

Frequently Asked Questions

Environmental Health

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide answers to questions that a new public health leader might have about providing core environmental health services in a local public health agency in Colorado. The questions are organized topically. In each topic area, the [Colorado core public health services](#) and related statutes and regulations are identified that pertain to the questions in that section. If you are unable to find a question in this list of frequently asked questions, contact your environmental health liaison at the Office of Planning and Partnerships, who can assist you in finding answers for your issue from CDPHE staff. In addition, if you have an environmental health lead, they should be connected to the Colorado Directors of Environmental Health (CDEH) network. This is an excellent resource of experienced local environmental health directors from throughout Colorado that share ideas on how to respond to the more complicated environmental health issues. Contact the Environmental Health Liaison for assistance with connecting with the CDEH network.

Many of the FAQ's address various scenarios that could be unique to a local community or neighborhood and come in the form of a complaint lodged with the local public health agency. Local public health staff respond often to residential and business complaints on a variety of issues including sewage, hazardous materials leaks and spills, and illness believed to be caused by food or associated with environmental conditions. Public health directors and their environmental health staff routinely seek voluntary compliance to eliminate public health nuisances but should be trained and prepared to take legal action if necessary to protect the health of the community. Even in uniquely local issues it is important to collaborate with CDPHE and other local public health colleagues for guidance and assistance when needed and to assure that responses are consistent when possible.

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CORE PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

6 CCR 1014-7 Section 4.1 F. Environmental Health

Recognizing that significant responsibility for environmental quality management and oversight lies with state and federal agencies, all agencies are required to participate in the protection and improvement of air, water, land, and food quality by identifying, investigating, and responding to community environmental health concerns, reducing current and emerging environmental health risks, preventing communicable diseases, and sustaining the environment. These activities shall be consistent with applicable laws and regulations, and coordinated with local, state and federal agencies, industry, and the public. Furthermore, agencies are required to:

1. Identify and mitigate vector-borne (e.g. insects, rodents), air-borne, water-borne, foodborne, and other public health threats related to environmental hazards.
2. Take appropriate steps to support the protection of surface water and groundwater, including recreational waters and drinking water sources, and assure appropriate local regulatory oversight of onsite waste-water systems.
3. Implement public health laws, policies and procedures to assure the safety of food provided to the public at retail food establishments.
4. Implement public health laws, policies and procedures to assure the sanitation of institutional facilities (e.g. child care facilities, local correctional facilities and schools).
5. Take appropriate steps to assure the proper storage, collection, treatment, and disposal of garbage, refuse, and solid and hazardous waste.
6. Promote programs to minimize the amount of solid and hazardous waste and maximize the amount of recycling and reuse.
7. Participate in land use planning and sustainable development to encourage decisions that promote positive public health outcomes (e.g. consideration of housing, urban development, recreational facilities and transport), and that protect and improve air quality, water quality and solid waste management.
8. Where appropriate and practicable, enter into contracts or other acceptable agreements with the state's environmental programs in order to perform local assessments, inspections, investigations, and monitoring programs.

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Air Quality

Core Services Rule – Environmental Health

Where appropriate and practicable, enter into contracts or other acceptable agreements with the state's environmental programs in order to perform local assessments, inspections, investigations, and monitoring programs.

QUESTION: What are some typical air quality complaints and inquiries and where can I find resources and assistance in responding?

- **Odors** - [Air Quality Control Commission Regulation No. 2](#) regulates odors in Colorado. Agricultural sources are exempt with the exception of hog farms which are subject to odor standards. Examples of agricultural sources could include manure piles, onion dumps, and feedlots. There are odor standards for residential or industrial sources. The procedure for determining the odor intensity must be done using special equipment by specially trained and certified personnel. For more information contact the [Air Pollution Control Division](#).
- **Indoor air quality complaints (Mold, etc.)** – Indoor air quality complaints can be very complex. Refer to CDPHE's [Indoor Air Quality webpage](#) for information as well as [federal, state and local contacts](#) for assistance.
- **Open burning** – Refer to CDPHE's [Outdoor Burning webpage](#) for information and [state and local contacts](#) for assistance.
- **Wood/pellet stove burning**- Refer to CDPHE's [Indoor Burning webpage](#) for information and [state and local contacts](#) for assistance.
- **Dust complaints** - Dust or particulate emissions are regulated by the [Air Quality Control Commission Regulation No. 1](#) and enforced by the Air Pollution Control Division. Contact the [Air Pollution Control Division](#) for more information.
- **Asbestos-related demolition and remodeling** - Refer to the [Asbestos](#) and [Asbestos-containing Household Wastes](#) web pages for information and state and local [contacts](#).

QUESTION: How does a local public health agency go about obtaining air quality monitoring data for their area?

ANSWER: Here are some steps to walk through in order to obtain local air quality data:

1. Start with the [Air Pollution Control Division Technical Services Program website](#).
 - a. Click on "[Air Quality Report View](#)" for draft hourly data.
 - b. Click on "[Technical Reports](#)" for the Annual Data Report or Annual Network Plans for information on air monitoring sites.

2. For finalized/validated data or larger datasets or if there are specific areas where you don't see data on the Air Pollution Control Division website, contact the [Technical Services Program](#). They can check if there might be some data from other agencies that is available. This is also true for much of the particulate data, which is filter-based and does not go on to the website.
3. If you are just looking for some basic data, summaries can also be found on [EPA's website](#).
4. If there are requests for additional monitoring, contact the [Technical Services Program](#).

QUESTION: What resources are available for local radon programs?

ANSWER: The Hazardous Materials and Waste Management Division administers the Radon Program. For information, resources and contact information, visit the [Radon website](#).

Apartments/ Rentals – Institutions and Public Accommodations Core Services Rule – Environmental Health

Implement public health laws, policies and procedures to assure the sanitation of institutional facilities (e.g. child care facilities, local correctional facilities and schools).

QUESTION: How do I handle complaints regarding structural issues (electrical, sagging floors, plumbing, etc.) in rental apartments or houses?

ANSWER: Complaints regarding structural problems in rental apartments or houses should be referred to local code enforcement for investigation. Most local health departments have very little, if any, authority to address complaints involving apartments or rental properties and, because they involve private residences with little or no impact on neighbors or to the community, they tend to fall outside the scope of “public” health. In most cases, these issues are handled as a civil matter between the tenant and the landlord. Most counties do not have housing codes or other local regulations to apply to these issues. Tenants can be referred to legal aid, municipal housing, building or code enforcement authorities, human services or others depending on the matter.

- [Colorado Legal Services](#) – This site provides self-help legal information for civil legal matters, where to find no or low-cost legal help, court information and other referral information.

Biosolids

Core Services Rule - Environmental Health

Take appropriate steps to support the protection of surface water and groundwater, including recreational waters and drinking water sources, and assure appropriate local regulatory oversight of onsite waste-water systems.

QUESTION: What are biosolids?

ANSWER: Biosolids are nutrient-rich organic materials resulting from the treatment of domestic sewage in a treatment facility. When treated and processed, these residuals can be recycled and applied as fertilizer to improve and maintain productive soils and stimulate plant growth.

QUESTION: Who regulates biosolids in Colorado?

ANSWER: Biosolids are regulated by the [Water Quality Control Division](#), CDPHE. Some counties have local ordinances.

- [Beneficial use of water treatment sludge and fees applicable to the beneficial use of sludges Regulations](#) (Water Quality Section).

Body Art – Institutions and Public Accommodations

Core Services Rule – Environmental Health

Implement public health laws, policies and procedures to assure the sanitation of institutional facilities (e.g. child care facilities, local correctional facilities and schools).

QUESTION: Who inspects body art facilities?

ANSWER: Regular inspection of body art facilities is optional according to the state regulations. Local boards of health may opt to establish a local body art inspection program. However, local public health agencies have a responsibility to investigate public health complaints. Local boards of health can adopt more stringent regulations, as well as license and inspect artists and body art studios. Some local boards of health have adopted their own regulations to inspect and license artists and studios, while other agencies only respond to complaints. If the local public health agency does not have a program they should make a determination if the complaint warrants an investigation. Information on local programs can be found on CDPHE's Tattoo and Piercing webpage.

QUESTION: Who investigates complaints on body art facilities?

ANSWER: Environmental health staff should investigate complaints involving body art facilities. If the local public health agency does not have an inspection program or environmental health staff, the public health director could investigate based on state body art regulations.

QUESTION: Are there laws that prohibit underage children/youth from getting body art without parental consent?

ANSWER: Body artists cannot perform body art procedures on a minor without consent from the minor's parent or legal guardian by state law. Body artists who perform such a procedure without parental consent can be fined \$250 for each offense, regardless of whether the artist or studio is located in a county with an inspection program.

QUESTION: Is it legal for people to do body art in their home?

ANSWER: Unless prohibited by local ordinance, body artists can work out of their homes only if a designated area is used for all procedures and the area and artist meet the requirements found in the [State Board of Health Rules and Regulations for Body Art Establishments](#). A plan review may be required for body art facilities, depending on the county it's located in. Existing [local inspection programs](#) can be found on the CDPHE website. Contact the [Division of Environmental Health and Sustainability](#) for more information and a list of local public health agencies that have body art programs.

Camps–Institutions and Public Accommodations Core Services Rule – Environmental Health

Implement public health laws, policies and procedures to assure the sanitation of institutional facilities (e.g. child care facilities, local correctional facilities and schools).

QUESTION: Who can assist me with complaints and issues regarding campgrounds and recreation areas?

ANSWER: The [Division of Environmental Health and Sustainability](#) can provide assistance with complaints and issues regarding camps. Information regarding campgrounds and recreation areas can be found in rules for [Campgrounds and Recreation Areas](#). These and all rules adopted by the State Board of Health are located on this CDPHE webpage and listed by Division.

Childcare–Institutions and Public Accommodations Core Services Rule – Environmental Health

Implement public health laws, policies and procedures to assure the sanitation of institutional facilities (e.g. child care facilities, local correctional facilities and schools).

QUESTION: How often is my agency required to inspect Child Care Facilities?

ANSWER: Inspections of child care facilities are required every two years in accordance with Colorado Department of Human Services regulation, but may be conducted more frequently based on an assessment of risk and available resources. The Division of Environmental Health and Sustainability can assist with the implementation of a risk based inspection protocol.

QUESTION: Who issues the license for a Child Care Facility?

ANSWER: Childcare facilities are licensed by the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS). However, CDPHE and delegated local public health agencies are responsible for inspection and enforcement of the [State Board of Health Rules and Regulations Governing the Health and Sanitation of Child Care Facilities in the State of Colorado](#). For more information regarding the licensing of child care facilities visit the [Child Care Centers website](#) for the Division of Child Care at CDHS.

Disease Prevention

Core Services Rule – Communicable Disease Prevention, Investigation and Control - CRS 25-1-509

Take appropriate measures to prevent disease transmission using methods specific to: infected persons (isolation, treatment, contact tracing/notification); contacts to infected persons (quarantine, prophylaxis); and the environment in which the communicable disease occurs (facility closure, disinfection).

Work closely with CDPHE in communicable disease investigation and control, particularly if the investigation crosses county lines or technical assistance is needed.

QUESTION: Who investigates foodborne illness complaints?

ANSWER: Foodborne illness complaints should be investigated in collaboration with local communicable disease and environmental health staff in cooperation with CDPHE, especially when a retail food service establishment is implicated in the investigation.

QUESTION: What do I do if a citizen reports that their coworkers or family members ate at a restaurant and became ill?

ANSWER: Encourage the caller to have those affected call the local public health agency themselves. They will need to provide information to verify the complaint, determine whether a communicable disease has been confirmed, and provide other necessary information regarding the suspected establishment. Based on the information received, the complaint should be reported to the indicated food service establishment and an inspection focusing on critical items should be completed. If a communicable disease has been confirmed, a full foodborne illness investigation should be completed by environmental and communicable disease staff in collaboration with CDPHE.

QUESTION: When should communicable disease staff partner with environmental health staff on a disease investigation?

ANSWER: Local communicable disease staff should partner with their environmental health colleagues when investigating disease reports involving food service establishments, daycare centers, and schools. Other examples include, but are not limited to, camps, recreational waters and nursing homes. State and local environmental health staff should be consulted when investigating a vector borne disease such as tularemia, plague or West Nile virus. All staff should be notified of significant disease investigations in case there is an unexpected connection.

QUESTION: When would I recommend that a school close?

ANSWER: You should rarely recommend that a school close. Consult with CDPHE disease control and Environmental Health and Sustainability staff as they have historical experience with other school closings within the state. Situations that may require a closure recommendation include inadequate hot and cold running water; reasonable heating and air conditioning; contaminated water or other environmental concerns.

Food Protection Core Services Rule-Environmental Health

Implement public health laws, policies and procedures to assure the safety of food provided to the public at retail food establishments.

QUESTION: What should I do with information from food, drug and product recall notices?

ANSWER: It is important for you to keep up to date on recall notices. Recall notices are sent from CDPHE's Office of Communications based on information from the FDA including details

on product information, labels, affected lot numbers, and information on the potential health impacts. These links can be posted on your agency website. Some agencies have email services set-up through which they can send recall and other public health information out to their residents. Also, if there is a recall, environmental health staff may need to follow up with stores to assure recalled items are removed.

You can also access recall information from the following places:

- [CDPHE's food, drug and cosmetic recall page](#)
- [FDA Recalls, Market Withdrawals, and Safety Alerts](#) - There is a link for signing up to receive alerts directly on this page.

QUESTION: How is food safety in retail food establishments such as restaurants, grocery stores and bakeries assured by local public health agencies?

ANSWER: Every local public health agency should have a food safety program as a core public health service. Currently most programs are managed and implemented by local food safety personnel or less commonly by CDPHE staff. Food safety programs are delegated to the local health agency and program functions managed through a contract with CDPHE. A food safety program includes plan review, permitting/licensing, inspections, education and if necessary enforcement.

If inspection records indicate food safety regulations are not being followed, in order to gain compliance, food inspectors may increase the frequency of inspection. In addition, the local public health agency may utilize other locally determined administrative processes such as an informal hearings or educational classes.

If these measures are unsuccessful, a Civil Penalty process may be implemented as established under the Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S.) section 25-4-1611. The statute prescribes when a facility will receive a penalty and for what amount.

Actual civil penalties range from \$250-\$1,000. They can be for violations of law (such as operating without a license) or for violations of the regulations (such as having pests on multiple inspections). For violations of the law, a facility/owner/operator is issued a notification and if the process continues, a civil penalty is assessed.

The [Division of Environmental Health and Sustainability](#) of CDPHE manages and assures consistency in the administration of the statewide food safety program. They provide assistance with establishing and managing a local food safety program.

QUESTION: Where can I find information pertaining to the sale of food out of a private residence?

ANSWER: The Colorado Cottage Foods Act allows a limited range of foods that may be prepared in a private residence for sale. Information including a fact sheet on the [Colorado Cottage Foods Act](#) can be found at the website for [The Division of Environmental Health and Sustainability](#).

Hotels/Motels–Institutions and Public Accommodations Core Services Rule – Environmental Health

Implement public health laws, policies and procedures to assure the sanitation of institutional facilities (e.g. child care facilities, local correctional facilities and schools).

QUESTION: Who can assist me with complaints and issues regarding hotels and motels?

ANSWER: [The Division of Environmental Health and Sustainability](#) of CDPHE can provide assistance with complaints and issues regarding hotels and motels. Hotels and motels are regulated in the [Sanitary Standards and Regulations for Public Accommodations](#).

Land Use

Core Services Rule –Environmental Health

Participate in land use planning and sustainable development to encourage decisions that promote positive public health outcomes (e.g. consideration of housing, urban development, recreational facilities and transport), and that protect and improve air quality, water quality and solid waste management.

QUESTION: What should my role be in land use, planning and zoning?

ANSWER: Local public health agencies should develop a close working relationship with local land use, planning and zoning authorities at the county and municipal level. Many local public health agencies collaborate with local land use/planning departments review and comment on applications for new and modified land uses in their jurisdictions. This provides the opportunity to proactively address potential public and environmental health impacts that may not be otherwise regulated by state or federal regulations or policies. Some local public health agencies participate in regular new case review meetings as a way to keep informed of changes

in the community and monitor and respond to potential public and environmental health impacts.

QUESTION: What activities and public health impacts might be addressed in my local land use office or code enforcement?

ANSWER: Activities and public health impacts that might be addressed by my local land use office or code enforcement generally through local zoning or building ordinances and specifically through site-specific land use permits and conditions. This can include:

- Trash
- Odors
- Noise
- Road dust
- Traffic
- Water quality
- Built environment and its impacts on public health

Marijuana

QUESTION: Where can I find information about medical and retail marijuana?

ANSWER: For help with questions about medical and retail marijuana in Colorado, please refer to the following resources:

- [Official State of Colorado Website for Retail Marijuana Information & Resources](#)
- [Retail marijuana contacts](#)
- [Medical marijuana laws and regulations](#)
- [Medical marijuana contacts](#)

Mass Gatherings – Institutions and Public Accommodations

Core Services Rule – Environmental Health

Implement public health laws, policies and procedures to assure the sanitation of institutional facilities (e.g. child care facilities, local correctional facilities and schools)

QUESTION: A concerned citizen calls about dozens of visitors that have gathered in an unincorporated area of the county for several days now. They are complaining about traffic, noise and the lack of facilities. Are there regulations that address situations like this?

ANSWER: Standards and Regulations for Group Gathering Areas are addressed in 6 CCR 1010-10. CDPHE, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, all Departments, Boards of Health or any peace officer is authorized to administer. The Standards and Regulations for Group Gathering Areas can be found on CDPHE's [Consumer Concerns and Complaints webpage](#).

Methamphetamine Labs

Core Services Rule – Environmental Health

Take appropriate steps to assure the proper storage, collection, treatment, and disposal of garbage, refuse, and solid and hazardous waste.

Promote programs to minimize the amount of solid and hazardous waste and maximize the amount of recycling and reuse.

QUESTION: What government entity has the authority to red-tag a property that has been determined to be a clandestine methamphetamine lab?

ANSWER: For the most part, the local building department has the authority to red-tag a property. Some local public health agencies may also have ordinances that allow them to red-tag a property. The meth lab cleanup statute (25-18.5-101 et seq.) gives the local governing body authority to enforce the statute and the cleanup regulation (6 CCR 1014-3) through local ordinances or resolutions. This includes preventing entry, requiring cleanup and overseeing cleanup. The statute defines "governing body" as the entity designated by the city council or county commissioners. If one is not designated, the default definition is the public health agency, building department and law enforcement agency with jurisdiction over the property. So it is up to each jurisdiction who they want to be involved. The statute allows the governing body to declare properties not remediated to be public health nuisances, so they can also use state or local nuisance codes as authority.

QUESTION: Who approves the site-specific cleanup plan that is submitted by the cleanup contractor?

ANSWER: Local public health agency personnel approve the site-specific cleanup plan. The regulation does not require that a cleanup plan be submitted for approval. This is because there is no requirement for local oversight. However, governing bodies can require that a cleanup plan be submitted for review if feel it is appropriate.

QUESTION: Who releases the property back to the homeowner after cleanup to the standard has been achieved and confirmed?

ANSWER: Because the statute doesn't require local oversight, or establish a state oversight program, the regulation only requires certification by an industrial hygienist. The governing body may establish a program to review reports and determine if a property meets the standard.

QUESTION: Who should my agency work with during the cleanup of meth labs?

ANSWER: If the governing body chooses to be involved in the oversight of meth lab cleanup, they would work directly with the property owner, industrial hygienist, and cleanup contractor. They may also choose to limit their involvement and only interact with the owner. Even if they choose not to have an oversight program, the statute and regulation require that they receive a copy of the final report documenting cleanup. The Hazardous Materials and Waste Management Division is available to provide technical assistance upon request. [Visit their website for more information, regulations and contact information.](#)

Mobile Home Parks – Institutions and Public Accommodations Core Services Rule – Environmental Health

Implement public health laws, policies and procedures to assure the sanitation of institutional facilities (e.g. child care facilities, local correctional facilities and schools).

QUESTION: Who can assist me with complaints and issues regarding mobile home parks?

ANSWER: [The Division of Environmental Health and Sustainability](#) of CDPHE can provide assistance with complaints and issues regarding mobile home parks. Mobile home parks are regulated in the [Mobile Home Parks regulations](#).

Oil and Gas

Core Services Rule – Environmental Health

Take appropriate steps to support the protection of surface water and groundwater, including recreational waters and drinking water sources, and assure appropriate local regulatory oversight of onsite waste-water systems.

Take appropriate steps to assure the proper storage, collection, treatment, and disposal of garbage, refuse, and solid and hazardous waste.

Participate in land use planning and sustainable development to encourage decisions that promote positive public health outcomes (e.g. consideration of housing, urban development, recreational facilities and transport), and that protect and improve air quality, water quality and solid waste management.

QUESTION: What do I do if I get a complaint regarding an oil well or oil and gas development issues?

ANSWER: Oil and gas operations are regulated by the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission (COGCC) and by CDPHE.

The Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission (COGCC) is authorized by the legislature to foster the responsible development of Colorado's oil and gas natural resources in a manner consistent with the protection of public health, safety and welfare, including the environment and wildlife. Questions about a new or proposed oil and gas permit can be addressed by the Local Government Designee for their county. The current list of county designees is available at the local government link on the [Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission webpage](#). All contact information for COGCC and other regulating entities can also be found on their webpage.

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) has a limited role in regulating oil and gas development. For questions about environmental permits and requirements with regard to air, water or solid waste please refer to CDPHE [Oil and Gas](#) webpage. Here also is additional information about oil and gas activities with a focus on health along with details to report possible health concerns. (on the Colorado Health Emergency Line for Public Information (COHELP) Line. The COHELP line can be reached at [1-877-462-2911](tel:1-877-462-2911) or [303-389-1687](tel:303-389-1687).)

Onsite Wastewater - Septic Systems

Core Services Rule – Environmental Health

Take appropriate steps to support the protection of surface water and groundwater, including recreational waters and drinking water sources, and assure appropriate local regulatory oversight of onsite waste-water systems.

QUESTION: Who is responsible for onsite wastewater permitting, inspection and enforcement in my jurisdiction?

ANSWER: The local public health agency is responsible for permitting, inspection and enforcement of regulations pertaining to onsite wastewater treatment systems with a capacity less than 2,000 gallons per day. Some counties have delegated this responsibility to other local government offices. Onsite waste water treatment systems that have a capacity greater than 2,000 gallons per day are handled by CDPHE, Water Quality Control Division. For more information visit the Clean Water page and click on-site wastewater treatment systems.

Private Residences

Core Services Rule – Environmental Health

Participate in land use planning and sustainable development to encourage decisions that promote positive public health outcomes (e.g. consideration of housing, urban development, recreational facilities and transport), and that protect and improve air quality, water quality and solid waste management.

Take appropriate steps to support the protection of surface water and groundwater, including recreational waters and drinking water sources, and assure appropriate local regulatory oversight of onsite waste-water systems.

Identify and mitigate vector-borne (e.g. insects, rodents), air-borne, water-borne, food-borne, and other public health threats related to environmental hazards.

Take appropriate steps to assure the proper storage, collection, treatment, and disposal of garbage, refuse, and solid and hazardous waste.

QUESTION: How do I handle complaints regarding private single-family residences?

ANSWER: Complaints regarding private residences can be complex and multi-faceted. Consultation with the agency's or county attorney and with the Colorado Directors of Environmental Health network may be helpful.

Here are some common scenarios with some suggested responses.

SCENARIO: A mobile home resident has 20-30 cats. This home is in terrible condition and the smell is unbearable for neighboring trailers.

RESPONSE: First, identify conditions that have a potential to negatively affect neighbors. Odors are an air quality issue that has an impact on neighbors. Odors that are detectable from outside the property line are regulated by the Colorado Air Quality Control Commission Regulation Number 2. However, even in residential settings, odors can be problematic for neighbors at intensities that are well below the allowed limits.

See the Air Quality Section for more details. The internal condition of the home does not constitute a public health issue. The number of cats or other "animal units" that are allowed on an individual property may be governed by county or municipal ordinances. In this case, an inquiry or referral to the local land use or code enforcement authority should be made. Finally, the public health director or staff should notify the property owner or resident that a complaint was received. If the public health director or staff have concern for the health, safety or welfare of children or aging adult residents, a referral can be made to the county department of human services. Depending on the conditions on the property, a joint investigation from human services and the local public health agency may be appropriate.

SCENARIO: A garage is being used for living space. The "tenants" have installed a stove and small space heater. Neighbors are concerned about carbon monoxide poisoning.

RESPONSE: This is usually a building code issue and should be referred to the county or municipal building or code enforcement authority. The public health director or staff should inform the resident of the complaint and provide health education and recommendations for carbon monoxide monitors as appropriate. If the garage is being rented as an "apartment", the public health director should determine if there are adequate drinking water and toilet facilities available in the unit and that they comply with onsite wastewater treatment regulations if applicable.

SCENARIO: An elderly person lives alone in an old and poorly kept home. Neighbors say that water from the laundry is pumped outdoors; dishwasher is thrown outside, yard smells of urine. There is suspicion that there is no operable plumbing in the home.

RESPONSE: The internal condition of the home does not constitute a public health issue. The public health director or environmental health staff should notify the property owner or

resident that a complaint was received. An inspection of the property should be conducted by environmental health staff to determine if there are indications of a failed onsite wastewater treatment system or dumping of waste water. If these conditions or practices are confirmed, the public health director or staff should work with the residents to assure compliance with the [Colorado On-Site Wastewater Treatment System Regulations](#).

See the On-site wastewater section for more information. If the public health director or staff has concern for the health, safety or welfare of the elderly residents, a referral can be made to the county department of human services. Depending on the conditions on the property, a joint investigation from human services and the local public health agency may be appropriate.

SCENARIO: A neighbor complains about tall weeds, junk cars, lumber, trash and dog droppings in the yard next door.

RESPONSE: These types of complaints should be referred to a local code enforcement or zoning department. However, if there is evidence that these conditions provide a harborage for animal or insect vectors for infectious disease, the public health director may declare that a public health nuisance exists. The Public Health Act directs the county or district board of health to examine all nuisances, sources of filth, and causes of sickness, which, in its opinion, may be injurious to health, and it shall destroy, remove, or prevent the nuisance, source of filth, or cause of sickness, as the case may require. More information can be found in Section 25-1-518 C.R.S.

Public Health Pests/nuisances, lice, bed bugs - Vector Surveillance and Control

Core Services Rule – Environmental Health

Identify and mitigate vector-borne (e.g. insects, rodents), air-borne, water-borne, food-borne, and other public health threats related to environmental hazards.

QUESTION: What do I do if I get a call regarding public health pests (lice scabies, bed bugs...)

ANSWER: Contact the manager for the public accommodation or apartment complex and inform them that a complaint was received. Determine and/or recommend that the complex has a pest management plan in place for response as appropriate from a licensed exterminator service. Confer with local zoning and code enforcement authorities to determine if there are local ordinances that may apply and make referral if appropriate. For complaints regarding

non-public accommodations or residences, refer them to licensed pest control services. Here are some resources for more information:

- [EPA Bed Bug Website with a link to Bed Bug Information Clearinghouse](#)
- [CDC Information about Bed Bugs](#)

Schools - Institutions and Public Accommodations Core Services Rule – Environmental Health

Implement public health laws, policies and procedures to assure the sanitation of institutional facilities (e.g. child care facilities, local correctional facilities and schools)

QUESTION: How often are schools inspected?

ANSWER: Some agencies inspect schools on a routine basis, while others respond to complaints only. See Rules and Regulations Governing Schools in the State of Colorado [Rules and Regulations Governing Schools](#). CDPHE recommends that all schools with laboratories, and/or engaging in industrial arts or hazardous vocational activities should be inspected a minimum of once per year. All other schools should be inspected a minimum of once per three years. School food service inspections shall be conducted at the frequency established in the Colorado Retail Food Establishment Rules and Regulations, 6 CCR § 1010-2.

Solid and Hazardous Waste Core Services Rule – Environmental Health

Take appropriate steps to assure the proper storage, collection, treatment, and disposal of garbage, refuse, and solid and hazardous waste.

Promote programs to minimize the amount of solid and hazardous waste and maximize the amount of recycling and reuse.

QUESTION: How can a public health director address calls involving waste management issues including, abandoned barrels, waste tires, onion dumps, roadside dumping, or a neighbor's trash?

ANSWER: Determine if there are local ordinances or programs in city or county offices to which the complaint can be referred and collaborated. These issues can also be handled as a public

health nuisance which would be the responsibility of the public health director to determine the appropriate next steps.

QUESTION: What do I do with landfill complaints?

ANSWER: Refer the complaint to local zoning and code enforcement authorities to determine if they have local permits or ordinances that apply. Landfills are also regulated by the Hazardous Materials and Waste Management Division.

- [CDPHE solid waste management webpage](#)

Swimming Pools

Core Services Rule – Environmental Health

Take appropriate steps to support the protection of surface water and groundwater, including recreational waters and drinking water sources, and assure appropriate local regulatory oversight of onsite waste-water systems.

QUESTION: Are natural swim areas such as beaches and hot springs regulated like swimming pools?

ANSWER: Yes. They are all regulated under the [Regulations for Swimming Pools and Mineral Baths](#). Natural swimming areas are in Article 4.6 and hot springs are in Article V.

Vector Surveillance and Control

Core Services Rule – Environmental Health

Identify and mitigate vector-borne (e.g. insects, rodents), air-borne, water-borne, food-borne, and other public health threats related to environmental hazards.

QUESTION: What do I do if I get a call regarding an animal bite?

ANSWER: Response to animal bites is an important responsibility for local public health agencies for the prevention of rabies and other animal borne diseases. It is important to determine as quickly as possible if an animal that has bitten a human is current on its vaccinations and if the animal should be quarantined or specimens submitted to a public health laboratory for rabies testing; and if the person that is bitten will require prophylaxis. For more information visit CDPHE's [Rabies webpage](#). The Environmental Health and Sustainability

Division are a resource in dealing with animal borne disease response. New public health directors should familiarize themselves with the resources available on the [Colorado rabies resource guide page](#) for information on how to obtain a resource guide as well as the following:

- Guidelines for the handling and submission of skunks.
- Management of domestic dogs, cats, and ferrets involved in human bites.
- Algorithm for managing cat, dog, and ferret bites in Colorado.
- Management of domestic pets exposed to wildlife.
- Algorithm for Rabies management of domestic pets exposed to wildlife.
- Hybrid-wolf bite management algorithm.
- Recommendations For hybrid wolves regarding vaccination, bite follow-up and exposure to rabies.
- Compendium of animal Rabies prevention and control.

Water Supplies

Core Services Rule – Environmental Health

Take appropriate steps to support the protection of surface water and groundwater, including recreational waters and drinking water sources, and assure appropriate local regulatory oversight of onsite waste-water systems.

QUESTION: LPHA’s are frequently copied on notices to water treatment facilities from CDPHE. Explain who inspects these facilities and sends out these notices.

ANSWER: Within the Safe Drinking Water Program in the Water Quality Control Division, there are three sections: Engineering, Field Services, and Compliance Assurance. The Engineering section is who approves designs and any changes or alterations to drinking water systems. Field Services conducts sanitary surveys, and interacts with water providers to physically inspect systems for compliance with the Colorado Primary Drinking Water Regulations. Compliance Assurance assures that these Regulations are being followed by interacting with water systems, issuing compliance advisories, and issuing formal Enforcement Orders for systems out of compliance. If a public health director has questions or comments regarding correspondence to a particular water system, they should contact the person who wrote the letter (the engineer/field inspector/compliance assurance specialist), although the administrative assistant who emailed the letter, should be able to assist as well.

There are a number of people in different programs who work with water systems. It is the Water Quality Control Division's practice to copy local health agencies on certain types of

correspondence, both for their information as the local health agency, and also because they may have additional information that may be helpful to the Water Quality Control Division.

Water Quality Control Division tries to copy the local public health agencies on information requests they send out on "proposed" or "discovered" systems, which are systems that may need to be regulated as public water systems, but the Water Quality Control Division doesn't have enough information about them yet. It may be the case that the local public health agency might have important firsthand knowledge about the system that would assist the Water Quality Control Division in classifying a system.

Aside from the extra information that the Water Quality Control Division can gain from local public health agencies, the correspondence serves to provide information to the local public health agency. Another situation in which the Water Quality Control Division would directly contact a local public health agency would be one involving an acute health situation. Depending on the particular situation, the Water Quality Control Division may contact you just in an advisory capacity, or there have been cases where the Water Quality Control Division asks a local health agency staff member to physically visit a water system. With any acute health case, CDPHE will contact the local agency directly and consult about the actions needed to protect public health.

QUESTION: When does a public health director need to get involved with issues involving sanitary surveys or corrective action plans (or other processes) and what assistance might they be asked to provide?

ANSWER: All public water systems are required to have sanitary surveys conducted either by the Water Quality Control Division field services inspectors, or in certain counties, by delegated local health agency inspectors. Depending on the type of customer served, these sanitary surveys are required every three to five years. If deficiencies or violations of the regulations are identified during the survey, the water system must (in most cases) enter a corrective action plan to address the outstanding deficiencies. Sanitary surveys include records review for the system, viewing the system's monitoring plan, some maintenance and responsibility questions for care of the system, plus an inspection of the well, water treatment including disinfection, and water distribution. When violations or deficiencies are noted the local public health agency will follow up to ensure resolution. If corrective action plans are required the case will be turned over to the Water Quality Control Division.

QUESTION: Who regulates public water supplies?

ANSWER: CDPHE Water Quality Control Division regulates public water supplies.

QUESTION: Who regulates the construction of new wells?

ANSWER: Regulatory and enforcement responsibilities for residential wells lie with Colorado Department of Natural Resources. For more information on well permitting and regulation go to the [Colorado Division of Water Resources](#).

QUESTION: Who is responsible for inspections at water treatment facilities?

ANSWER: CDPHE Water Quality Control Division is responsible for inspections at water treatment facilities.

QUESTION: What are the recommendations and process for testing private wells?

ANSWER: Ground water wells are the principle source of water for most homeowners in rural areas of Colorado. There are over 200,000 permits for ground water wells currently issued in our state and approximately 4,000 new permits are requested annually. Typical well water tests for most areas should include bacteria, nitrate and fluorides. The Laboratory Services Division of CDPHE provides water testing for a fee. They will ship sample bottles and instructions to the resident. The samples can be shipped or dropped off at the Laboratory Services Division at CDPHE. For more information refer to the [Customer Resources page](#) on the CDPHE website. The CDPHE Lab offers several testing packages, including one frequently recommended for new wells or new well owners that would cover a variety of possible contaminants and pollutants. Some local public health agencies can also test for bacteria such as total coliform and *E.coli* and can serve as resources to other agencies. Here are local public health agencies that provide laboratory services:

- [Weld County Department of Public Health and Environment](#)
- [Northeast Colorado Health Department](#)
- [Mesa County Health Department Regional Laboratory](#)
- [San Juan Basin Health Department](#)
- [Larimer County Health Department](#)
- [Pueblo City County Health Department](#)