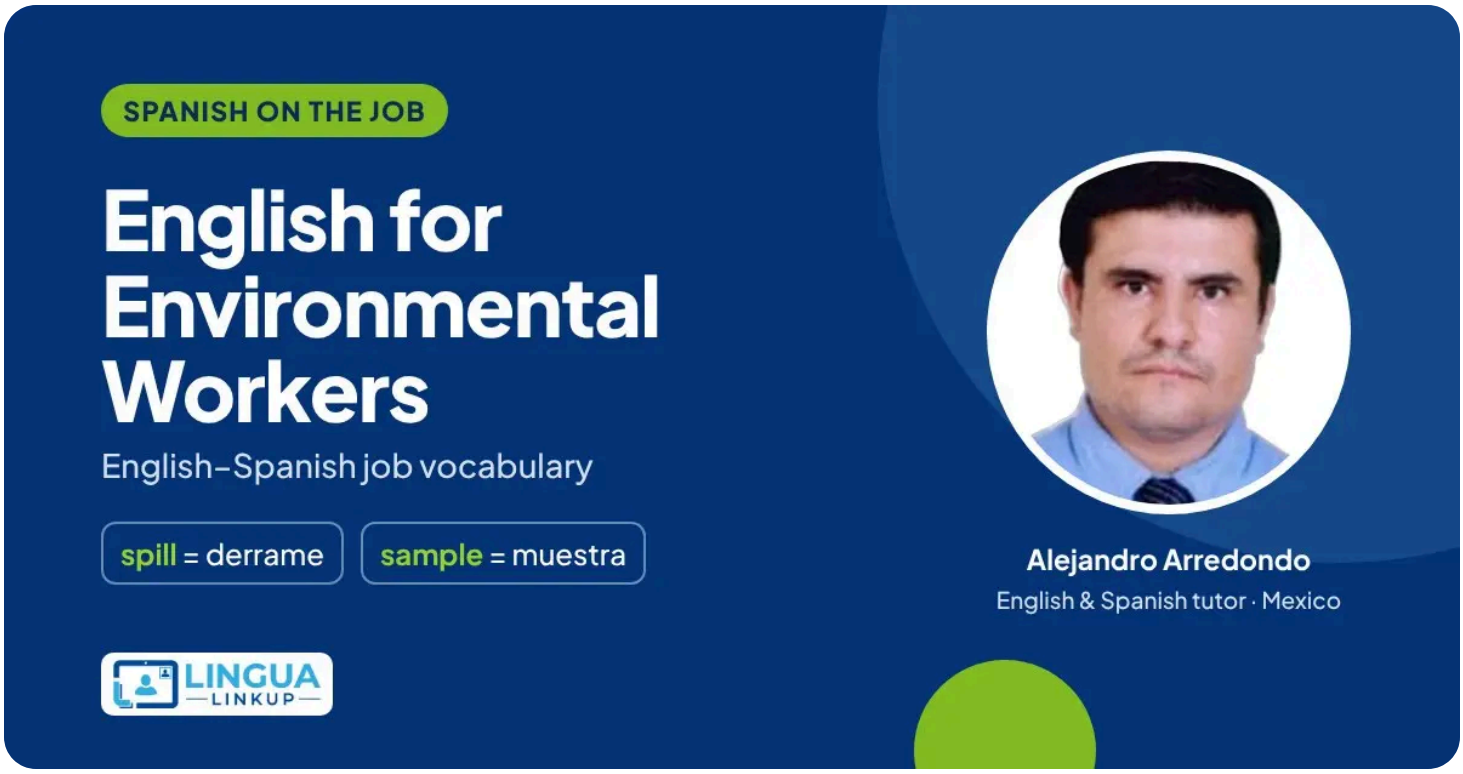
English Vocabulary for Environmental Workers (English–Spanish)

Updated November 3, 2026



Quick answer: The English words environmental workers hear most on the job include **hazardous waste** (*residuos peligrosos*), **spill** (*derrame*), **sample** (*muestra*), **contamination** (*contaminación*), **PPE** (*equipo de protección personal*), **SDS** (*hoja de datos de seguridad*) and **wastewater** (*aguas residuales*). This English–Spanish guide has 120+ terms and phrases for waste handling, water treatment, remediation, sampling, safety and reporting, with a printable PDF.

Environmental services crews, remediation technicians, water and wastewater operators, recycling and landfill staff all work with chemicals, permits and strict procedures. When the procedures and labels are in English, workers need that vocabulary to stay safe and pass inspections. Employers can use this list for bilingual training; workers can use it to study for the job.

Hazardous materials and waste

English	Español
hazardous waste	residuos peligrosos
hazardous materials (hazmat)	materiales peligrosos
chemical	sustancia química
toxic / flammable / corrosive	tóxico / inflamable / corrosivo
drum / container	tambor / contenedor
label	etiqueta
Safety Data Sheet (SDS)	hoja de datos de seguridad
disposal	eliminación, disposición final
recycling	reciclaje
landfill	relleno sanitario, vertedero
asbestos / lead / mold	asbesto / plomo / moho
manifest (waste manifest)	manifiesto de residuos

Spills and emergency response

English	Español
spill / leak	derrame / fuga
spill kit	kit para derrames
absorbent pad	almohadilla absorbente
containment	contención
berm / dike	berma / dique
evacuate	evacuar
decontamination (decon)	descontaminación
“Stop work. There’s a leak.”	“Paren el trabajo. Hay una fuga.”
“Contain the spill before it reaches the drain.”	“Contengan el derrame antes de que llegue al drenaje.”
“Report every spill to your supervisor.”	“Reporten todos los derrames a su supervisor.”

Water and wastewater treatment

English	Español
wastewater	aguas residuales
treatment plant	planta de tratamiento
stormwater	agua pluvial
runoff	escorrentía
sludge	lodo

filter / pump / valve	filtro / bomba / válvula
flow rate	caudal
chlorine	cloro
pH level	nivel de pH
discharge permit	permiso de descarga

Sampling, testing and site assessment

English	Español
sample	muestra
soil / groundwater / air sample	muestra de suelo / agua subterránea / aire
monitoring well	pozo de monitoreo
chain of custody	cadena de custodia
lab results	resultados de laboratorio
above the limit	por encima del límite
contamination	contaminación
remediation / cleanup	remediación / limpieza
excavation	excavación
“Label each sample with the date, time and location.”	“Etiqueten cada muestra con la fecha, la hora y el lugar.”

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PPE and safety

English	Español
personal protective equipment (PPE)	equipo de protección personal (EPP)
respirator	respirador
fit test	prueba de ajuste
chemical-resistant gloves	guantes resistentes a químicos
coveralls / Tyvek suit	overol / traje Tyvek
face shield / goggles	careta / gafas protectoras
confined space	espacio confinado
permit required	se requiere permiso
lockout/tagout	bloqueo y etiquetado
gas detector	detector de gases
heat stress	estrés por calor
“Put on your respirator before you enter.”	“Póngase el respirador antes de entrar.”

Regulations, paperwork and reporting

English	Español
EPA (Environmental Protection Agency)	Agencia de Protección Ambiental
OSHA	Administración de Seguridad y Salud Ocupacional
HAZWOPER training	capacitación HAZWOPER (operaciones con residuos peligrosos)
compliance	cumplimiento
inspection / inspector	inspección / inspector
violation / fine	infracción / multa
incident report	reporte de incidente
logbook	bitácora
work order	orden de trabajo
“Fill out the log at the end of your shift.”	“Llene la bitácora al final de su turno.”

Everyday English phrases for the job site

- **What’s the plan for today?** – ¿Cuál es el plan para hoy?
- **Where do you want this drum?** – ¿Dónde quiere este tambor?
- **I need more absorbent pads.** – Necesito más almohadillas absorbentes.
- **The detector is beeping.** – El detector está sonando.
- **Can you show me how to do it?** – ¿Me puede enseñar cómo hacerlo?

- **I don’t understand. Can you say it more slowly?** – No entiendo. ¿Lo puede decir más despacio?
- **The job is done. The area is clean.** – El trabajo está terminado. El área está limpia.

Tips for learning job English faster

1. **Start with the labels and signs** you see every day: DANGER, CAUTION, FLAMMABLE, KEEP OUT.
2. **Learn the SDS sections** (hazards, first aid, PPE, storage). They’re the same on every sheet.
3. **Practice the radio and phone phrases** you use with supervisors and dispatch.
4. **Study 10 minutes a day** on your phone instead of one long class a week.

English training for environmental services companies

Our English training for environmental workers gives Spanish-speaking crews live group lessons by level plus a self-study course on their phones, built around safety, procedures and the vocabulary above. We can add custom lessons from your own SOPs, SDS sheets and safety manual. See also English vocabulary for the oil and gas industry.

Frequently asked questions

How do you say “hazardous waste” in Spanish?

Residuos peligrosos. Hazardous materials (hazmat) are materiales peligrosos.

What is an SDS in Spanish?

Hoja de datos de seguridad (Safety Data Sheet). It lists a chemical’s hazards, first aid, PPE and storage.

How do you say “wastewater” in Spanish?

Aguas residuales. A treatment plant is una planta de tratamiento.

How can environmental workers learn English for the job?

Start with labels, signs and SDS sections, then practice the phrases you use with supervisors. Our English training for environmental workers pairs small group lessons with a self-study course on the phone.

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