Environmental Health
Rapid Needs Assessment for Floods in the Caribbean
An Environmental Health Rapid Needs Assessment (EHRnA) is conducted to determine immediate resource needs of an affected area. The EHRnA is designed to provide a snapshot of the potential need for resources, so that decisions can be quickly made about how much and what resources should be activated. An EHRnA is undertaken, by a small team whose objective is, to provide information that will determine critical resource requirements to support emergency response activities.

Environmental Health Rapid Needs Assessment tools are the basic operational data gathering instruments used by the EHRnA team to collect information in an uncomplicated but precise manner. The structure and design of the assessment forms must reflect this.

The EHRnA tools are used within an operational plan. This plan must include:

- Linkages and relationships with the national health sector disaster management plan and the national disaster response agency.
- Primary and secondary target assessment areas
- Assessment of priorities
- Fastest method available for undertaking the assessment (e.g. air, ground)
- Identification of assessors
- Team roster
- Reporting timeframes
- Communications procedures
- Safety and security procedures
- Emergency action procedures
- Dispute resolution procedures
EHRnA Team Reporting

Three reports are required for any EHRnA team. These are:

1. Assessment forms
2. Consolidated report
3. Final report

EHRnA Assessment Forms

The assessment form is the principal tool used to collect and relay information to decision makers who in turn will put into operation the mobilization of adequate resources to address the immediate needs of the affected area (s). It is vital therefore, that information in the assessment forms is complete and concise. Templates of these forms are included in this document.

EHRnA Consolidated Report

The EHRnA team leader and the coordinator of the National Health Sector have responsi-
bility for taking the information from the various assessor forms and collating the findings into a Consolidated Report. The Consolidated Report should provide an overview of the impacted area resource immediate needs and the issues faced by the flood-affected areas and must be directed to the appropriate body that will immediately mobilize resources as recommended. It is important that the reports be forthcoming within 24 hours of the occurrence.

**EHRnA TEAM CONSOLIDATED REPORT TEMPLATE**

Report Number:

Event:

Date, time and Location:

Reporting Period:

Overview:
   Describe the area affected by the flood, indicating the boundaries of the most severely affected areas.

Situation Assessment:
   This is a narrative that outlines the most critical issues, as determined by team leader and the National Disaster Response Agency designee. Some emphasis should also be placed of other imminent hazards that could exacerbate the situation and cause additional response requirements.

Key areas to be reported on include: Population affected, general health situation, basic health needs, (water, food).

Recommendations:
   The recommendations are extracted from the Assessment Forms. The focus must be placed on the most critical issues identified during the assessment phase, clearly identifying the resources required.

Annexes:
   Any addition information that would enhance the content of the report should be attached. The individual Forms should also be attached to this report.

Verification:
   Team leader and the National Disaster Response Agency designee must sign the document.
Final Report

Each EHRnA Team deployed after the flood event must submit a final Report within the time frame specified by the Team Leader. The Team Leader compiles this report, which is used to assess how effectively and efficiently the assessment operation was undertaken. The report should seek to identify impeding factors to the deployment and suggest corrective measures for the future.

**EHRnA TERMINAL REPORT TEMPLATE**

Event:
Date:

Introduction: The following Final Report is that of the EH Rapid Needs Assessment team that conducted an initial EH assessment following:

Issue: A one sentence statement

Background: Give a brief description of the issue, context, disaster response and list of challenges – Public Health problems

Recommendations: Detail recommendations in relation to challenges outlined, specifically the issues outlined below.
1. The activation process
2. The mobilization process
3. On-site operations
4. Reassignment and/or demobilization
5. Post-mission activities
6. Organisational effectiveness
7. An assessment of the EHRnA tools used
8. An assessment of policies and procedures

*The Team Leader must sign the document*

The EHRnA Team

An EHRnA team should be deployed immediately during flood event, as long as conditions permit (e.g. an approaching tropical storm) and immediately after the occurrence of a flooding episode. The team should be comprised of small groups of competent experts.

Each team may be comprised of three sections. Specifically, these are (1) a management unit, (2) an assessment unit and (3) a support unit.
Management Unit

The Management Unit supervises and coordinates the assessment and support units and bears responsibility for the coordination of the EHRnA. The unit comprises:

- A team leader, the chief officer responsible for environmental health
- A member of the National Health Disaster Management Coordination Unit
- The Environmental Health Officer with responsibility for the flooded region.

The team leader has overall responsibility for EHRnA operations and provides the linkages to the national health emergency response agency.

The Environmental Health Officer is responsible for providing local knowledge of the flooded area.

Assessment Unit

The Assessment Unit should include experts that can be drawn from a cross section of the society. These are the individuals that actually perform the EHRnA.

In each case the designated expert within the unit must determine or estimate the resources required to ensure the maintenance of acceptable environmental health standards.

The Assessment Team could be comprised of up to six persons:

- **A water and sanitation expert**

  The water and sanitation expert assesses the distribution status and safety of the potable water supply where appropriate he/she will take water samples. In addition he/she is required to assess the status of excreta and solid waste disposal systems, as well as the number, type and capacity for disposal of dead animals and cadavers. He/she must clearly identify and estimate the immediate needs.

- **A food safety and hygiene expert**

  The food safety and hygiene expert assesses the state of food supplies, availability, safety and distribution within the flood-affected region. In addition they are responsible for assessing the requirements for personal domestic hygiene and survival within the flood-affected zone. They must clearly identify and estimate the immediate needs of this sector and where necessary take samples for laboratory analysis.

- **A vector and rodent control expert**

  An infectious disease professional or entomologist if possible holds responsibility for assessing the resource requirements for vector and rodent control in the immediate and near
future. They must clearly identify and estimate the immediate needs.

• **A hazardous materials expert**

  The hazardous materials expert assesses hazardous materials sites and facilities and their potential for impacting the public in the flooded area. This expert identifies the type of hazard, the contamination threat and the areas under threat. They must clearly identify and estimate the immediate needs.

• **Logistician**

  The logistician determines the immediate requirements for the provision of food, shelter, water and sanitary needs for displaced members of the affected population. In addition they assess the amount of relief and emergency first aid along with volunteer capacity. Logicians must also assess needs related to clean-up operations.

• **A public health doctor, medical/epidemiological expert**

  The medical expert assesses all relevant health care infrastructure and primary care systems, emergency medical services along with any special medical requirements. They must be able to set up ASAP epidemiological surveillance system for affected populations.

**Support Unit**

The support unit provides both logistical and administrative support to the assessment unit.
# Environmental Health Rapid Needs Assessment:
## Drinking Water Quality and Quantity

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<thead>
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<th>Water Quality and Quantity</th>
<th>Type/Cause of Flood</th>
<th>Reporting Unit</th>
<th>Form</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Operations Period:</td>
<td>Date/Time Prepared:</td>
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<td>Type of Area: [ ] Urban [ ] Sub-urban [ ] Rural [ ] Industrial</td>
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</table>

### Observation Operation
- **Agency/Organization:**
- **Survey Method:** [ ] Aerial [ ] Ground Survey [ ] Interview
- **GPS Location:**

### Debris Removal
- Are areas where you need emergency access covered by debris? [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] Unknown
- Is there local capacity to remove debris? [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] Unknown
- Have all emergency routes been identified? [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] Unknown
- Estimated quantity of debris to be removed: 

### Drinking Water Quality and Quantity
- Is distribution system operational? [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] Unknown
- Has water been contaminated? [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] Unknown
- Will potable water be required? [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] Unknown
- Is alternative water supply available? [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] Unknown
- Is chlorine available for disinfection? [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] Unknown
- Are field kits available for water testing? [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] Unknown
- How much potable water will be needed? (20L/person/day) 
- Are tankers/trucks available to transport water? [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] Unknown

### Potable Water Systems
- [ ] Wells [ ] Springs [ ] Reservoirs [ ] Cisterns [ ] Desalination Plant
- [ ] Water Treatment Plant [ ] Other (Please specify) 
- Number of facilities affected (specify types): 
- Name of Facility: 
- Location: 
- Extent of damage: [ ] Most destroyed [ ] Major damage [ ] Minor damage [ ] In use
- Risk of downstream impacts: [ ] High [ ] Moderate [ ] Low
- Time to return to service: Hours Days Weeks 
- Is commercial power available at facility? [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] Unknown
- Is generator power available at facility? [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] Unknown
- Service area of facility: 
- Service population of facility: 

### Response Actions
- **Priority:** [ ] High [ ] Low
- **Team Leader** 
- **Date** 
- **Time** 
- **Distribution:** 

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### Vectors and Vermin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vectors and Vermin</th>
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</table>

#### Observation Operation

Agency/Organization: 
Survey Method: [ ] Aerial [ ] Ground Survey [ ] Interview 
GPS Location: 

#### Vectors Status

Are rodent populations obviously present in the affected area? [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] Unknown 
If yes, give details of most prevalent locations and estimate numbers: 

Estimate the number and type of bait stations required to control rodent populations: 

Are flies, mosquitoes and other insect pests present in large enough numbers to cause concern? 
Flies [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] Unsure 
Mosquitoes [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] Unsure 
Other insect pests [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] Unsure 
Identify "other insect pests": 
Recommend control measures for these insect pests, and provide details such as quantities of substances to be used where applicable and necessary equipment: 

#### Removal of Potential Vector Habitat

Is there significant water settlement in areas adjacent to or close to areas of human habitation? [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] Unsure 
If yes, indicate: Est. size of area: _________ Longitude: _________ Latitude: _________ 
If yes, can contingency action be taken to remove water? Outline required action(s) below, giving estimated resources required.

Are there exposed piles of refuse, dead animals or putrescible material? [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] Unsure 
If yes, estimate the amount of debris to be removed, and indicate below the resources required for such: 

#### Response Actions

Priority: [ ] High [ ] Low 
Team Leader Date Time 
Distribution:
# Environmental Health Rapid Needs Assessment: Food Safety

## Food Safety

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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### Observation Operation

- Agency/Organization: 
- Survey Method: [ ] Aerial [ ] Ground Survey [ ] Interview
- GPS Location: 

### Food Handling Establishments

- No. storage sites [ ]
- No. preparation sites [ ]
- Other processing site [ ]
- Has there been flood damage to any of the facilities? [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] Unknown
- If yes, describe the extent of the damage: 

  [ ] Can operations continue? [ ] Yes [ ] No
- Is power available? [ ] Yes [ ] No
- Requirements to optimize/resume operations:

### Est. quantities of food by weight:

- requiring processing/heating [ ]
- requiring refrigeration [ ]
- ready to serve cold [ ]
- lost due to poor storage/power failure [ ]
- lost due to contamination [ ]
- at risk if no remedial action is taken [ ]

- Are quantities sufficient for the number of persons requiring food assistance? [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] Unsure
- Estimate food requirements if necessary:

### Operations

- In records of food operations monitoring, have any critical points been identified? Yes [ ] No [ ]
- Can remedial action be taken in the short term? Yes [ ] No [ ]
- What would be required to achieve this?

### Risk from Sewage/excreta

- Is there a sewerage system? [ ] Yes [ ] No
- If yes, has the system been damaged? [ ] Yes [ ] No
- Unknown [ ]
- Est. no. of houses with septic tanks [ ]
- How many damaged? [ ]
- Est. no. of houses with pit latrines [ ]
- How many damaged? [ ]

### Risk from Industrial Activity

- Is there industrial activity in the area? [ ] Yes [ ] No
- If yes, describe location and possible types contamination:
### Equipment/Supplies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are field kits available for analysis of floodwater?</td>
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<tr>
<td>If no, what is required?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Have food supplies encountered floodwater?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>If yes, is there equipment to ascertain contamination in the food?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>If no, indicate resources required:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are there adequate supplies of cleaning products and apparatus?</td>
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<tr>
<td>If no, list requirements:</td>
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### Drinking Water Quality and Quantity

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<th>Question</th>
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<td>Is there risk of microbiological contamination of drinking water?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Is there risk of chemical contamination in drinking water?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is sufficient water stored (20L/person/day)</td>
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### Response Actions

Priority: [ ] High [ ] Low

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Team Leader</th>
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## Sanitation and Hygiene

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### Observation Operation

Agency/Organization: ____________________________

Survey Method: [ ] Aerial [ ] Ground Survey [ ] Interview

GPS Location: ____________________________

### Water Supply Management

Is regular water supply present? [ ] Yes [ ] No

Has the water been tested for: Residual Chlorine [ ] Turbidity [ ] Microbiological Quality [ ]

Indicate values: Chlorine Turbidity MicroB

Do values indicate acceptable quality? [ ] Yes [ ] No

If no, suggest disinfection method: ____________________________

If there is no regular supply, how is water supplied? truck [ ] tanker [ ] Other [ ]

Is a field test kit available for water testing? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Water has been tested for: Residual Chlorine [ ] Turbidity [ ] Microbiological Quality [ ]

Indicate values: Chlorine Turbidity MicroB

Do values indicate acceptable quality? [ ] Yes [ ] No

If no, suggest disinfection method: ____________________________

Are shelters being used/occupied? [ ] Yes [ ] No

Have the water containers been examined? [ ] Yes [ ] No

Is volume adequate to supply 20 L/person/day? [ ] Yes [ ] No

Is the storage container clean? [ ] Yes [ ] No

Is the storage container free from cracks? [ ] Yes [ ] No

Is the storage container covered at all times? [ ] Yes [ ] No

Has disinfection responsibility been assigned to a specific person? [ ] Yes [ ] No

### Response Actions

Priority: [ ] High [ ] Low

Team Leader ____________________________ Date ____________________________ Time ____________________________

Distribution: ____________________________
# Environmental Health Rapid Needs Assessment: Sanitation and Hygiene

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excreta Disposal and Personal Hygiene</th>
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## Excreta Disposal and Personal Hygiene

- **Is there a sewerage/excreta disposal system?**
  - [ ] Yes
  - [ ] No

- **If yes, has the system been damaged?**
  - [ ] Yes
  - [ ] No
  - [ ] Unknown

- **Est. no. of houses with septic tanks?**
  - How many damaged?

- **Est. no. of houses with pit latrines?**
  - How many damaged?

- **Have existing toilets been repaired where necessary?**
  - [ ] Yes
  - [ ] No

- **Have exposed pit toilets been treated?**
  - [ ] Yes
  - [ ] No

- **Have damaged septic tanks been rehabilitated?**
  - [ ] Yes
  - [ ] No

- **Have chemical toilets been used where required?**
  - [ ] Yes
  - [ ] No

- **Are basic sanitation services available?**
  - [ ] Yes
  - [ ] No

- **If no, what type of latrine is recommended for construction?**
  - [ ] Individual
  - [ ] Collective
  - [ ] Portable

- **For construction of latrines, have the following been considered:**
  - [ ] Soil conditions
  - [ ] Topographical conditions
  - [ ] Proximity to coastal environment
  - [ ] User access
  - [ ] Presence of surface or groundwater

- **Are the ground conditions suitable for latrine construction?**
  - [ ] Yes
  - [ ] No

- **Are facilities available for the transport of the excreta to a suitable site for burial?**
  - [ ] Yes
  - [ ] No

- **Are the no. of latrines suitable for the no. of persons at the shelter?**
  - (1 latrine per 25 women; 1 latrine & 1 urinal per 35 men)
  - [ ] Yes
  - [ ] No

- **Are basic handwashing facilities provided?**
  - [ ] Yes
  - [ ] No

- **Are these facilities easily accessible or located within close proximity to latrines?**
  - [ ] Yes
  - [ ] No

- **Are handwashing facilities adequate for the number of people?**
  - [ ] Yes
  - [ ] No

- **Have provisions been made for washing, cleaning and bathing?**
  - [ ] Yes
  - [ ] No

- **Is water available in adequate quantities?**
  - [ ] Yes
  - [ ] No

- **Are the shelters overcrowded?**
  - [ ] Yes
  - [ ] No

## Response Actions

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- **Priority:**
  - [ ] High
  - [ ] Low

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<tr>
<td>Solid Waste Management</td>
<td>Type/Cause of Flood</td>
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**Observation Operation**

Agency/Organization: __________________________

Survey Method: [ ] Aerial [ ] Ground Survey [ ] Interview

GPS Location: __________________________

**Solid Waste Management**

Access routes been restored? [ ] Yes [ ] No
Debris has been cleared from roadways etc.? [ ] Yes [ ] No
Waste collection services are available? [ ] Yes [ ] No
A public advisory been issued to provide guidance for waste handling? [ ] Yes [ ] No
Shelters been assessed for requirements for waste collection and disposal? [ ] Yes [ ] No
Are solid waste containers well placed in the shelter e.g. on a wooden platform? [ ] Yes [ ] No
Is garbage adequately stored in containers temporarily until the service resumes? [ ] Yes [ ] No
Are all solid waste containers fitted with covers? [ ] Yes [ ] No
Are the containers of suitable size? [ ] Yes [ ] No
Are the numbers of solid waste containers adequate? [ ] Yes [ ] No
Have arrangements been made for the removal and disposal of carcasses? [ ] Yes [ ] No
An inspection been carried out to determine the presence of hazardous materials? [ ] Yes [ ] No
Have arrangements been made for refuse collection from the shelter/households? [ ] Yes [ ] No
If collection & disposal services not available, has temporary site been identified? [ ] Yes [ ] No

**Response Actions**

______________________________
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Priority: [ ] High [ ] Low

Team Leader __________________________ Date ________ Time ________

Distribution: __________________________
# Environmental Health Rapid Needs Assessment: Chemical Hazards

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**Observation Operation**
- Agency/Organization:  
- Survey Method: [ ] Aerial [ ] Ground Survey [ ] Interview  
- GPS Location:  

**Release Information Source**
- [ ] Highway [ ] Air Transport [ ] Railway [ ] Pipeline [ ] Fixed Facility  
- [ ] Offshore [ ] Underground Storage Tank [ ] Above Ground Storage Tank [ ] Unknown  
- Name of Fixed Facility:  
- Other:

**Material Type: (indicate type of container chemical is contained in e.g. plastic, metal drum etc.)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hazardous Substance</th>
<th>Type of substance</th>
<th>Type of Container</th>
<th>State of Container</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oil</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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**Estimated Quantity: (categories determined by criteria developed nationally)**
- [ ] Catastrophic [ ] Major [ ] Minor [ ] Unknown  

**Media Affected:**
- [ ] Air [ ] Land [ ] Water [ ] Unknown  
- Type of water body (e.g. sea, freshwater lagoon etc.):  

**Responders Present:**
- [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] Unknown  
- If yes, whom?

**Release contained:**
- [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] Unknown  
- If yes, how?

**Response Actions**
- * is container leaking  
- * call authorities in charge  
- * decontamination needs  

**Priority:** [ ] High [ ] Low  

Team Leader | Date | Time | Distribution:
**Acronyms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CEHI</td>
<td>Caribbean Environmental Health Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP</td>
<td>Contingency Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPT</td>
<td>Contingency Planning Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EH</td>
<td>Environmental Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FPA</td>
<td>Flood Prone Areas</td>
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<tr>
<td>FRU</td>
<td>Field Reporting Units</td>
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<tr>
<td>HACCP</td>
<td>Hazard Analysis of Critical Control Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDMC</td>
<td>National Disaster Management Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAHO</td>
<td>Pan American Health Organization</td>
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