

What does an environmental lawyer do?

Environmental lawyers have litigation, transactional and/or regulatory practices. The main areas of specialization by lawyers in private practice are:

Compliance lawyers assist business clients in complying with the complex body of federal, state and local environmental law regulating the quality of air and water, the management, transportation, recycling and disposal of waste materials, and the protection of wetlands and endangered species.

Environmental Cleanup lawyers specialize in the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (CERCLA), commonly known as Superfund, and represent clients regarding cleanup of state and federal Superfund sites, including challenging listing of sites, responding to remedial action orders, implementing remedial investigations, and negotiating or challenging remedy selection. They also negotiate settlements with environmental agencies.

Toxic Tort and Environmental Litigators represent clients in air, water and waste enforcement actions brought by federal and state enforcement agencies, in toxic tort lawsuits involving chemical exposures, dust exposures and industrial accidents, environmentally-related products liability cases, and insurance coverage actions over pollution issues and toxic tort claims. These cases often involve complex technical and scientific testimony.

Transactional environmental lawyers counsel clients on the environmental and land use issues that arise in purchase or sale of businesses and real property, as well as in leasing and financing transactions. They identify, evaluate and allocate environmental liabilities through due diligence, indemnities, insurance arrangements, and risk transfer agreements. They also assist businesses in obtaining necessary land use, water rights, and environmental permits and approvals.

Where can I practice environmental law?

Some environmental attorneys work for federal or state enforcement agencies as regulatory attorneys or litigators. The main agencies in DC/Maryland are the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Justice's Environment and Natural Resources Division, and the

Maryland Attorney General's Office. Attorneys at the Attorney General's Office prosecute environmental crimes, or they may work at state agencies that work on environmental issues such as the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of the Environment, Maryland Environmental Services, and the Maryland Energy Administration. Environmental lawyers also work for non-profits advocating for greater environmental regulation and enforcement. Most environmental lawyers work in the private sector, either at law firms or in corporate law departments.

How can I get a job as an environmental lawyer?

Take all the environmental and administrative law courses offered at UB. Business law courses will be helpful if you are interested in becoming a transactional environmental lawyer. If you are interested in environmental litigation, consider participating in Moot Court and writing on to a law journal. Gain all the litigation experience you can during law school, even if it is not environmental law related. Find UB alumni who practice environmental law on www.martindale.com and set up informational interviews. Working as an intern or a law clerk at a law firm, state or federal agency, or a non-profit that has an environmental practice is the best way to secure a job after graduation. If you are interested in environmental enforcement, intern with the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Justice Environment and Natural Resources Division, or the Maryland Attorney General's Office. If policy and advocacy work interests you, volunteer with nonprofits. You can find environmental advocacy organizations, as well as internship opportunities, on www.pslawnet.org.

Where can I learn more?

Environmental Protection Agency – www.epa.gov/

Environmental Law Net – www.lawvianet.com/

Maryland Attorney General's Office – <http://www.oag.state.md.us/ECU/index.htm>

Maryland State Bar Association Environmental Law Division –

http://www.msba.org/sec_comm/sections/environ/

Natural Resources Defense Council's Directory of Environmental Nonprofits –

<http://www.nrdc.org/reference/environgroups.asp>

PSLawNet – <http://www.pslawnet.org/>

U.S. Department of Justice Environment and Natural Resources – www.usdoj.gov/enrd/

Who teaches environmental law at UB?

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