

NEHA NEWS

A Day in the Life of an Environmental Health Professional Blog

Did you know that NEHA has a blog that follows the work of environmental health professionals across the country, and even that of staff members from the NEHA office? You can find all these blogs at www.neha.org/membership-communities/get-involved/day-in-life. To give you a taste of what we've been posting, below is the text from an April 2016 blog that was authored by Solly Poprish, NEHA's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Public Health Associate Program Intern.

Together with the body art industry, the Food and Drug Administration, the Association of Food and Drug Officials, and state and local regulators, NEHA is working to revise its Body Art Model Code (BAMC). The group is working to update the BAMC in a way that is reflective of current body art trends and procedures, as well as ensure it is relevant and implementable to industry professionals.

Earlier this year, I accompanied a local environmental health specialist on a body art studio inspection. The tattoo shop had a very cool aesthetic with exposed brick, art, and repurposed decorations on the walls; the tattoo artists were friendly and accommodating.

Reid Matsuda is a body art studio inspector for the City and County of Denver. He provided me with insight into the inspection process and what individuals getting tattoos should look for when patronizing a studio.

"The biggest thing I would stress in terms of what patrons should look for is that the artists are opening the packaging in front of them. Some artists like to set up and prep for a client and that is great—as long as the sterilized items stay in the sterile packaging until the client is there to witness the sterile seal being broken. Otherwise, you never really know what is sterile and what isn't," Matsuda shared with me.

He went on to say, "Also make sure they offer extensive aftercare instructions and bandage the wound prior to leaving. If for a second you feel like you are in a production line, step away. This is a piece of art that is going to follow you around for the rest of your life and if artists or managers don't give you the time to thoroughly explain risks and care, you are in the wrong place."

As tattoos become more and more popular, it's important to recognize that getting work done at a studio that does not properly follow appropriate health codes can lead to serious repercussions.

As an inspector, the main things that Matsuda looks for are

- general cleanliness;
- hand sinks with hot water,
- expiration dates on ink, needles, tubes, grips, peel packs, etc.;
- nitrile gloves (petroleum products break down the latex barrier within 15–20 minutes of use);
- sharps and biohazard containers (sharps go in a rigid, red bin; biohazards are prominently labeled in a red bag); and

- cleaning supplies (disinfectants versus sterilizers) and making sure they at least have Madacide to target hepatitis and HIV.

As we work on revising the BAMC, we recognize how vital it is to bring together industry and regulatory professionals. We look forward to the outcome of this partnership and value the expertise of all individuals as we move through this process.

Do you have a comment to share about our work on revising the BAMC? Is your interest piqued to see what other blogs we have posted? If so, please join the conversation by going to www.neha.org/membership-communities/get-involved/day-in-life.

NEHA's New Mentorship Program

Through a grant from the U.S Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Pesticide Programs, NEHA is excited to begin a new mentorship program for developing school integrated pest management (IPM) capabilities. This program will provide mentorship between local health departments and rural or underserved schools to facilitate the use of IPM in school buildings.

The target audience for this program is school districts, IPM team members, facility and maintenance departments, janitorial staff, school administration, local health department inspectors, and health educators. By developing an IPM school program, schools and students will benefit by reducing attrition, exposure to pesticides and pests, and exposure to potential allergens and asthma triggers. Additionally, schools will be able to save money on pest management and build stronger partnerships between their school district and local health department.

Over the course of the next two years, activities will include

- development of mentorship program criteria and selection of participants,
- development of a toolkit and resource list for schools around IPM techniques and activities,
- facilitation of meetings between mentors and mentees,
- development and delivery of IPM webinars focused on needs of mentorship participants,
- development of a model guide for sustaining the mentorship program,
- and establishment of baseline IPM activities and related data for mentees.

Is your school district interested in participating in this program? If so, keep an eye out for program criteria and participant selection announcements coming soon. You can also contact Vanessa DeArman at vdearman@neha.org.

NEHA Credential Renewals Go Digital

NEHA's credentialing department is excited to announce that current credential holders may now renew their credential online (www.neha.org/membership-communities/renew). Credentialing has made significant steps to go paperless for items such as renewal notices, applications, and several different forms. E-mailed renewal notices are a huge step in becoming greener as we used to mail out over 650 paper renewal notices every month. Credential renewal notices will be sent via e-mail, so please make sure all your contact information is updated in your My NEHA profile. 🐼