

May, 2002

To: Environmental Health Colleagues  
From: Carl Osaki, RS, MSPH, Project Manager  
Subject: Essential Services of Environmental Health Project

This questionnaire is designed to obtain input about your individual training needs relating to the practice of environmental health. We are requesting your assistance in helping to develop an effective and competent environmental health workforce.

The University of Washington, School of Public Health and Community Medicine, Northwest Center for Public Health Practice, is collecting this information as a part of a national research project. The aim is to develop training modules for incorporating the *Ten Essential Services of Public Health* into environmental health practice. This project will cover a six-state region including Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming.

The long-range benefits from this project will be to:

- Assist environmental health agencies more clearly understand their role in the practice of public health
- Demonstrate where environmental health activities should be focused to achieve maximum public benefits
- Clarify how to make effective environmental health policy in the development of programs and activities
- Demonstrate how environmental health agencies can be more responsive to the changing needs of their communities
- Develop a unified message of how and why we practice environmental health

We are asking you to complete a questionnaire about activities that you do in your current job. It will take about 15 minutes of your time to complete. You do not have to answer every question. Although you may not directly benefit by the results of this project, the information you provide will help to determine training needs associated with the *Essential Services*. Your participation is voluntary and there will be no link between your name and the information you provide. A self-addressed, stamped envelope is provided.

Thank you for helping us to understand your professional needs. If you have any questions about this project, please contact me at 206-685-3770 or via email: [csosaki@aol.com](mailto:csosaki@aol.com). If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may call the Human Subjects Division at the University of Washington at (206) 543 0090.

**Instructions:**

For purposes of completing this questionnaire,

- Please consider the following definition of environmental health: “*Environmental health and protection is the art and science of protecting against environmental factors that adversely impact human health or the ecological balances to long-term human health and environmental quality, whether in the natural or human-made environment*” (source: National Environmental Health Association).
- Please consider the **environmental health unit** that you most closely associate with. This may be a program, section, division, district, or department.
- Unless otherwise indicated, please place an “**X**” next to the appropriate choice for each question
- Please interpret questions asking about “processes”, “systems”, or “protocols” as being supported by written policies or procedures.

**Part I. Background Information:**

In what state do you work?

WA \_\_\_ ID\_\_\_ WY\_\_\_ OR\_\_\_ AK\_\_\_ MT\_\_\_

Sex: M\_\_\_ F\_\_\_

Which of the following describes your racial background? Select all that apply:

American Indian or Alaska Native \_\_\_

Asian \_\_\_

Black or African American \_\_\_

Hispanic or Latino \_\_\_

Pacific Islander \_\_\_

White \_\_\_

Other (please specify \_\_\_\_\_)

Type of agency:

Local: Public Health \_\_\_\_, Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

State: Public Health \_\_\_\_, Environmental \_\_\_\_, Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Federal: CDC \_\_\_\_, EPA \_\_\_\_, Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Type of work unit:

Program: \_\_\_

Section: \_\_\_

Division: \_\_\_

District: \_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_

Other: (please specify type): \_\_\_\_\_

Level of Job Class:

- Front line worker: \_\_\_\_
- Supervisor/Program Manager: \_\_\_\_
- Senior Manager/Director: \_\_\_\_
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Environmental Health employees in your work unit: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of years you have worked in Environmental Health: \_\_\_\_\_

Does your work unit have standards for measuring performance? Y \_\_ N \_\_ Unsure \_\_

**Part II. Essential Services Knowledge/Practice:**

The following questions relate to your knowledge and practice of the *Essential Services of Public Health*, modified for environmental health. For each of the *Essential Services* described below in bold letters, please tell us whether your environmental health unit is performing the following activities. (Please indicate your response by placing a check in the appropriate box for Yes, No or Unknown/Unsure.)

**Monitor environmental and health status to identify community environmental health problems**

Question		Yes	No	Unsure
1	Our unit has a formal system (written policy) in place to assess environmental health threats			
2	Our unit has a formal system in place to acquire community input.			
3	Our unit routinely conducts community environmental health needs assessments.			
4	Our unit has a formal system for identifying vulnerable populations			

**Diagnose and investigate environmental health problems and hazards in the community**

Question		Yes	No	Unsure
5	Our unit has a written protocol to analyze the relationship between environmental health hazards and health impacts.			
6	Our unit has a memorandum of agreement with agencies involved in investigating environmental hazards/risks.			
7	Our unit has communicable disease surveillance capacity to assess environmental hazards.			
8	Our unit has the technical capacity to perform environmental health risk assessments.			

**Inform, educate, and empower people about environmental health issues**

Question		Yes	No	Unsure
9	Our unit has an environmental health advisory group.			
10	Our unit regularly provides environmental health information to the community.			
11	Our unit has the capacity to communicate with people of diverse backgrounds (e.g., ethnic groups, tribes, belief systems).			
12	Our unit regularly evaluates the effectiveness and appropriateness of communication methods.			

**Mobilize community partnerships to identify and solve environmental health problems**

Question		Yes	No	Unsure
13	Our unit has a formal system for identifying stakeholders or interested parties.			
14	Our unit partners with schools of higher learning that are potential sources of future public health workers.			
15	Our unit has an up-to-date, written directory of potential partners.			
16	Our unit has a formal process for developing collaborative or shared efforts on issues of common interest.			

**Develop policies and plans that support individual and community environmental health efforts**

Question		Yes	No	Unsure
17	Our unit has a formal process in place to identify community environmental health priorities.			
18	Our unit has ready access to policy makers for briefing, educating or communicating with them about environmental health issues			
19	Our unit has a formal process to include the community in policy development			
20	Our unit has a formal process in place to review the effectiveness of environmental health polices on a periodic basis.			

**Enforce laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety**

<b>Question</b>		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Unsure</b>
21	Our unit has a formal process in place to evaluate the effectiveness, appropriateness, and clarity of laws, regulations, and compliance requirements.			
22	Our unit has a formal process to obtain feedback from the regulated community.			
23	Our unit has ready access to legal advice or resources.			
24	Our unit has a formal system to ensure consistency of enforcement actions			

**Link people to needed environmental health services and assure the provision of environmental health services when otherwise unavailable**

<b>Question</b>		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Unsure</b>
25	Our unit has a formal protocol for addressing environmental health needs it cannot meet.			
26	Our unit has the capacity to provide environmental health services to non-English speaking members of our community.			
27	Our unit has an up-to-date directory of referral sources.			
28	Our unit has a formal protocol for expanding environmental health services beyond normal capacity or mutual aid agreements.			

**Assure a competent environmental health workforce**

<b>Question</b>		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Unsure</b>
29	Our unit has an on going training plan to improve the knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform my job			
30	Our unit has written standards identifying minimum competencies needed to perform my job.			
31	Our unit routinely conducts personnel assessments (evaluations).			
32	Our unit has a written policy on the recruitment, training, and retention of staff.			

**Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of environmental health services**

<b>Question</b>		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Unsure</b>
33	Our unit has a formal process to routinely perform program evaluations or assessments (e.g., outcome and utilization of services)			
34	Our unit surveys community groups or stakeholders to obtain feedback about environmental health services or programs.			
35	Our unit has a quality improvement plan in place.			
36	Our unit has performance standards in place to measure our unit's progress.			

**Research for new insights and innovation solutions to environmental health problems.**

<b>Question</b>		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Unsure</b>
37	Our unit has a formal process for identifying research needs.			
38	Our unit has a formal relationship with research entities (e.g. University, medical institutions)			
39	Our unit has an awards program for innovative solutions by unit employees.			
40	Our unit has the capacity to seek grants, new funding opportunities, or partners for research projects.			