

POSITION DUTY STATEMENT

DOT PM-0924 (REV 01/2025)

CLASSIFICATION TITLE	OFFICE/BRANCH/SECTION	
Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist)	D5/Environmental Stewardship Branch	
WORKING TITLE	POSITION NUMBER	REVISION DATE
Senior CEQA/NEPA Scientist	905-156-0765-XXX	10/05/2025

As a valued member of the Caltrans team, you make it possible to improve lives and communities through transportation.

GENERAL STATEMENT:

The Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist) works under the general direction of the Environmental Stewardship Branch Chief and is a key member of the Environmental Stewardship Branch at Caltrans District 5 in San Luis Obispo, CA. The incumbent serves as the environmental team lead on each project for the delivery of the most environmentally challenging transportation projects and natural resource management activities throughout the Central Coast and inland areas. The Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist) independently plans and executes complex environmental studies and assists the Senior ES (Supervisor) in ensuring the timely completion of environmental documents and work products to support overall project delivery in the District. The Senior California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)/National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Scientist independently gathers, researches, and analyzes social, natural, and environmental data for preparation, review, and processing of environmental documents as mandated by federal and state laws, regulations, policies, and procedures. The incumbent is assigned to the most complex projects, assists the Senior Environmental Scientist (Supervisor) in planning and tracking workload, is a lead worker, and completes senior-level document review. Occasional overtime, travel and overnight stays may be required. Possession of a valid driver's license is required when operating a State owned or leased vehicle.

CORE COMPETENCIES:

As a Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist), the incumbent is expected to become proficient in the following competencies as described below in order to successfully perform the essential functions of the job, while adhering to and promoting the Department's Mission, Vision, Values, Strategic Imperatives and Goals. Effective development of the identified Core Competencies fosters the advancement of the following Leadership Competencies: Change Commitment, Risk Appetite, Self-Development/Growth, Conflict Management, Relationship Building, Organizational Awareness, Communication, Strategic Perspective, and Results Driven.

- **Creativity and Innovation:** Thinks beyond the confines of traditional models to recognize opportunities, seek creative solutions and take intelligent risks. (Climate Action - Innovation)
- **Dealing with Ambiguity (Risk):** Can comfortably handle risk and uncertainty, as well as make decisions to act without having the total picture. (Employee Excellence - Collaboration)
- **Initiative:** Ability to identify what needs to be done and doing it before being asked or required by the situation. Seeks out others involved in a situation to learn their perspectives. (Employee Excellence - Stewardship)
- **Problem-solving and Decision-making :** Identifies problems and uses logical analysis to find information, understand causes, and evaluate and select or recommend best possible courses of action. (Employee Excellence - Collaboration)
- **Teamwork/Partnership:** Develops, maintains, and strengthens partnerships with others inside or outside of the organization through effective communication and collaboration. (Employee Excellence - Collaboration, Integrity, Pride)
- **Organizational Awareness:** Contributes to the organization by understanding and aligning actions with the organization's strategic plan, including the mission, vision, goals, core functions, and values. (Prosperity, Employee Excellence - Collaboration, Pride)
- **Interpersonal Effectiveness :** Effectively and appropriately interacts and communicates with others to build positive, constructive, professional relationships. Tailors communication style based on the audience. Provides and is receptive to feedback. (Employee Excellence - Collaboration)
- **Planning and Results Oriented:** Organizes and executes work to meet organizational goals and objectives while meeting quality standards, following organizational processes, and demonstrating continuous commitment. (Safety, Prosperity, Employee Excellence - Collaboration, Integrity, Pride)
- **Technical Expertise:** Depth of knowledge and skill in a technical area. (Climate Action, Employee Excellence - Collaboration, People First, Pride)

TYPICAL DUTIES:

Percentage
Essential (E)/Marginal (M)¹ Job Description

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40%	E	The Senior ES (Specialist) conducts preparation of environmental documents, including Environmental Impact Reports/Statements, Initial Studies/Environmental Assessments, and Categorical Exemptions/Exclusions pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for assigned projects. Uses scientific knowledge and background to develop environmental commitments with other environmental scientists and subject matter experts. Prepares and leads consultant preparation of various technical studies and analyses related to sea level rise, greenhouse gas emissions, climate change, ecological health, cumulative impacts, growth-related effects, community impacts, and environmental justice for projects with high levels of environmental complexity. Integrates findings from technical reports into environmental documents. Analyzes and interprets scientific data and studies to identify and assess the significance of impacts to environmental resource areas; assesses the environmental consequences of all alternatives for proposed transportation projects; and formulates mitigation measures for each alternative. Reviews engineering documents to ensure environmental commitments are recorded and met in project plans, specifications, and estimates. Develops specifications to incorporate environmental commitments into project bid packages. Works with all offices in the Environmental Division to convey environmental commitments to project managers and engineers. Ensures that environmental commitments are implemented during construction and post-construction, including by conducting on-site monitoring. Assists the Senior ES (Supervisor) by reviewing the work of Environmental Scientists/Planners and consultants to ensure products are consistent with standards and requirements specified under CEQA and NEPA and the Caltrans Standard Environmental Reference. Coordinates with other Department branches, functional units, and Caltrans Districts/Regions, the Caltrans Legal Office, and other program units and branch programs on implementation of federal and state environmental laws and policies.
30%	E	Uses environmental science principles to conduct field and office research, including coordination with key stakeholders, to identify and evaluate community and environmental effects of various transportation alternatives for the preparation of complex environmental documents. Responsible for drafting correspondence to the public and public agencies, coordinating mass mailings, preparing materials for public meetings, and leading the reproduction and distribution of documents. Participates in inter-agency meetings and fosters positive relationships between regulatory agencies, local jurisdictions, and Caltrans. Simultaneously manages multiple projects, either as a lead worker or by leading consultant efforts, while adapting to shifting priorities. Provides senior level technical guidance for encroachment permit applicants and reviews technical studies and environmental documents submitted to the Department for encroachment permit approval. Prepares and analyzes CEQA and NEPA documents submitted for encroachment permit applications and tracks and manages the status on permit applications. Uses scientific knowledge to analyze and research fuels reduction principles and actions for the Vegetation Management Program. Prepares CEQA documentation for the Vegetation Management Program and ensures environmental commitments, standards, and requirements are met as specified under CEQA and the Caltrans Standard Environmental Reference. Liaises with and obtains California Coastal Commission (CCC) permits for projects within their jurisdiction, particularly along the Big Sur Coast and other coastal areas within District 5. Prepares or leads consultant preparation of permit applications. Assists the Senior Environmental Scientist (Supervisor) by reviewing staff and consultant-prepared permit applications for accuracy and completeness. Leads public outreach efforts with the general public and regulatory agencies, including coordinating public meetings during the circulation period of environmental documents. Conducts outreach with CEQA responsible agencies such as the Coastal Commission and local jurisdictions to coordinate on CEQA significance determinations. Leads and/or facilitates meetings with elected officials, stakeholders, and the public. Consults with state and local agencies and the public pursuant to NEPA, ensuring compliance with federal and state environmental requirements for District 5 projects.
20%	E	The Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist) is a key member of Project Development Teams (PDTs) and plays a critical role in managing the environmental aspects of project delivery. Applies principles of environmental science to support project development, including contributing to project descriptions, project schedules, and risk registers. Advises PDTs on environmental significance determinations pursuant to CEQA and NEPA, particularly in the most complex or controversial situations within District 5. Coordinates and disseminates information between and within PDTs and across offices within the Division of Environmental Planning. Takes the lead in developing entry-level staff, providing technical guidance, and fostering professional growth. Assists the Senior Environmental Scientist (Supervisor) in mentoring and training staff to ensure consistency in environmental review processes and regulatory compliance.

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5%	E	Performs administrative duties, including maintaining the environmental administrative record and updating the STEVE environmental database. Reviews and assists in processing Project Change Requests to ensure environmental compliance. Facilitates the integration of environmental requirements into project scopes and designs by coordinating with technical specialists and ensuring alignment with CEQA, NEPA, and regulatory agency requirements.
5%	M	Participates in special teams and projects addressing issues of statewide importance, contributing expertise on CEQA, NEPA, and coastal resource management as they relate to District 5's environmental challenges. Stays current on scientific trends, regulatory updates, and best practices by attending state and non-state-sponsored conferences, training courses, and interagency workshops. Engages in professional development by reading relevant literature, tracking policy changes, and participating in professional organizations to ensure District 5 remains at the forefront of environmental compliance and project delivery.

¹ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS are the core duties of the position that cannot be reassigned.
MARGINAL FUNCTIONS are the minor tasks of the position that can be assigned to others.

SUPERVISION OR GUIDANCE EXERCISED OVER OTHERS

This position does not have direct supervisory responsibility. However, the Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist) serves as a lead over certain tasks and projects, providing technical guidance and oversight. As a project lead, the incumbent helps ensure environmental compliance, document quality, and regulatory coordination. Supports the Senior Environmental Scientist (Supervisor) by reviewing the work of Environmental Scientists, Environmental Planners, and consultants for accuracy, consistency, and adherence to environmental regulations. May be asked to act on behalf of the supervisor during periods of leave, ensuring continuity in project oversight and decision-making.

KNOWLEDGE, ABILITIES, AND ANALYTICAL REQUIREMENTS

The Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist) must communicate clearly, both verbally and in writing, and be able to manage multiple projects simultaneously. Using their expertise in environmental science, the incumbent must screen projects to identify resource areas requiring further study and prepare environmental inventories by gathering and analyzing natural, social, and environmental data. The incumbent conducts public interviews and effectively interprets and applies a wide range of federal and state environmental laws and regulations, including CEQA, NEPA, and California Coastal Act requirements. Must be able to analyze complex environmental regulations and navigate challenging project circumstances while ensuring that District 5's environmental goals and Caltrans policies are met.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR DECISIONS AND CONSEQUENCES OF ERROR

Errors in researching and evaluating environmental data for various transportation alternatives on a Caltrans project could delay the preparation and approval of environmental documents. Such errors or delays may negatively impact project cost, scope, and schedule, potentially leading to loss of project funding or construction delays for critical transportation projects within District 5. The incumbent must maintain professionalism when interacting with the public, regulatory agencies, local jurisdictions, and internal Caltrans staff. Failure to do so could erode public trust and damage Caltrans' relationships with key partners, stakeholders, and communities.

PUBLIC AND INTERNAL CONTACTS

Works closely with engineering and transportation planning staff from local agencies and Caltrans, serving as an intergovernmental liaison with various governmental planning staff. Coordinates with local, state, regional, and federal agencies, ensuring environmental considerations are integrated into project planning and delivery. Arranges, attends, and actively participates in meetings with regulatory agencies, local jurisdictions, regional planning organizations, and interested stakeholders. May serve as the environmental contact during the public review and outreach phase of environmental documents, responding to inquiries and ensuring regulatory compliance is communicated effectively.

PHYSICAL, MENTAL, AND EMOTIONAL REQUIREMENTS

This position may require prolonged periods of sitting for report writing, research, and meetings. Fieldwork may involve standing or walking for extended periods in various terrain and environmental conditions. Travel for external meetings, site visits, or fieldwork may require driving or riding in a vehicle for long durations, sometimes in remote or coastal areas within District 5. Mental requirements include sustained focus for environmental analyses, report writing, and regulatory review. Emotional requirements include the ability to maintain cooperative working relationships in an interdisciplinary setting, appropriately navigate difficult situations, and recognize and respond to emotionally charged issues involving the public, stakeholders, and regulatory agencies.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

Working hours will be set sometimes between 6:00am and 6:00pm. Employee must be reachable during work hours while teleworking. The work environment is fast-paced and dynamic, requiring considerable flexibility in managing time, priorities, and assignments. The role can be demanding and occasionally stressful, particularly when balancing multiple project deadlines and regulatory requirements. The incumbent may be required to travel to other Caltrans District offices, Headquarters, or external meeting locations, as well as to proposed project sites. Fieldwork may involve exposure to various climatic conditions, including

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rain, wind, coastal fog, and heat, depending on the location within District 5. While at their base of operation, employees will work in a climate-controlled office under artificial lighting, though temperature fluctuations may occur. The position requires frequent computer use, including typing on a keyboard for several hours per day. While primarily sedentary, the role may involve walking or standing for extended periods, particularly during fieldwork, site visits, or public meetings.

This position may be eligible for telework. The amount of telework is at the discretion of the Department and based on Caltrans's current telework policy. While Caltrans supports telework, in-person attendance may be required based on operational needs. Employees are expected to be able to report to their worksite with minimal notification if an urgent need arises. The selected candidate may be required to conduct business travel on behalf of the Department or commute to the headquartered location. Business travel reimbursements considers an employee's designated Headquarters Location, primary residence, and may be subject to CalHR regulations or applicable bargaining unit contract provisions. All commute expenses to the headquartered location will be the responsibility of the selected candidate.

I have read, understand and can perform the duties listed above. (If you believe you may require reasonable accommodation, please discuss this with your hiring supervisor. If you are unsure whether you require reasonable accommodation, inform the hiring supervisor who will discuss your concerns with the Reasonable Accommodation Coordinator.)

I agree that by providing my electronic signature for this form, I agree to conduct business transactions by electronic means and that my electronic signature is the legal binding equivalent to my handwritten signature. I hereby agree that my electronic signature represents my execution or authentication of this form, and my intent to be bound by it.

EMPLOYEE (Print)

EMPLOYEE (Signature)

DATE

I have discussed the duties with, and provided a copy of this duty statement to the employee named above.

SUPERVISOR (Print)

SUPERVISOR (Signature)

DATE