

# Defining the Emergency Response Roles of Environmental Health Specialists in Northwest Ohio

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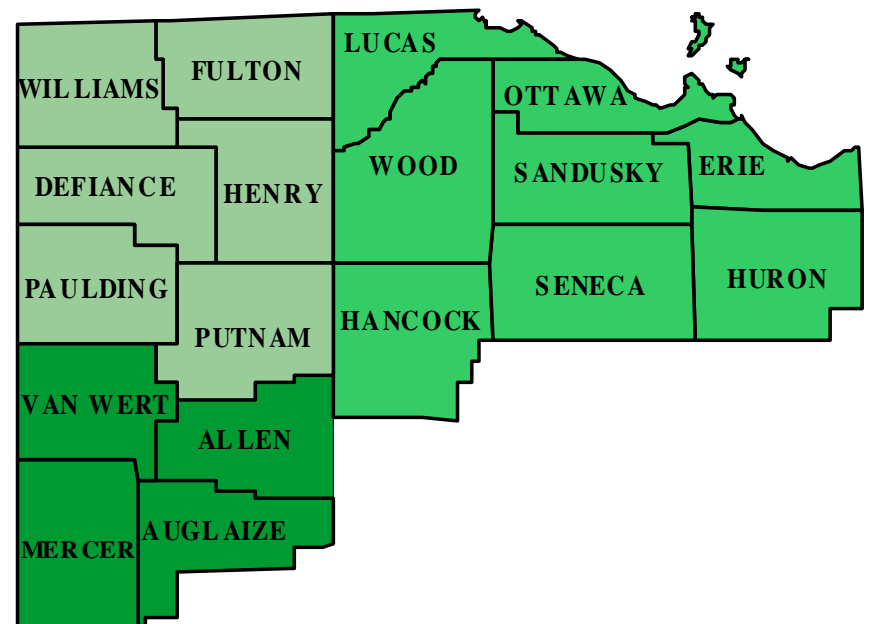
# Project Overview

## Problem Statement

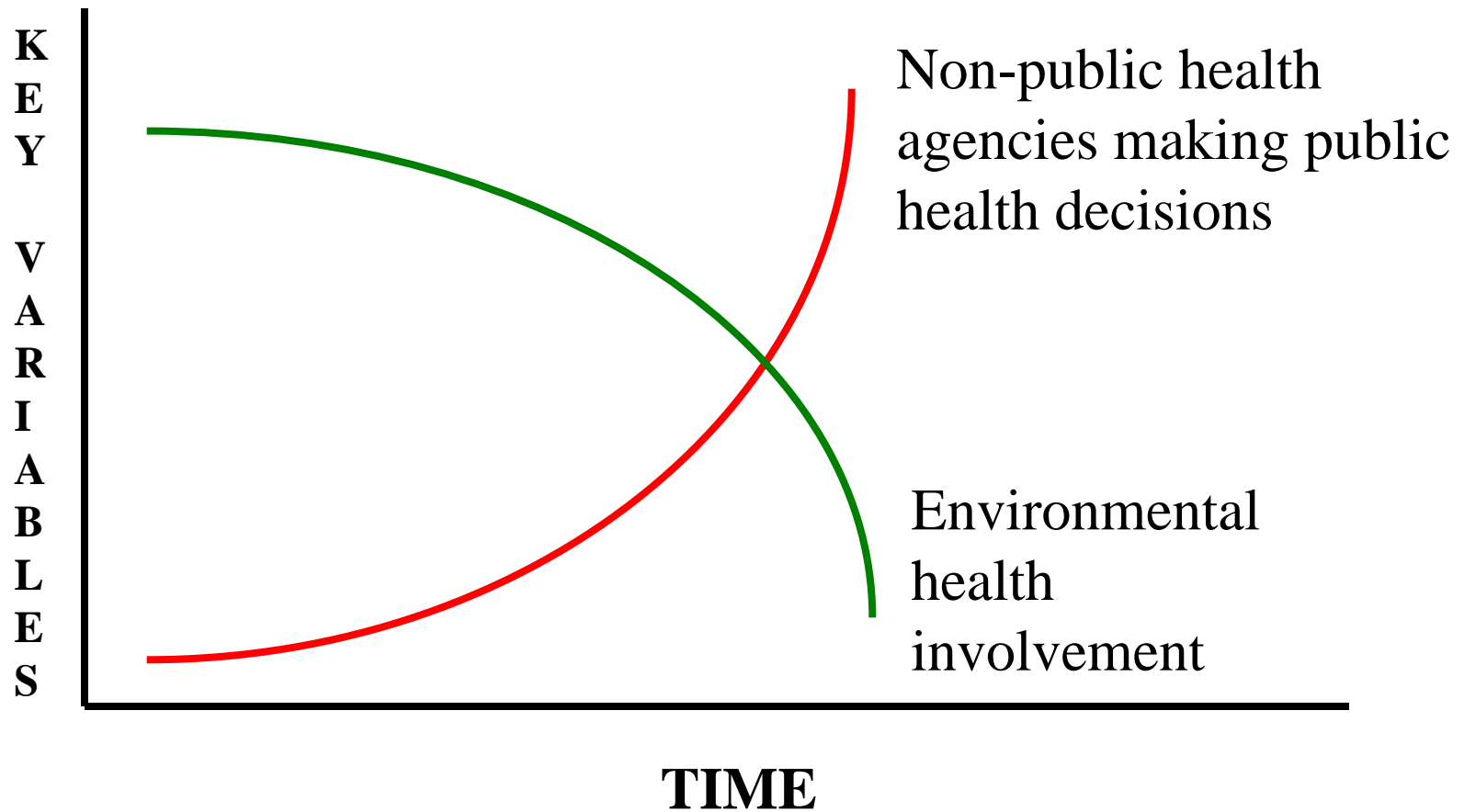
Involvement of environmental health specialists during emergency response is low in Northwest Ohio.

## Program Goal

Increase the involvement of Northwest Ohio environmental health specialists during emergencies.



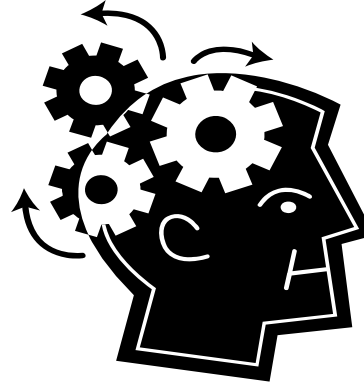
# Behavior Over Time



# Current Mental Models

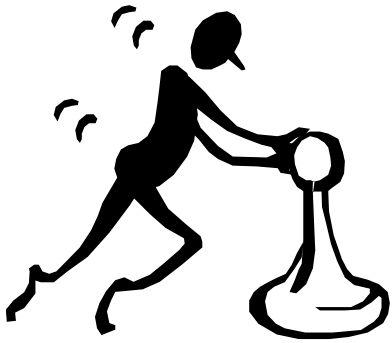
- ❖ This is someone else's responsibility, let them do it.
- ❖ I want to be involved, but I don't know what to do.
- ❖ We don't have the personnel, time or funding to be involved.
- ❖ There are other programs that need our attention.

**Non-public health agencies make public health decisions, due to the lack of environmental health involvement.**

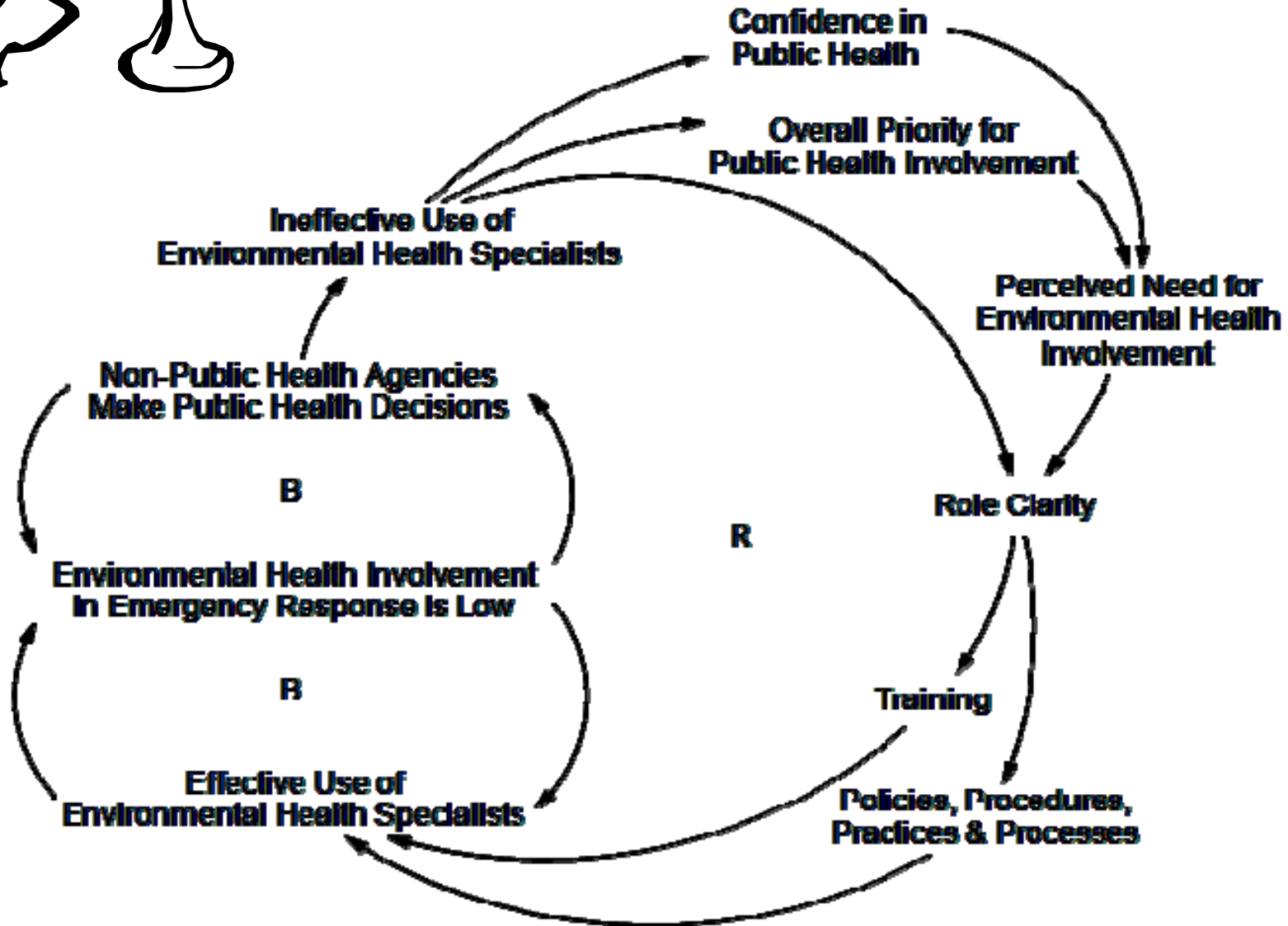


**Environmental health is not involved in emergency response activities.**

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# Shifting the Burden



## Methodology

- Develop a list of emergency response roles.
- Develop a survey tool.
- Distribute a survey.
- Define the role.

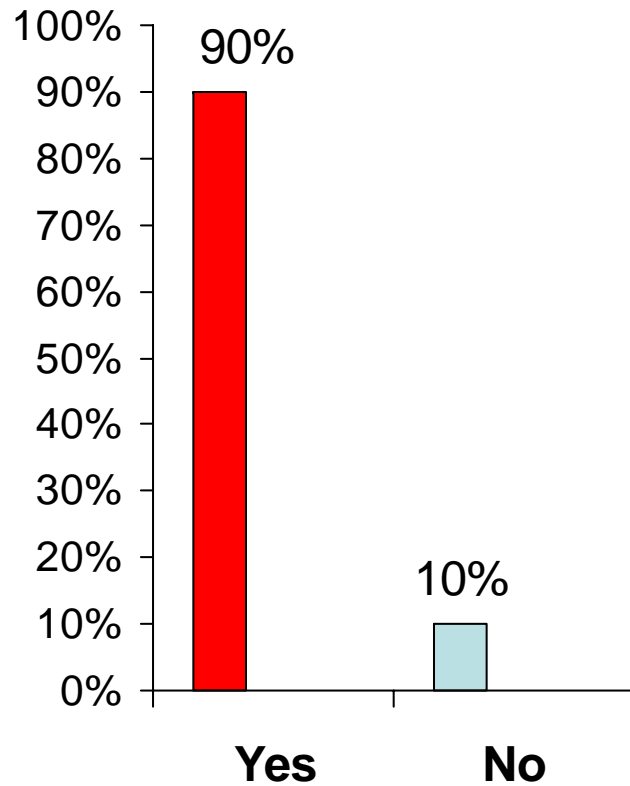


## Anticipated Results

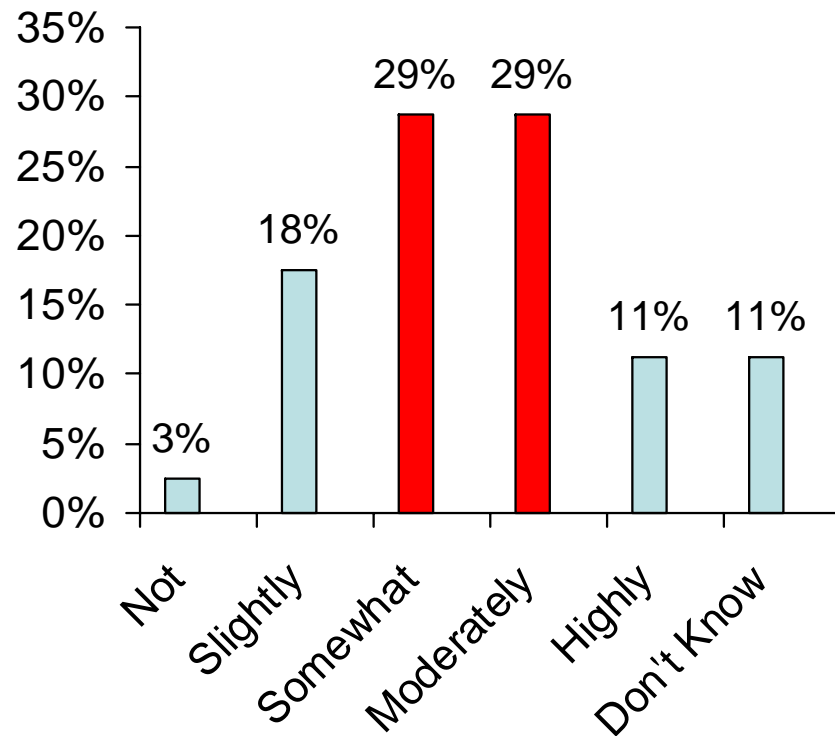
- A well-rounded, all-hazards definition.
- Respondents would identify food safety, potable water, sewage, solid waste and vector control.
- Respondents would not identify hazardous materials, building assessments, and outbreak investigations.

# What We Found Is...

80 (44%) of 183 surveys were returned.

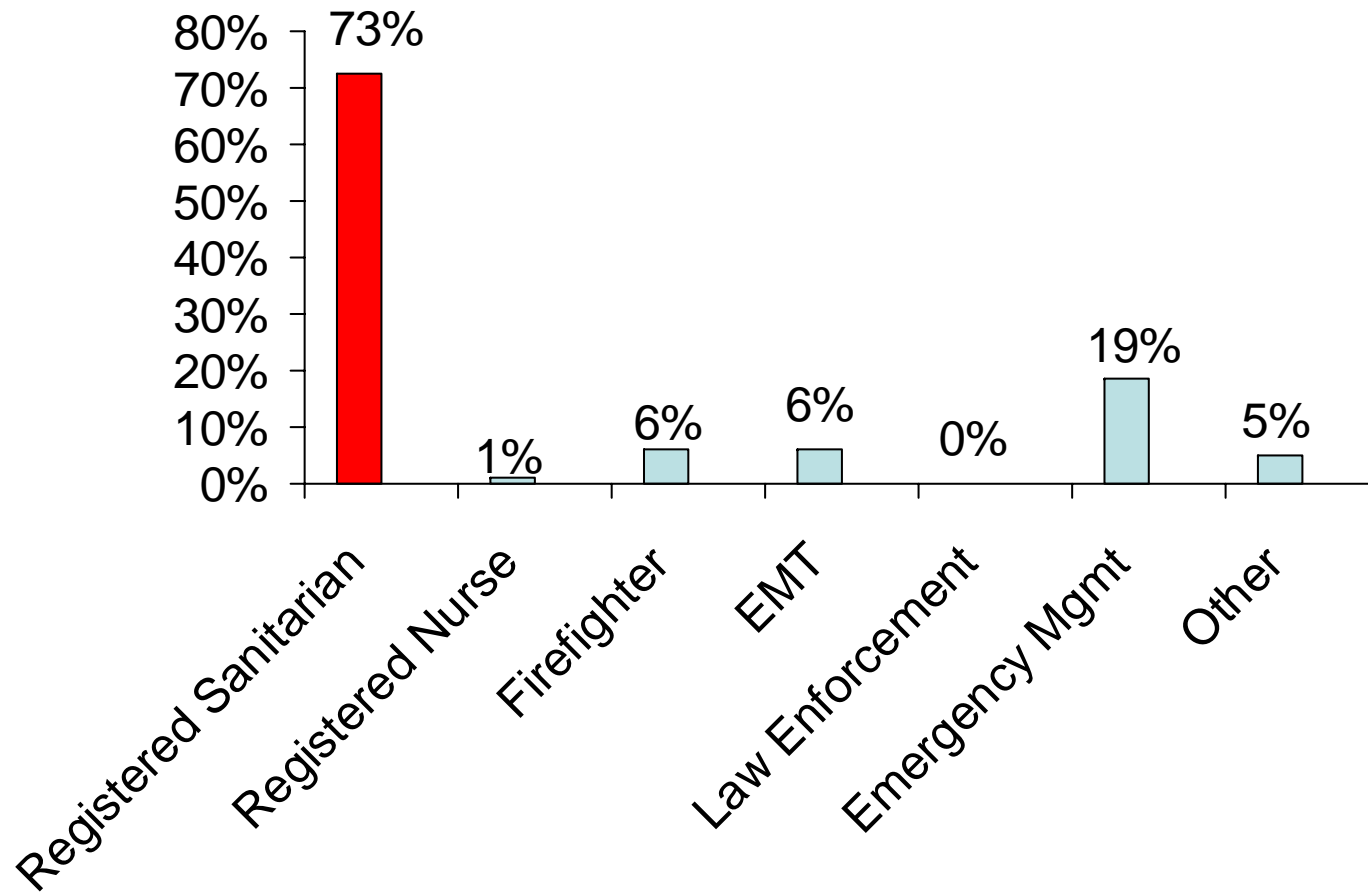


Should EHS be involved  
in emergency  
response?



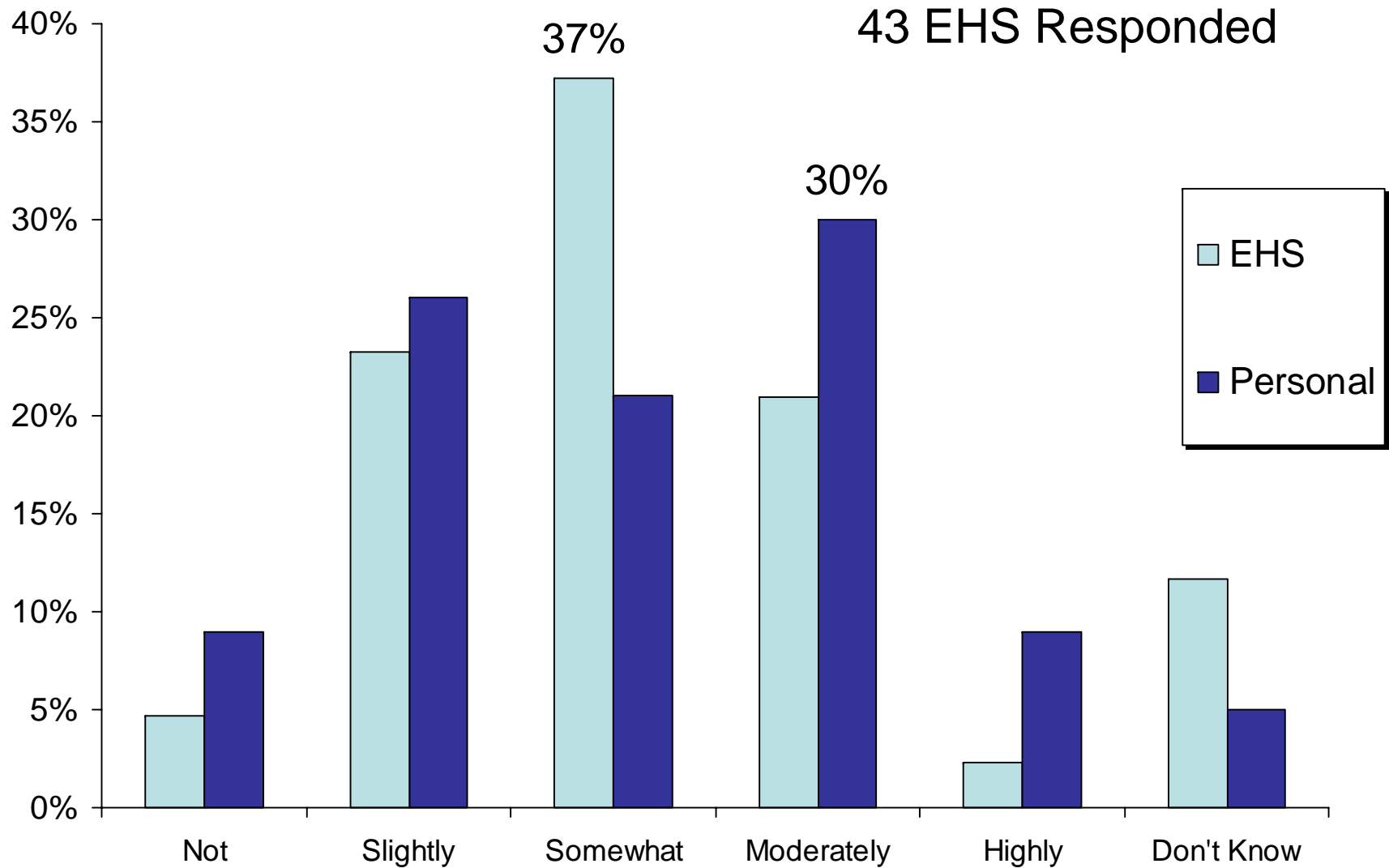
How involved are EHS?

# What is Your Discipline?

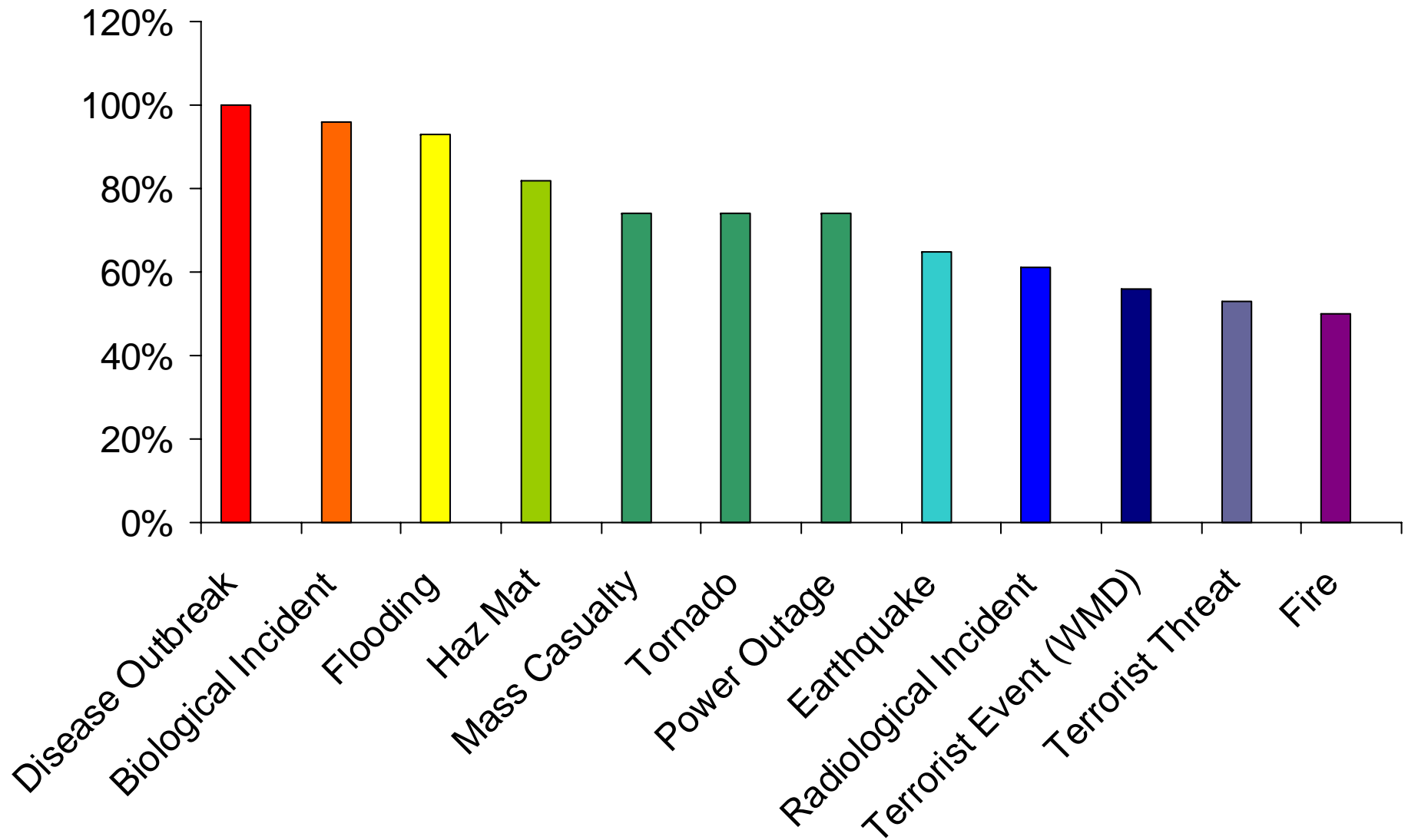




# Level of Involvement



# When Would You Expect EHS Involvement?



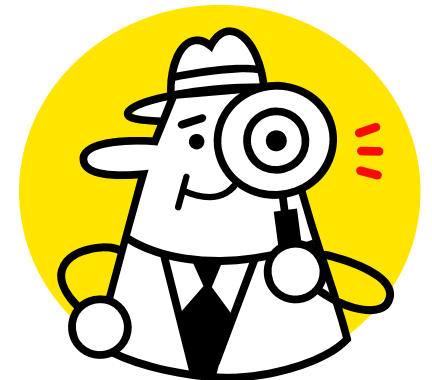
# EHS Functions

## Potential

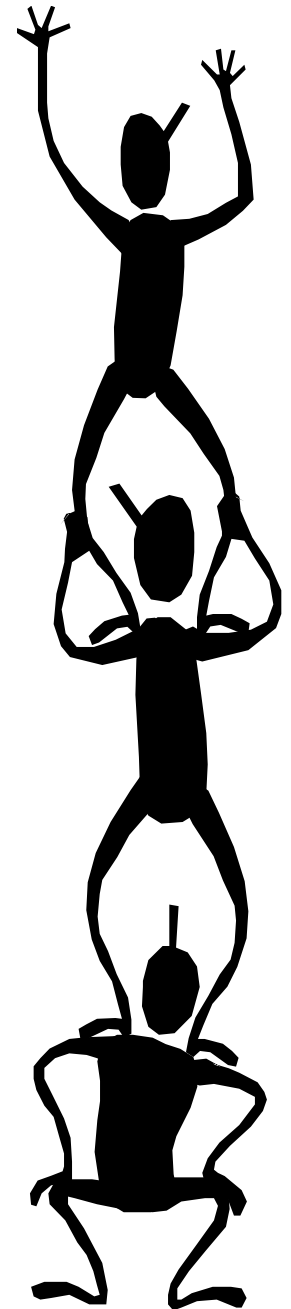
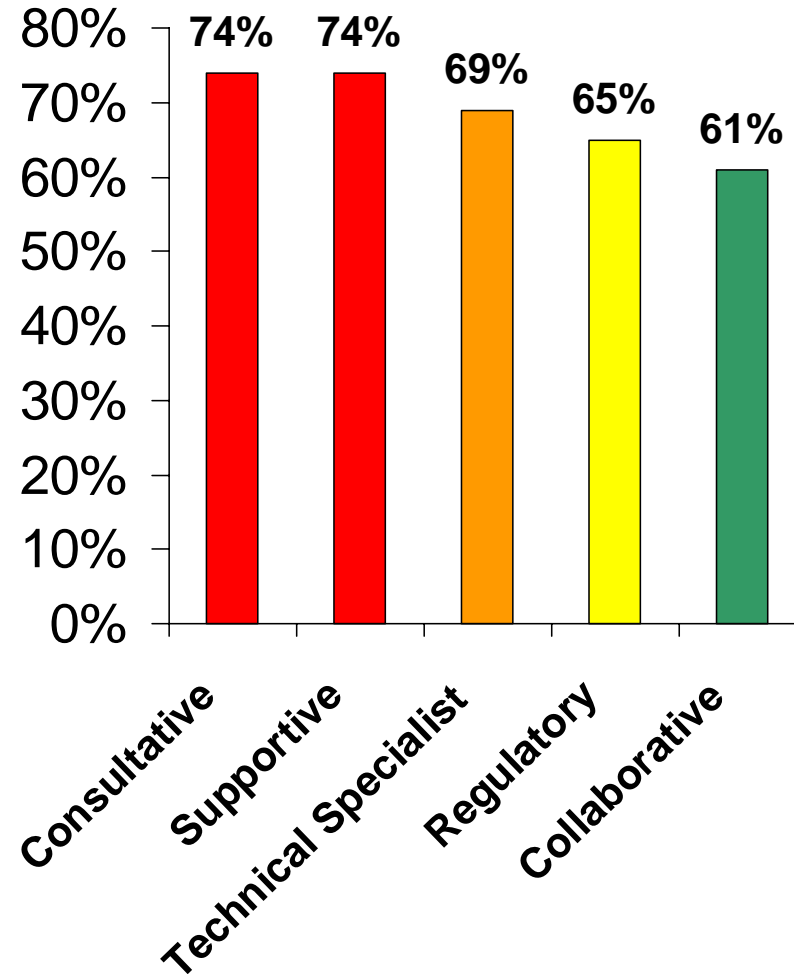
- food safety (96%)
- drinking water (94%)
- waste water (92%)
- public education (90%)
- solid waste (86%)
- epidemiology (85%)
- vector control (78%)
- public information (72%)
- health & safety officer (65%)

## Current

- food safety (86%)
- public education (69%)
- drinking water (68%)
- epidemiology (64%)
- public information (58%)
- waste water (57%)
- solid waste (54%)



# Potential EHS Roles



# Reasons for EHS not being more involved:

“Lack of funding.”

“Lack of training.”

“Public health is not a first responder.”

“Lack of support & leadership.”

“It’s not my job.”



# Conclusions

- EHS *do* want to be involved.
- A system of training, policies, procedures, practices, and processes is needed.
- Concepts must be implemented.
- More research is needed on this subject.
- Environmental health must be at the planning table with other responders.



# Future Steps

- Provide the health jurisdictions with a defined role.
- Develop policies, procedures, practices, training and exercises.
- Conduct a statewide survey.



Questions?

Thank You!

