

Lecture Hall

Session Abstracts

National Environmental Health Association (NEHA)
72nd Annual Educational Conference & Exhibition

Terrorism and All-Hazards Preparedness

Tuesday, June 24

8:00 – 8:50am

Old Job, New Expectations: Innovative Tools for Environmental Health Emergency Preparedness

Brian R. Golob, CHMM, REHS, Senior Environmentalist, Hennepin County HSPHD, MN

Are you feeling overwhelmed at work dealing with delegated programs such as food, indoor air quality, hazardous waste, septic, and pools? How about adding emergency preparedness to your work load? Do you know what to do or where you can find useful and practical resources so you can either start planning, or build on previous emergency preparedness work efforts related to environmental health? Are you ready to respond to an incident in your community? The Twin Cities Metro Advanced Practice Center (APC) in Minnesota, comprised of Hennepin County, St. Paul – Ramsey County, and the City of Minneapolis, has been funded since the fall of 2004 to develop tools and model practices pertaining specifically to local environmental health emergency preparedness and response. The APC has developed and produced a number of new products that are intended to strengthen local environmental health capacity in the event of a public health emergency. These include the following:

- environmental health emergency response plans,
- an Environmental Health emergency Response Guide,
- an Environmental Health Resource Compendium for Emergency Response,
- a Solid Waste Management and Highly Pathogenic H5N1 Avian Influenza Virus Decision Tree and Guidance Document,
- Food Safety and Food Security Self Audit and Inspection Checklist,
- fact sheets for food establishments to help discard or salvage decisions in recovery, and an emergency equipment and supplies list, and
- a benchmark emergency preparedness assessment of environmental health professionals in Minnesota.

These materials provide a wealth of useful information that are applicable to and appropriate for environmental health professionals across the country dealing with emergency preparedness issues. The session will highlight these resources.

9:30 – 10:20am

Taking Out the Garbage: Suggestions on Improving Food Protection and Defense Education and Training

Jennifer M. Pierquet, MPH, Food Protection Education Coordinator, University of Minnesota, MN

This presentation identifies the shortcomings of food protection and defense education and training. Two focus groups conducted at the 2007 NEHA Annual Conference in Atlantic City, New Jersey provided information on experiences with food protection and defense education and

training. The objectives of the research reported here were 1) to define EH professionals' role in a disaster and in day-to-day activities 2) to discover how EH professionals would overcome the barriers present in food protection and defense education and training and 3) offer some suggestions on how to put these solutions into action. The study found that EH professionals want a centralized education and training base that offers innovative, concise, and practical materials to be used in their everyday profession and emergency situations.

11:00 – 11:50am

Enhancing Awareness and Preparation for Environmental Health in Times of Emergency Response and Homeland Security

Sharron LaFollette, PhD, Public Health Dept. Chair, University of Illinois at Springfield, IL

As presenter, I will outline the teamwork necessary to build an interdisciplinary team of faculty who collaborated with the Illinois Environmental Health Association, Illinois Department of Public Health, and National Environmental Health Association to identify nationally-recognized professionals, researchers, and the media to provide for public dialog and practitioner training surrounding lessons learned during emergency response to catastrophic natural events and acts of terrorism. Included will be our strategy to coordinate sessions of the conference and public lecture series around a cohesive theme to identify strategies for improving the ability and efficiency to deliver environmental health services and promote effective environmental health law, policy, and scholarship. In addition, the presentation will discuss the video taping of session to use as the foundation by which an online upper-division general education course was designed. Through a case study approach, the online general education course increased student awareness and preparation on environmental health issues and provided students with a multidisciplinary approach to addressing the public crisis in environmental health.

The proposed presentation relates to the "Thinking New Knowledge" conference theme. The online course builds on latest research on lessons learned during emergency response to floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, food safety emergencies, and acts of bioterrorism. Faculty and presenters from a variety of disciplines (environmental and public health sciences, public policy and workforce development, philosophy and social sciences, public reporting and library sciences) were involved in this three-tiered effort (conference, public lecture series, and online general education course).

1:30 – 2:20pm

Environmental Health Profession All-Hazards Needs and Challenges—Statistical Results of the 2007 Joint NEHA and Michigan State University National Survey

Omar K. Helferich, PhD, MS, Professor, Central Michigan University, MI

Doug Voss, PhD, Professor of Business and Supply Chain, University of Central Arkansas, AR

John E. Griggs, PhD, Managing Director, Griggs & Associates LLC, MI

This session provides the findings and recommendations based on the joint NEHA and Michigan State University survey on all hazards preparedness and response for the environmental health profession. The survey provides an understanding of environmental health professionals view of issues and framework to track roles related to public health all hazards protection. The results identify challenges and opportunities to improve hazards preparedness and response. The research team's NEHA 2007 presentation provided the background and the preliminary findings based on less than 100 respondents. The proposed session will present the final analysis and recommendations based statistical analysis of several hundred respondents. Responses to scaled survey questions provide statistical data to report on needs and challenges to improve all hazards preparedness and response. The results are presented in two categories: 1) greatest needs to ensure preparedness and response capability and 2) greatest challenges to improving preparedness and response. Many respondents elected to provide excellent and detailed

responses to open ended questions. The responses were reviewed to determine the greatest opportunities for improving public health preparedness and response for all hazards within two years. The following categories received significant entries: 1) collaboration, 2) training, 3) funding, and 4) role definition. Other entries, such as a need for process redesign, improved tools, greater public relations, and better planning were also included. A second open ended category, other areas that environmental health agencies should be involved to improve hazards preparedness and response, are analyzed under the categories of community services (e.g. mass care, etc.) public education/training, and specific threats (e.g. hazardous materials, etc.) The session concludes with recommendations on training and future research based on the survey results and one-on-one interviews.

3:00 – 3:50pm

Food Defense ACEs for Environmental Health Professionals: Assignments, Coordination, and Exercises

Marion V. Allen, Food Defense Outreach Coordinator, Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition/FDA, MD

The Food Defense Surveillance Assignment (FDSA) is the latest in a progressively more complex series of food defense related field activities. The FDSA is the first food defense field assignment that engaged several federal, state and local organization representatives in all aspects of the planning, implementation and evaluation of this activity. The activity was designed to test communication and coordination between regulatory agencies when examining a dual jurisdictional commodity. It was conducted jointly with several FDA and USDA operational divisions, as well as many state and local regulatory agencies as well as the Food Emergency Response Network (FERN) Laboratories. The assignment scenario was designed around a finished product that is regulated by both the FDA and the USDA and is commonly used in the National School Lunch Program as well as state/local regulated retail and foodservice establishments. Inspectors from all of the participating agencies were asked to raise food defense awareness by sharing the ALERT message or similar food defense messaging which addresses preventative measures that can be taken to reduce risk of intentional food contamination. FDSA inspections began March 5 2007 and continued for four weeks through March 30 2007.

The scope covered the supply chain from farms to distributing firms and manufacturers to retail stores and restaurants and school district central kitchens. During the inspections, FDA, USDA, state, and local inspectors conducted a food safety inspection and engaged each firm's management in discussion aimed at increasing food defense awareness specific to their operations. Investigators also collected records and, in some cases, a physical sample.

While measurement of deterrence is subjective, this assignment enhanced food defense awareness and preparedness. FDA, USDA, state and local inspectors demonstrated an ability to trace product back from retail to the manufacturing facility approximately sixty five percent of the time. Overall, planning and coordination efforts were successful although there are opportunities to streamline the process. The FDSA demonstrated the ability and willingness of all participants to communicate, coordinate and collaborate to achieve a uniform response to a potential credible threat to the food supply.

4:30 –5:20pm

Managing an Emergency Dispensing Site Using ICS, a Medical Reserve Corps, and an EOC for Delivery of Vaccine Pandemic Flu: Lessons Learned from a Full-Scale Exercise

Sharon Walker Mastenbrook, RS, REHS, CFPM, CPO, MA, MS, Director of Public Health, Burlington Board of Health, MA

This talk will detail the management required to establish a full-scale exercise testing an Emergency Dispensing Site, the Incident Command system, the Town's Emergency Operations Center and a medical Reserve Corps. Over the course of eleven months, the Burlington Board of Health wrote an Emergency Dispensing Site plan, established a Medical Reserve Corps, and held a full-scale, real time exercise in which 877 citizens received seasonal flu shots and learned how Burlington prepared for a public health emergency requiring mass vaccination of its citizens. A twenty minute documentary-style video of the event will be shown as part of the presentation.