

Environmental Health Priority Activities

Purpose

The purpose of this Environmental Health Services Division Emergency Response Plan Attachment #3 is to guide the Environmental Health Services Division (EHD) and its community and agency partners in better understanding the priority environmental health responses in a natural or man-made disaster or a public health emergency.

Scope

The information in this Attachment refers to the list of potential priority activities the Environmental Health Emergency Response Team and EHD staff may conduct in support of public health and its community partners' emergency response plans.

Activities emphasize health hazards associated with specific subject areas including:

- Chemical, biological and radiological¹ contaminants
- Drinking water
- Food safety
- General sanitation
- Hazardous materials and household hazardous waste
- Mass care shelter and feeding facilities
- Solid waste and debris management
- Water recreation safety (pools, spas, beaches)
- Wastewater
- Zoonotic and vector borne disease control
- Building assessment for re-occupancy

Table 1 lists EHD priority activities in these subject areas, along with the ESF(s) that address that activity.

Situation Overview

The EHD's capacity for emergency preparedness response has varied over time in accordance with financial and political changes. Priority activities listed reflect current capacity (funding and staffing) and statutory requirements.

It is unknown if a listing of EHD priority activities in an emergency response has been previously developed and/or distributed. It is also unknown whether current capacity reduces, meets, or exceeds previously understood response activities in total or in specific topical service delivery areas.

¹ EHD supports the lead function of the Washington State Department of Health in response to radiological contaminants.

Table 1: Environmental Health Priority Activities

Subject Area	Priority Activities	ESF ²
Drinking Water	Provide information to the public and update the County's website on water resources and availability, rationing, storage and disinfection through fact sheets or other formats in support of the local water districts.	8, 10
	Disseminate 'boil water' and 'do not drink' guidelines in support of and at the request of local water utilities.	8, 11
	Provide limited technical assistance to small community and non-community Group A water systems identified by WA Department of Health Regional Office; including special purpose investigations.	3- addendum
	Technical assistance in support of WA Department of Health Regional Office for Group B water systems.	
	Support the WA Department of Health and Public Health – Seattle & King County Communicable Disease and Epidemiology Program in the investigation of possible water borne illnesses.	8, 11
	Provide assistance, as resources allow, in assessing water safety of wells or public systems in an emergency, including determination of potential contamination, sample collection, remediation of contamination, and public health messaging based on sampling results.	8, 11
Mass Feeding Facilities and Non-Medical Mass Care Shelters	Assist with environmental health assessments to ensure shelter health and safety, utilizing the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Shelter Assessment Tool and Instructions. ³	6
	Advise on shelter siting.	6
	Advise on organization and layout of shelter.	6
	Ensure food safety (see section on Food Safety for specifics).	6, 11
	Ensure safety of drinking water (see section on Drinking Water for specifics).	6, 11

² Emergency Support Function (ESF) as designated by King County Emergency Preparedness. Not all Priority Activities listed in the chart relate to an existing ESF. It is recommended that ongoing work be completed to update identified ESF's to reflect actual services EHD could provide in an emergency.

³ CDC Shelter Assessment Tool and Instructions located at: <http://emergency.cdc.gov/shelterassessment/>.

Subject Area	Priority Activities	ESF ²
Mass Feeding Facilities and Non-Medical Mass Care Shelters	Ensure that personal hygiene (e.g. toilets, hand wash sinks, soap, disposable towels, showers and laundry) amenities are provided.	6
	Ensure wastewater is properly managed.	6
	Ensure proper management of solid waste.	6
	Monitor housekeeping and sanitation.	6
	Identify and assist with vector/pest related concerns and promote Integrated Pest Management.	6
	Provide educational information to volunteers and attendees regarding health and safety issues.	8, 11
	Coordinate with the American Red Cross, and other agencies as needed, in support of all mass care sheltering plans throughout the county.	6, 8
	Provide assistance to Regional Animal Services of King County, and other jurisdictions as needed, on household pet and service animal needs, including mass care, sheltering, and infection control.	6
Food Safety	Provide technical assistance and consultation to owners/managers of food establishments regarding general food safety issues.	8, 10
	Provide plan review of food establishments for re-opening of business and/or emergency & limited services.	
	Provide information to owners/managers of food establishments on salvaging and protecting perishable foods.	8, 10
	Provide information to owners/managers of food establishments on sorting, possible denaturing, and proper disposal of foods which may have been contaminated.	8, 10
	Ensure that contaminated foods are properly collected and managed (e.g. landfilled or incinerated).	11

Subject Area	Priority Activities	ESF ²
Food Safety	Provide technical assistance at mass feeding centers, if established, to ensure safe food handling practices and personal hygiene for workers and attendees.	6, 8, 11
	Provide information to the public addressing protection of perishable foods and regarding the sorting and disposal of food that may be contaminated.	8, 11
	Investigate possible food borne illnesses in support of and at the request of Public Health – Seattle & King County Communicable Disease and Epidemiology Program.	11
Hazardous Materials	Report chemical incidents to the WA Department of Ecology.	10
	Perform screening of suspect and non-regulated small quantity hazardous materials for proper disposal that might be generated from clean-up sites.	10
Radiation	Support the WA Department of Health in its response.	
On-Site Septic Systems and Public Sewer	Assess the health impacts of wastewater spills and overflows, in support of local utilities and the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks, and as resources allow, including determination of potential contamination, sample collection, and remediation.	3
	Provide educational information/recommendations to the public regarding personal hygiene and water use and exposure prevention for wastewater contamination.	
	Provide information on alternative human waste disposal methods if commercial toilets are not available.	
Solid Waste	Coordinate with appropriate contacts (e.g. solid waste facilities, waste haulers and recyclers or municipalities) to determine extent of solid waste management system disruption, including disruptions to facilities and equipment.	3
	Provide increased regulatory oversight as needed for licensed facilities and waste haulers, and determine if regulatory waivers are necessary.	3

Subject Area	Priority Activities	ESF ²
Solid Waste	Coordinate with known waste operators and haulers to provide information and guidance to businesses and the public regarding changes in the solid waste management system and how to dispose of solid waste.	8, 11
	Provide technical and regulatory assistance with the location and opening of alternative facilities, including those at non-medical mass shelter facilities and Temporary Debris Staging and Reduction Sites.	3, 11
	Provide regulatory oversight for the proper management of contaminated and potentially hazardous wastes (e.g. food, disaster debris) using the Waste Characterization Program, if necessary, prior to disposal.	11
	Serve as liaison among solid waste management providers, haulers and facilities.	
Vector Control and Zoonotic Disease	Provide information to residents addressing topics such as rodent-transmitted disease and control measures, avoiding mosquito and tick bites, and insect repellent safety and use.	
	Coordinate the response of regional veterinary services and animal care groups, in partnership with Regional Animal Services of King County, as appropriate.	8
	Assist in surveillance for animal viruses, parasites and bacteria through liaison with the WA Department of Agriculture, the WA Department of Health, and WA Department of Fish and Wildlife, as requested.	8, 11, 14
	Support the WA Department of Agriculture in its response to agricultural zoonotic disease outbreaks.	11
	Conduct disease investigation activities for zoonotic disease outbreaks in coordination with Public Health – Seattle & King County Communicable Disease and Epidemiology.	8
	Direct response activities to vector-borne public health emergencies.	8
	Ensure appropriate infection control measures to minimize disease risk to animals and people.	
	Identify and assist with vector/pest related concerns and promote Integrated Pest Management.	

Subject Area	Priority Activities	ESF ²
Building Assessment for Re-occupancy	Assist with environmental health assessments to ensure healthy and safe buildings prior to re-occupancy, utilizing the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Building Assessment Tool and Instructions.	14

References

Public Health – Seattle & King County. Environmental Health Services Division. *EH Division – Mission Critical Business Functions*. October 2015

Twin Cities Metro Advanced Practice Centers. *Environmental Health Emergency Response Guide*. October 2007

King County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan. December 2013. Available at:
<http://www.kingcounty.gov/safety/prepare/EmergencyManagementProfessionals/Plans/ComprehensiveEmergencyManagementPlan.aspx>.