. Certifications and Licenses Held

The respondents represented all states and 12 foreign countries. The states with the greatest number of respondents were Texas (12%), California (8%), Pennsylvania (5.7%), Illinois (4.7%), Ohio (3.7%), New York (3.5%), Florida (3.1%), and Georgia (3.1%).

The Employers

The respondents worked in many different settings and for many different types of employers and industries. Some were self-employed (5.1%), while others worked for consulting companies (8.5%), for a total of 13% working in consulting roles. The rest (85%) worked for other employers. Table 4 identifies the industries in which the respondents worked.

Industry Group	Percent
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing/Hunting	0.1
Mining	5.2
Utilities	5.1
Construction	8.4
Manufacturing	38.3
Wholesale and Retail	1.0
Transportation	2.4

Industry Group	Percent
Information	0.9
Insurance and Finance	18.8
Real Estate	0.2
Professional, Scientific, & Tech Services	10.0
Waste Management	0.4
Education Services	3.8
Health Care	1.4
Public Administration & Government	8.8

Table 4. Primary Employer Industry Groups

Of those working in government, 2.9% worked at the federal level, 3.8% at the state level, and 2.1 at the local level.

34.5% of the respondents worked for privately owned companies and 49.8% worked for publicly traded companies. Some companies had U.S. operations only (35%), while the majority had international operations (62.8%). The employers with foreign involvement were engaged in North America (54.5%), Europe (12.1%), Pacific Rim (12.1%), the Middle East (7.4%) and in other world locations.

Most respondents worked for large companies. 29.5% work for companies with more than 25,000 employees. 63.2% worked for companies with more than 2,500 employees. 15.3% worked for companies with 500 to 2,500 employees. 6.9% worked for companies with 100 to 500 employees and 10.4% worked for companies with fewer than 100 employees. Nearly all respondents worked in business units that had many fewer employees.

The number of safety, health and environmental (SH&E) specialists in the overall company or organization for which they worked was quite varied. For 14.3% of the respondents, they were the only SH&E specialist. For 44.8% of respondents, their employer had 2 to 10 specialists. The employers of an additional 19.5% of respondents had 11 to 25 specialists. The employers of 21.7% of the respondents had more than 25 specialists.

Some respondents (16.9%) worked in one business unit, while others (74.3%) worked for more than one through a corporate level position (30%), a regional position (20.3%) or at a plant or operating unit level (23.8).

Most respondents (82.8%) worked in a company office, although 16.3% had a home office.

The Professional Practices

As indicated above, 5.1% were self employed. 96.9% of the respondents worked full time and 2.2% worked part time. The typical work week is detailed in Table 5.

Number of Hours	Percent
< 30	1.7*
31–40	10.2
41–50	57.6
61–70	4.7
> 70	1.1
* Most indicated they worked part-time	

Table 5. Number of Hours Typically Worked Per Week

Most respondents had to travel as part of their job. The amount of travel is explained in Table 6.

Percent of Time	Percent of Respondents
No travel	6.8
1–10	34.7
10–25	24.2
50–75	7.1
> 75	2.5

Table 6. Rate of Travel

Most respondents had responsibility for multiple locations as shown in Table 7.

Number	Percent of Respondents
1–5	41.5
6–10	13.3
11–20	10.8
21–50	10.3
> 50	20.5

Table 7. Number of Sites Services

About half of the respondents did not supervise others or other SH&E professionals. The supervisory roles are detailed in Tables 8 and 9.

Number Supervised	Percent
0	48.6
1–5	30.0
6–10	9.8
11–25	6.8

Number Supervised	Percent
26–50	2.5
51–100	0.9
> 100	0.9

Table 8. Number of People Supervised

Number Supervised	Percent
1–5	33.5
6–10	8.3
11–25	5.3
26–50	1.4
51–100	0.3
> 100	0.2

Table 9. Number of SH&E Personnel Supervised

The job titles varied. 62.4% had titles denoting a professional role. 23.1% reported consultant/advisor titles. 25.8% had titles indicating their leadership of a group. 8.7% held positions at top level executives.

The respondents entered professional safety practice in different ways, as shown in Table 10.

Entry Method	Percent
From a safety-related degree	42.0
Volunteered to fill a safety position	4.7
Supervisor asked me to handle SH&E	7.8
Applied for SH&E position without experience	23.3
Started in HR and expanded into SH&E	0.6
Started in engineering and assigned SH&E	6.8
Started in a SH&E Committee and got interested	1.3
A friend/colleague in SH&E encouraged me to enter field	7.9
Other	14.2

Table 10. How Respondents Entered Safety Practice

Respondents had varying responsibilities when they first became engaged in SH&E practice, as shown in Table 11. Their responsibilities have expanded significantly over time as indicated by their current practice.

Area of Practice	Initial Percent	Current Percent	Percent Change
Safety	72.4	88.7	16.3
Industrial hygiene	48.7	65.9	17.2
Fire protection	37.5	51.4	13.9
Safety engineering	25.1	50.0	24.9
Environment–general	24.0	41.9	17.9
Ergonomics	23.1	59.4	36.3
Risk management	22.7	53.2	30.5
Hazardous materials management	22.6	40.6	18.0
Occupational health	20.6	43.7	23.1
Security	8.1	20.5	12.5
Product safety	8.0	17.0	9.0
Systems safety	7.9	22.9	15.0
Environmental health	7.9	23.0	15.1
Engineering	4.8	10.8	6.0
Health physics	4.6	9.8	5.2
Environmental engineering	4.1	11.8	7.7
Public health	3.6	10.3	6.7
Medical	2.8	8.6	5.8
Nursing	1.2	3.4	2.2
Other	5.9	10.0	4.1

Table 11. Initial and Current Job Responsibilities

The respondents also reported how much time they spent in each area. A composite of all respondents appears in Table 12. The results indicate the portion of 100 percent of their work devoted to each area. The portion reporting some time for an area of responsibility is also shown and is similar to the information reported in Table 11.

Area of Practice	Percent of Job Time	Percent with Some Time
Safety	72.4	88.7
Safety engineering	4.5	39.0
Product safety	1.4	14.4
Systems safety	2.7	19.0
Industrial hygiene	11.1	61.3
Occupational health	2.7	32.5
Environmental health	1.0	15.1
Public health	0.5	6.3
Medical	0.4	7.4

Area of Practice	Percent of Job Time	Percent with Some Time
Nursing	0.2	2.6
Health physics	0.6	7.6
Ergonomics	4.4	47.7
Fire protection	4.9	42.1
Risk management	8.8	46.9
Environmental-general	5.1	36.0
Environmental engineering	0.7	9.7
Hazardous materials management	2.3	30.4
Engineering	0.9	8.2
Security	1.5	17.9
Other	4.7	13.8

Table 12. Average Time Spent on SH&E Job Responsibilities

Respondents also reported their level of satisfaction with their careers in SH&E. 52.6% were very satisfied, 38.9% satisfied, 1.6% dissatisfied, 0.2% very dissatisfied and 5.6% were neither satisfied or dissatisfied. Overall, 91.5% were positive about their careers and 1.8% were negative.

The Salaries and Benefits

The pay was quite varied. The distribution of pay is shown in Table 13. The average pay was \$99,244 and the median was approximately \$89,000. Nearly all in the lower three brackets were part-time. Those in the highest bracket were all presidents, vice presidents or owners of companies.

Pay Range \$ × 1000	Percent	Cumulative Percent
0–20	0.2	0.2
20–30	0.2	0.5
30–40	0.2	0.7
40–50	0.8	1.5
50–60	3.4	5.0
60–70	7.6	12.6
70–80	14.4	27.0
80–90	16.2	43.2
90–100	16.9	60.1
100–110	13.8	73.9
110–120	8.1	82.1
120–130	6.1	88.1
130–140	3.5	91.7

Pay Range \$ × 1000	Percent	Cumulative Percent
140–150	2.5	94.1
150–160	1.9	96.0
160–170	0.9	96.9
170–180	0.8	97.7
180–190	0.5	98.2
190–200	0.3	98.5
200–250	0.6	99.1
250–300	0.5	99.6
> 300	0.4	100.0

Table 13. Pay Distribution of Respondents

Most respondents were eligible for bonus pay. Only 7.3% were not eligible. The distribution of bonus pay in the last year is shown in Table 14. The average rate of bonus pay was 8.4%.

Percent of Gross Pay	Percent Receiving
None	21.4
1–5	22.9
6–10	18.2
11–15	11.6
16–20	6.8
21–25	4.4
26–30	2.2
> 30	3.7

Table 14. Bonus Pay

Respondents identified all of the benefits they receive in their employment by checking items that appeared in a list of possible benefits. The percent of respondents who received each benefit are listed in Table X in descending order of frequency.

Benefit	Percent
Paid Vacation	93.0
Dental	87.0
Retirement Savings Plan (i.e. 401(K))	85.0
Health Care Plan	86.0
Association Dues Reimbursement	77.0
Group Life Insurance	77.0

Benefit	Percent
Sick Leave	76.0
Long-Term Disability	75.0
Short-Term Disability	73.0
Tuition Reimbursement	72.0
Flexible Spending Plan	70.0
Vision Care	70.0
Bonus pay	66.0
Pension	55.0
Flex Time/Schedule	46.0
Profit Sharing	30.0
Maternity/Paternity Benefits	27.0
Long-Term Car	27.0
Retiree Medical	26.0
Stock Option	25.0
Cafeteria Plan	24.0
Incentive Compensation	24.0
Health Club Membership	21.0
Childcare	8.0

Table 15. Compensation Benefits of CSPs

Comparison of Results to Other Recent Salary Survey Results

Some recent studies provide some comparative information. The results are compared in Table 16.

Study	Average Pay	Median Pay
This study	\$99,244	\$89,000
ISHN (11/2007)	\$67,668	\$65,000
Safety + Health (11/2007)	\$76,750	
Business & Legal Report (2007)		
Compliance Officer		\$48,496
Environmental Engineer		\$72,089
Environmental Scientist		\$57,823
H&S Engineer		\$68,327
IH Engineer		\$72,098
Industrial S&H Engineer		\$68,327
Product Safety Engineer		\$68,327
Safety Director		\$108,670
Training & Development Specialist		\$49,300

Table 16. Reported Pay in Recent Studies

Factors Affecting Pay and Achievement

Many factors affect pay. Previous studies suggest that supervisory responsibility is very significant. So is education level and field of study, years of experience, quality certification held, scope of responsibility, size of employer, field of specialization, and geographic location. The details for these factors is not explored in this paper, but will be published in an expanded study of this data by BCSP on its web site (www.bccsp.org).

Summary

This study reported information about the practice of 2,572 individuals holding the Certified Safety Professional (CSP) certification. The results show that the practice continues to expand in breadth of responsibility in safety, health, environmental and related areas. Their pay is significantly higher than participants in other studies of safety practice. The results also show that people get started in professional safety practice through various means and not simply following completion of safety related degrees. The results show that safety professionals work long hours and most have significant travel for their work while impacting multiple work site and locations. Typically, the respondents are involved in professional membership organizations and hold other certifications in addition to the CSP. Most work for large companies from a wide range of

industries that have operations within and outside the United States. About half of the respondents supervise others.

References

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