

**California Department of Food and Agriculture
Produce Safety Program
Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist)
Duty Statement**

I. Program/Position Identification:

The Inspection and Compliance (I&C) Branch deals with a broad range of technical, environmental health, and on-farm management issues related to protecting public health. The Branch consists of nine well-established and fully developed programs: Shipping Point Inspection (SPI) Program; Produce Safety Program (PSP); Organic Program; Direct Marketing Program; O-Cal Cannabis Certification Program; Technical Assistance Program; Standardization Program; Avocado Inspection Program; and Citrus Program. The I&C Branch consists of multi-discipline staff, including Agriculture Program Supervisors; Senior Environmental Scientists and Environmental Scientists; subject matter specialists; inspectors and investigators; and technical and support staff.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) released the first-ever regulations in accordance with the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), signed into law in 2011 by President Obama. The regulations now require producers to adhere to prescriptive measures intended to minimize food safety risks at the farm level.

Under general direction of the Senior Environmental Scientist (SES) (Supervisory), the Senior Environmental Scientist (SES) (Specialist) will serve as PSP review specialist to review inspection reports and findings, including environmental assessments to ensure adherence to FSMA requirements. The incumbent will perform work concerning present and future environmental issues relating to food safety; conduct field inspections; make presentations at meetings and workshops; meet with individuals from industry to ensure adherence to FSMA and CDFA laws and regulations in regard to environmental requirements and efficacy data; participate in field investigations as a subject expert; and consult with otherstate departments and programs on issues related to food safety assessments regarding agricultural production systems.

This position is designated under the Conflict-of-Interest Code. The position is responsible for making or participating in the making of governmental decisions that may potentially have a material effect on personal financial interests. The appointee is required to complete Form 700 within thirty (30) days of appointment, on an annual basis, and upon vacating the position. The incumbent must complete an Ethics orientation training course within six months of assuming a Form 700 covered position, and every two (2) years thereafter, by December 31 of each numbered year. Failure to comply with the Conflict-of-Interest Code requirements may void the appointment.

Classification:	Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist)
Working Title:	FSMA Review Specialist
License or	
Other Requirement:	Bachelor's or advanced degree with a major in biological, chemical, physical, or environmental science, or a closely related scientific discipline FDA Commission with Credential Valid California Driver's License
Position Number:	018-775-0765-004

Classification: Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist)

Position Number: 018-775-0765-004

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Location:	Sacramento, CA
Work Hours/Shift:	40 hours per week
Date Prepared:	Dec 2025

II. Essential and Non-Essential Job Functions:

A. Essential Functions:

Function #1	Produce Safety Inspections and Reporting - 50%
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- Conduct food safety field inspections and assist on investigations and monitor activity on farms to ensure compliance with PSR requirements. This function may entail up to 50% or more travel for any given month throughout California.
- Using various modes of transportation, visit grower business sites and farms to ensure PSR requirements and guidelines are followed.
- Regularly confer with and advise the SES (Supervisory) and Management on any industry and inspection issues to ensure the appropriate procedures, guidelines, and processes are adhered to, and report egregious and potentially egregious conditions to the SES (Supervisory) as soon as possible.
- Ensure industry standards and PSR requirements of applicable assessment procedures are met by reviewing on-farm records and practices to ensure uniformity and accuracy throughout statewide programs.
- Scientifically analyze and evaluate food safety claims and guarantees in order to ensure alignment with PSR requirements; provide scientific guidance and recommendations of appropriate actions pertaining to PSR requirements; and request additional data from producers and/or industry organizations as needed.
- Determine and evaluate impacts on produce safety related on-farm activities on environmental systems and assess public health impacts.
- Implement, update, and maintain inspection procedures adhering to state, Federal, and industry standards. Write inspection reports capturing inspection findings consistent with federal and state standards.
- Respond to inquiries from industry, by written correspondence or telephone, regarding issues related to produce safety compliance.
- Document compliance and industry issues by maintaining ledgers and statistical logs, per Branch policies and FDA requirements.
- Develop recommendations for corrective actions for on-farm food safety issues as necessary.

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- Facilitate communication with FDA Office of Compliance and Enforcement or other federal, state or local agency officials as necessary, to address questions related to PSR compliance.

Function #2 Review Inspection Reports & Farm Environmental Information – 20%

- Scientifically analyze and evaluate food safety production claims and guarantees to substantiate Produce Safety Rule requirements. Provide scientific guidance and recommendations of appropriate actions pertaining to FSMA requirements to PSP inspectors and/or management.
- Serve as PSP review specialist to review and evaluate environmental assessments and/or inspection reports provided by field inspectors to ensure adherence to the Produce Safety Rule and CDFA laws and regulations.
- Responsible for making critical scientific determinations on the severity of non-conformities discovered while reviewing FSMA Inspection Report Packets and classify inspections.
- Research new protocols given by the FDA and compile written conclusions that can be implemented by producers to assist in their food safety implementation plans.
- Assist SES (Supervisory) in training new hires in field inspections and PSR-related topics. Shadow field staff in-training to ensure PSP processes and procedures are being met, assist in training on interpreting laws and regulations that must be followed to ensure food and feed safety, and oversee the processing of administrative actions and/or penalties resulting from non-compliance.

Function #3

Outreach – 15%

- Travel to various locations throughout the state to attend meetings, conferences, and/or workshops related to PSP to make presentations on produce safety related topics.
- Participate in meetings with commodity/industry groups concerning regulatory requirements under FSMA so that all registered covered producers understand how to be in alignment with FSMA and/or state laws and regulations.
- Serve as a subject matter expert for food safety field investigations and hearings in order to provide sound and scientific information for the Department.

Function #4

Reports and Correspondence – 10%

- Prepare correspondence and technical reports to various entities in order to bring their production/facility sites into alignment with FSMA requirements.

- Respond to inquiries from industry in consultation with supervisor and program manager, by written correspondence or telephone, regarding environmental issues related to food safety.
- Prepare analytical, statistical, environmental, and scientific documentation and reports on specific food safety issues for evaluation by the Department's legal counsel.
- Assist with periodic reporting to FDA or any additional reporting requests by CDFA leadership and management.

B. Non-Essential Functions:

Function #1	Miscellaneous Duties – 5%
• Perform other job-related duties as requested by supervisor.	

III. Work Environment

Regular or recurring telework may occur as part of the incumbent's ongoing regular schedule in accordance with CDFA's Telework Policy. Regular and recurring travel throughout the state may be required up to 50% of work time.

This position requires the incumbent to work cooperatively with others; maintain regular, consistent, predictable attendance; and exercise good judgment. The incumbent must have good written and oral communications skills. Incumbent must establish and maintain courteous, professional, and effective working relationships with those contacted during the course of work; make appropriate decisions and well-thought-out recommendations; work well under pressure; and work independently to complete assigned work and meet required deadlines.

This position requires the incumbent to work from home and to travel by air, private or State vehicle, or other transportation modes to various locations throughout the state.

The duties of this position are performed in various environments, which consist of working outdoors approximately 50% of the time and indoors 50% of the time. The outdoor activities include visiting and traveling overnight to farms, processing plants, trainings, meetings or conferences. Outdoor work may also include walking on uneven ground; carrying and using sample equipment; and conducting visual environmental assessments, field inspections, and data recording. Incumbent may be required to travel and be in field locations during inclement or severe weather. The incumbent will be required to drive, have a valid driver license, and have a safe driving record as documented by the Department of Motor Vehicles.

Indoor work will be performed from a workstation equipped with standard office equipment. Indoor activities may include trainings, presentations, and computer and electronic communication. This position requires the ability to operate a computer terminal, calculator, photocopier, fax, and telephone; participate in, give presentations at, and interact with others at meetings; grasp papers, small objects, and manuals; and maneuver above shoulder level and below waist level to access upper and lower files and cabinets. Due to the duties of this position, FDA Commission with Credential will be required as a condition of permanent state employment.

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Once hired, the application process for the FDA Commission with Credential will begin and can take approximately 3-4 months. Commission appointment requires the incumbent to be a citizen of the United States or United States National, and to undergo a detailed background check and live scan fingerprinting. For additional information regarding this process, please see the US Food and Drug Administration Regulatory Procedures Manual available at <https://www.fda.gov/media/71888/download>.

**IV. Employee's Statement:
Initial applicable statement**

I have read and understand the duties and essential functions of the position. I understand Reasonable Accommodation¹ and how it applies to essential functions. I can perform the duties of this job without Reasonable Accommodation.

OR

I have read and understand the duties and essential functions of the position. I understand Reasonable Accommodation¹ and how it applies to essential functions. I will need Reasonable Accommodation to perform one or more of the essential functions described in this duty statement.

Employee Signature²

Date

Supervisor Signature

Date

¹ A reasonable accommodation is an adjustment or modification to a job or workplace that allows qualified employees or prospective employees to perform the essential functions of the job successfully.

² Duties of this position are subject to change and may be revised as needed or required. If/when duties change you will be provided a revised duty statement to sign.

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Under general direction of the Senior Environmental Scientist (SES) (Supervisory), the Environmental Scientist (ES) will serve as PSP review specialist to review inspection reports and findings, including environmental assessments to ensure adherence to FSMA requirements. The incumbent will perform work concerning present and future environmental issues relating to food safety; conduct field inspections; make presentations at meetings and workshops; meet with individuals from industry to ensure adherence to FSMA and CDFA laws and regulations in regard to environmental requirements and efficacy data; participate in field investigations as a subject expert; and consult with otherstate departments and programs on issues related to food safety assessments regarding agricultural production systems.

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Classification:	Environmental Scientist
Working Title:	FSMA Review Specialist
License or	
Other Requirement:	Bachelor's or advanced degree with a major in biological, chemical, physical, or environmental science, or a closely related scientific discipline FDA Commission with Credential

Valid California Driver's License

Position Number: 018-775-0762-xxx
Location: Sacramento, CA
Work Hours/Shift: 40 hours per week
Date Prepared: December 2025

II. Essential and Non-Essential Job Functions:

A. Essential Functions:

Function #1 Produce Safety Inspections and Reporting - 50%

- Conduct food safety field inspections and assist on investigations and monitor activity on farms to ensure compliance with PSR requirements. This function may entail up to 50% or more travel for any given month throughout California.
- Using various modes of transportation, visit grower business sites and farms to ensure PSR requirements and guidelines are followed.
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- Ensure industry standards and PSR requirements of applicable assessment procedures are met by reviewing on-farm records and practices to ensure uniformity and accuracy throughout statewide programs.
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- Determine and evaluate impacts on produce safety related on-farm activities on environmental systems and assess public health impacts.
- Implement, update, and maintain inspection procedures adhering to state, Federal, and industry standards. Write inspection reports capturing inspection findings consistent with federal and state standards.
- In consultation with the SES (Supervisory) and/or PSP management, respond to inquiries from industry, by written correspondence or telephone, regarding issues related to produce safety compliance.

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- Document compliance and industry issues by maintaining ledgers and statistical logs, per Branch policies and FDA requirements.
- Develop recommendations for corrective actions for on-farm food safety issues as necessary.
- Facilitate communication with FDA Office of Compliance and Enforcement or other federal, state or local agency officials as necessary, to address questions related to PSR compliance.

Function #2 Review Inspection Reports & Farm Environmental Information – 20%

- Scientifically analyze and evaluate food safety production claims and guarantees to substantiate Produce Safety Rule requirements. Provide recommendations of appropriate actions pertaining to FSMA requirements to PSP inspectors and/or management.
- Review and evaluate environmental assessments and/or inspection reports provided by field inspectors to ensure adherence to the Produce Safety Rule and CDFA laws and regulations.
- Confer with and inform the EPM I and SES (Supervisory) on critical scientific determinations on the severity of non-conformities discovered while reviewing FSMA Inspection Report Packets and classify inspections.
- Research new protocols given by the FDA and compile written conclusions that can be implemented by producers to assist in their food safety implementation plans.
- Under the direction of the SES (Supervisory), shadow field staff in-training to help ensure PSP processes and procedures are being met, and help in training new hires on interpreting laws and regulations that must be followed to ensure food safety, and oversee the processing of administrative actions and/or penalties resulting from non-compliance.

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