

Direct from CDC

Environmental Health Services Branch

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Web-Based Resources for Environmental Public Health Practitioners

Editor's note: NEHA strives to provide up-to-date and relevant information on environmental health and to build partnerships in the profession. In pursuit of these goals, we are featuring a column from the Environmental Health Services Branch (EHSB) of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in every issue of the Journal.

EHSB's objective is to strengthen the role of state, local, and national environmental health programs and professionals to anticipate, identify, and respond to adverse environmental exposures and the consequences of these exposures for human health. The services being developed through EHSB include access to topical, relevant, and scientific information; consultation; and assistance to environmental health specialists, sanitarians, and environmental health professionals and practitioners.

EHSB appreciates NEHA's invitation to provide monthly columns for the Journal. EHSB staff will be highlighting a variety of concerns, opportunities, challenges, and successes that we all share in environmental public health.

Need answers to pressing environmental health questions that you face on an almost daily basis? Check out the wealth of environmental health resources available for download on the Environmental Health Services Branch Web site (<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs>). From concentrated animal-feeding operations (CAFOs) to workforce development issues, our Web site may have just the resources you need at your fingertips.

The Web site is a major part of EHSB's plans for dissemination of new tools and information. We are stepping up efforts to post program information on the site. The site now includes 10 major content areas (in the order presented online):

- Environmental Public Health Performance Standards (EnvPHPS) (<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/EnvPHPS>);
- Environmental Public Health Leadership Institute (EPHLI) (<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/EPHLI>);
- Building Environmental Health Capacity (<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/CapacityBuilding>);
- Community Environmental Health Assessment (CEHA) (<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/CEHA>);
- Emergency and Terrorism Preparedness for Environmental Health Practitioners (<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/ETP>);
- Environmental Health Specialists Network (EHS-Net) (<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/EHSNet>);
- EHS Publications (<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/Publications/Publications.htm>);
- Environmental Health Topics (<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/Topics>);
- News and Features (<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/News/>); and
- Training (<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/Resources/Training.htm>).

The Web site also provides signup information for the CDC Environmental Health Listserv (<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/Listserv/listserv.htm>). This resource was created to enable environmental health professionals to share information.

Grouping of key topic areas is an important feature that helps users search and scan for information on Web sites (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services & U.S. General Services Administration, 2006). Several EHSB Web areas now include keyword listings:

- **EPHLI** final projects can be searched by CDC Health Protection Goal and keyword (<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/ephi/keywords.htm>).
- **Capacity-building grantee project summaries** can be searched by keyword (<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/CapacityBuilding/keywords.htm>).
- **Emergency and Terrorism Preparedness for Environmental Health Practitioners** content can be searched by topic area (<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/ETP>).
- **EHS-Net** projects, and publications and presentations, can be searched by project focus—policies and practices of retail food service establishments, retail food safety programs, and the general public (<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/EHSNet/foodsafety.htm> and <http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/EHSNet/highlights.htm>).
- **Environmental Health Topics Page** provides an index of environmental health

topics (<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/Topics>) and links to Web-based information from the branch as well as environmental health information from other CDC divisions, federal agencies, and nongovernment organizations. Current topics include the following:

- Air Quality;
- *Cryptosporidium*, Cryptosporidiosis;
- Drinking Water;
- Emergency Preparedness;
- Environmental Public Health Marketing;
- Food Safety;
- Healthy Homes;
- Lead;
- Mold;
- Norovirus;
- Onsite Wastewater;
- Program Management/Evaluation;
- Recreational Water;
- Rodent Control;
- Vector Control/Integrated Pest Management;
- Vessel Sanitation;
- Veterinary Medicine and Public Health Practice;
- West Nile Virus; and
- Workforce Development.

The depth with which topics are handled varies, and topic links are updated when resources are added to the Web site. For example, the extensive Workforce Development page (<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/Topics/workforce.htm>) includes links to EHSB columns in the *Journal of Environmental Health*, to EPHLI, to specific

EPHLI final projects, to a CD-ROM developed by an EHSB capacity-building grantee, and to a guide that encourages environmental health professionals who are retiring or leaving active-duty military service to consider careers with state and local environmental public health programs; it also provides links to workforce development information from other organizations (the Association of Environmental Health Academic Programs, the American Public Health Association, NEHA, Eastern Kentucky University, the National Library of Medicine, and the University of Pittsburgh).

Although one of the newer topic pages, Environmental Public Health Marketing (<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/Topics/Marketing.htm>), does not yet offer the breadth of links seen on the Workforce Development page, this marketing page includes a CD-ROM developed by an EHSB capacity-building grantee, a summary of two specific EPHLI final projects, CDC information defining health marketing, and a toolkit from the National Association of County and City Health Officials.

Statistics show that users have found the Norovirus topic page (<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/Topics/norovirus.htm>) to be the most useful. In 2007, it was in the top 10 most-viewed topic pages, with the *Cryptosporidium* page (<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/Topics/Cryptosporidium.htm>) close behind. A comparison of September 2007 statistics with September 2006 statistics shows a 175 percent increase in viewers for the entire EHSB Web site.

In 2007, the site was redesigned to be consistent with recent CDC Web upgrades; a user-friendly layout makes the material easy to read. Improvements include a searchable A–Z topic index as well as an enhanced search engine that is specific to the information on the EHSB site:

- The A–Z Index is at http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/A_to_Z.htm.
- The Search Page is at <http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/Home/Search.htm>.

As always, EHSB welcomes your feedback on the Web site or on any of our programs. Please send your comments to ehsb@cdc.gov. We are here to support your programs: Let us know how we can help. ☺☺☺

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Reference

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services & U.S. General Services Administration. (2006). Content organization. In: *Research-based Web design and usability guidelines* (Chap. 16). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Retrieved December 24, 2007, from <http://usability.gov/pdfs/chapter16.pdf>.