

Reference G1
REFERENCE MANUAL 83
DISEASE REPORTING

Background and Purpose: Prompt reporting of communicable diseases enables appropriate public health follow-up and can limit disease transmission. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for reporting and managing communicable disease cases or outbreaks which occur within NPS boundaries.

Communicable Diseases: A communicable disease is an infectious disease that is capable of being transmitted from one person or species to another. Examples include norovirus, tuberculosis, rabies, and Lyme disease. Common routes of transmission include foodborne, waterborne, vectorborne, and person-to-person contact.

A. General Guidelines

- A.1 NPS unit managers shall designate (in writing) a point-of-contact (POC) responsible for implementing and coordinating a disease reporting program. When a sanitarian or environmental health specialist is located in the park, that person should be designated. A copy of the written designation should be sent to the regional or area public health consultant.
- A.2 NPS unit managers shall communicate to staff and concessioners that all disease reports should be reported to the POC.
- A.3 The POC shall maintain a communicable disease log for all disease reports or illness complaints received. An example of a disease log is attached and can be modified to meet individual NPS unit needs. Ideally, the log should be maintained as an electronic spreadsheet (e.g. Microsoft Excel).
- A.4 The POC shall maintain contact information for dispatch centers, district rangers, concessioners, local medical facilities, and local and state health departments.
- A.5 The POC shall contact the regional or area public health consultant for any of the following situations:
- a) a communicable disease outbreak (≥ 3 persons with similar symptoms and a common link) has occurred or is suspected
 - b) a report or cluster of disease reports suggests the potential for an outbreak
 - c) a rare or uncommon disease has been reported or is suspected
 - d) a disease has resulted in death or significant disability
 - e) other concerns
- A.6 If necessary, the regional or area public health consultant will develop a public health response plan/investigation in collaboration with the NPS medical epidemiologist and/or health officials from local and state health departments or

- federal agencies. Elements of the investigation might include interviews, laboratory testing, environmental sampling, and record review.
- A.7 The PHC shall notify the NPS unit manager (or designee) of all public health investigations.
 - A.8 For public health investigations involving specific concessioner establishments, the PHC shall notify the park concession's office.
 - A.9 The NPS unit manager shall notify the SSO superintendent, area field director, and area public affairs officer when a public health investigation has been initiated. The NPS unit manager should decide if and when a media release is appropriate.
 - A.10 The NPS unit manager shall consult and seek advice from the PHC, NPS medical epidemiologist, and other health officials regarding interpretation and implications of investigative findings. If necessary, the NPS unit manager may take appropriate procedures to restrict or close any establishment, facility, or operation if evidence suggests an outbreak may be occurring (or recurring). This authority is outlined in 36 CFR 1.5.

B. NPS Public Health Program Deliverables

- B.1 The PHC will meet with the park POC to review disease reporting data and processes.
- B.2 For health investigations, the PHC will provide regular updates to the NPS unit manager and to the WASO Office of Public Health. The PHC will submit a final report (including recommendations for disease control and prevention) within 30 days of completion of the investigation.
- B.3 Where appropriate, the WASO Office of Public Health will provide briefing statements to the Associate Director of Visitor and Resource Protection and to the NPS Public Affairs Office.

C. References and Investigative Protocols

1. Control of Communicable Diseases Manual. APHA, 18th Ed., 2004.
2. Nationally Notifiable Disease Surveillance System, CDC, <http://www.cdc.gov/epo/dphsi/nndsshis.htm>
3. Procedures to Investigate Foodborne Illness, Fifth Ed., International Association for Food Protection, 1999.
4. Guide for Investigating Foodborne Disease Outbreaks and Analyzing Surveillance Data, U.S. Public Health Service, CDC, 1978.
5. Procedures to Investigate Waterborne Illness, Second Ed., International Association for Food Protection, 1995.

6. Procedures to Investigate Arthropod-Borne and Rodent-Borne Illness, International Association for Food Protection, 1983.

7. Additional information can be obtained by contacting state health departments:

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/international/relres.html>

Report Date	Name	Age	Sex	Emp/Vis/ Conc	Date/Time of Sx Onset	Symptoms/Description of Illness	Contact Info	Logged by