

BASIC ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM OPTIONAL FIELD EXERCISE GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION

Field exercises are **not** required to be completed as part of the Basic Environmental Health Program. They can be used at the discretion of the local health department's Director of Environmental Health or student's supervisors to enhance the training provided during the Program. If elected to be used, students should complete inspections and the field exercise reports with a qualified mentor.

The following field exercises are available for use and, if used, are recommended to be completed prior to the corresponding session of the Basic Environmental Health Program.

- Swimming Pools (intended to be completed at a swimming pool with lifeguard supervision)
- High Risk Food Service
- Sanitary Survey of a Noncommunity Public Water Supply
- Elective Activity (a listing of suggested elective field exercises is provided on the Elective Field Exercise report)

The exercises and report completions are designed to provide additional hands-on experience to aid the student in understanding important basic concepts of various environmental health programs. Students are not expected to independently perform inspections of the identified field exercise facilities without substantial additional training and mentoring. In addition to the field exercise report forms, it is recommended students also complete the inspection report form for the applicable facility. It is the responsibility of the local health department where the participant is employed to provide for meaningful and successful field exercises with qualified mentors. A copy of these guidelines should be shared with the student's supervisor and mentors to understand the roles and responsibilities of all parties.

These guidelines outline the objectives, procedures, and responsibilities that apply to all the field exercises.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing an activity, the student should be able to:

- describe the purpose of the activity, and how it relates to public health;
- list the applicable laws and sanitary code(s);
- identify some possible health risks associated with the activity related to the exercise;
- describe how existing/potential health risks were (or could be) mitigated; and

- understand how health department staff communicate with/relate to the public and/or regulated community.

SUGGESTED ROLES OF LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT STAFF

(Depending on the local health department, the responsibilities for the following roles may overlap).

A. Director of Environmental Health

- 1) Assigns a timely and thorough completion of selected field exercises.

B. Student's Supervisor

- 1) Allows student adequate time for completion of the field exercise.
- 2) Arranges for appropriate, qualified mentor from local or another health department to work with the student and sees that the field exercise and written components are completed.
- 3) Reviews completed exercise report with student resolves any issues or questions the student may have and signs off that the learning objectives were met.

C. Mentor

- 1) Qualifications include:
 - a) Being an effective communicator/trainer/motivator who is enthusiastic about the mentor assignment.
 - b) Being a recognized technical expert, knowledgeable on applicable State Health Department regulations and policies and has current field experience and/or credential certificates in the program area assigned.
- 2) Responsibilities
 - a) Assists student in understanding and completing learning objectives outlined on individual field exercise reports.
 - b) Demonstrates requisite skills/procedures and provides oral and written resource information such as the Environmental Health Manual, Codes, books and brochures.
 - c) Encourages the student to do as much of the hands-on, practical aspect of the exercise as possible.

- d) Reviews the completed exercise with the student and resolves issues or questions prior to signing off on the exercise form.

D. Student

- 1) With assistance from the mentor, completes the field exercise report form. It is recommended that the facility inspection report form also be completed.
- 2) Asks questions and is engaged in the inspection process.
- 3) Reviews the field exercise and inspection report forms with the mentor and supervisor and resolves any questions.

Each field exercise is expected to involve less than a day in the field and no more than one hour to complete the written work. If a public health hazard is identified during the field exercise, the mentor must assume responsibility for resolving the situation immediately, consistent with State Health Department policies/procedures for that program.