



ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

September 2015

INVESTIGATING FOODBORNE ILLNESS OUTBREAKS

Restaurant inspections are a fairly routine part of a health inspector’s job; examine the food handling processes, check holding temperatures for hot and cold food, check hand washing stations, check for vermin evidence. But, when the Public Health Department confirms that there is a case or cases of foodborne illness, the nature of the job takes on an investigatory role. Linking foodborne illness cases to a particular food is rarely possible but it is possible to address the environmental factors that contribute to the outbreak, shorten the duration of the outbreak and prevent future occurrences.

The Environmental Management Department (EMD) works closely with the Public Health Division during a foodborne illness outbreak. Public Health interviews the individuals to determine if there was a related food source or restaurant and EMD inspects the facility, may gather food samples for analysis and recommends appropriate control measures. Some facilities may need to close in order to take extra sanitation measures and to dispose of any food that is suspect in the illness.

Microorganisms that cause illness can be present at many phases as the food travels from farm to food facility. Irrigation water can contain *E.coli*, *salmonella* cross contamination can take place at

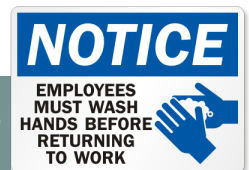
processing plants, cutting and prepping produce with rinds can contaminate the food inside if the rind carried *E.coli*, food not stored at proper temperatures can grow *salmonella*, and at a food facility norovirus can be easily spread by ill staff who transmit the virus to the food. All of these scenarios are suspect in a foodborne illness investigation.

Possible Sources of Food Contamination From Farm to Food Facility



Improper Food Storage Temperatures

Lack of Hand Washing is a Major Contributing Factor to Foodborne Illness



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- Val F. Siebal, Director, Environmental Management Department

FIRST RESPONDERS INSTANTLY ACCESS HAZARDOUS MATERIAL BUSINESS PLANS AND SITE MAPS ONLINE

For the last few years, all businesses that store and utilize hazardous materials in reportable quantities (55 gallons for liquids, 500 pounds for solids, 200 cubic feet for compressed gasses) must submit a Hazardous Materials Business Plan (HMBP) electronically through a database known as the California Environmental Reporting System (CERS). The Environmental Management Department (EMD), reviews the information that businesses submit and verifies its accuracy.

Now, imagine that you are a first responder and are called upon regularly to fight fires at commercial facilities that may be producing pesticides or storing ammonia, or to respond to explosions and toxic spills. It's imperative to know what chemicals and hazards are on-site in order to be prepared for chemical releases, hazardous material containment and potential explosives. And, site maps are crucial, particularly when dealing with large structures and warehouses.

Historically, EMD would collect the verified information that had been entered into CERS and transfer it to portable flash drives and give those flash drives to the local fire agencies to use during emergencies. This solution didn't provide constantly updated information for the fire agen-

cies responding to disasters. Recently, CERS has developed an interface specifically for emergency responders. Through this interface, emergency responders can log into CERS and review the Hazardous Material Business Plan for any facility while on-site at the location of the emergency. The HMBP also include a site map so even if no staff from the business or



Up-to-date site plans are critical to the safety of emergency responders

facility are present, the responders know exactly where hazardous materials are being stored. This is a major accomplishment and a giant step forward for emergency responders.

Last month EMD held two classes for the local fire agencies and emergency response personnel to teach them how to utilize the new interface into CERS. All participants were enthusiastic about the new advancement and look forward to utilizing the system.

Case in Point: EMD Hazardous Materials Incident Response Team recently responded to a report of a leak of Freon gas from a refrigeration unit at a grocery store. This toxic gas, if stored in large enough quantities, requires the business to file a Hazardous Materials Business Plan with a site map. In this case, the call came in during the day, people were evacuated to safety, and there was a business owner/manager present to explain the types of chemicals/gases present in the building. This illustrates the importance of hazardous chemical generation and storage compliance and accurate HMBP's and site maps on file.



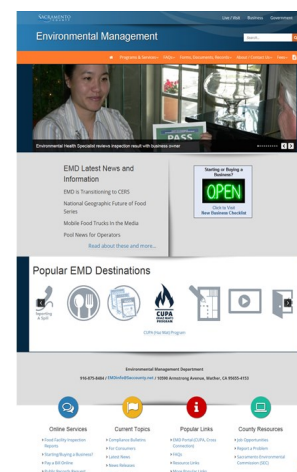
Our New Website Is Designed for Mobile, Too

The Environmental Management Department's website has been redesigned to seamlessly flow and function on both mobile devices with simplified navigation, as well as large desktop screens with mega-menus.

"Increasingly people are going to our website using their smartphone or tablet. This redesign was done to accommodate this patent trend to make it easier to access our online services and information from big and small screens," said Val Siebal, Department Director.

For the redesign, it was important that information be readily available with easy navigation. All content, including graphics, have been designed to scale smoothly and the content reorganized into categories for tidy, intuitive navigation.

While the majority of the information available remains the same, this newly designed website infrastructure now uses a different platform. Therefore, some of your saved links may not work. Please visit EMD's new website soon, and if you have a technical problem, have trouble finding information or would like to make a comment about the site, please contact our webmaster: sacportal@saccounty.net



Workplace Safety Tip: The Right Shoe for the Job

Recently, a brand of footwear that has become popular in hospitals has come under fire. Critics are claiming Crocs—brightly colored clogs made of a polymer resin with styles with holes on the tops and sides—pose health and safety risks. Possible risks cited include injury from falling scalpels or needles, infection from blood dropping through the holes, and the potential for disruption of medical equipment from static electricity build-up caused by the shoes. Some health organizations have developed policies which, in effect, ban Crocs, much to the chagrin of their employees, who discount the risks and claim the shoes provide extraordinary comfort and ease of cleaning. The debate raging over Crocs brings up an issue that many organizations fail to consider: Should you have a policy on footwear, and what should that policy be?

There are instances where the need for a policy on footwear is clear—such as when a regulation requires one. Under the Cal/OSHA General Industry Safety Orders, protective footwear is required when employees are exposed to foot injuries from:

- electrical hazards
- hot, poisonous, or corrosive substances
- falling objects
- crushing or penetrating actions
- abnormally wet conditions



There are also safety orders requiring workers to wear protective footwear in specific situations, including using heat-insulated footwear when operating a coke oven and nonsparking footwear when working in ship building and repair operations involving volatile liquids. The safety orders also specify paying attention to certain aspects of footwear (e.g., not wearing worn footwear in construction and not wearing footwear with waffling or patterns that might retain material in explosive operations).

When there is no specific regulation requiring protective footwear, an organization may still need a policy. In these instances, a risk assessment should be done to determine if there are hazards that warrant requiring protective footwear or banning certain footwear that poses a hazard for specific jobs (for example, not allowing high heels to be worn while climbing ladders to stock shelves) or because certain footwear does not sufficiently protect (for example, not allowing flip-flops because they don't cover the tops and sides of the foot).

(quoted from <http://www.ca-safety/public/1134.cfm?sd=208>)

Hazardous Material Plan Workshops

The Environmental Management Department offered 2 Hazardous Material Plan Portal Workshops during August, 2015. There were 5 individuals that attended these workshops. During the workshops, EMD staff provided regulated businesses an overview of the electronic reporting process and also assisted each person with the process of submitting their Hazardous Waste Plans electronically. Hazardous Waste Plans are mandated by the California Environmental Protection Agency to be electronically submitted, effective January 1, 2013. EMD continues to assist consumers who need instruction filing their plans electronically.

Food Safety Education Classes

There were 3 onsite and 1 off site Food Safety Education classes conducted in August 2015, with a total of 57 participants representing 14 facilities. Two classes were conducted in English and 2 in Spanish.

EC Division offered 2 Underground Storage Tank Workshops

in July. During the workshops, EMD staff assisted 4 people in submitting their Underground Storage Tank forms electronically through either the EMD web portal or the California Environmental Reporting System.

By the Numbers August 2015	
	Aug-15
Food Facility Placards Issued	
A. Green – Pass	1066
C. Red – Closed	20
B. Yellow – Conditional Pass	79
Inspections	1165
Abandoned Wells	15
Above Ground Storage Tank	5
Body Art	8
Food Protection (includes reinspections and food events)	1405
Farm Labor Camps	1
Public Swimming Pools/Spas	122
Solid Waste Facilities (landfills/transfer stations)	21
Liquid Waste	17
Medical Waste	5
Small Water Systems	6
Wells and Monitoring Wells	155
Businesses/Facilities Generating Hazardous Waste	65
Businesses/Facilities Storing Hazardous Materials	91
Underground Storage Tank Facilities	45
Underground Storage Tank Removal, Installations, Upgrades, Repairs	11
Storm Water Non Food Facility	24
Waste Tire	97
Tobacco Retailer	22
Commercial/Multi-Family Recycling	16
Refuse Vehicle Inspections/	0
Septic Tank Pumper Trucks	1
Total	2132
Investigations	
Body Art	5
Consumer Complaints	75
Food Borne Illness	20
Incident Response	
Solid Waste	3
Storm Water	3
Waste Tire	
Childhood Lead	0
Total	0
Class Attendance	
Food Safety Education (Food School)	57
Hazardous Materials Business Plan (HMP) Workshop	5
“How To Get A Green Placard For Food Inspection” Workshop Online also.	
Underground Storage Forms Workshop	4
Total	66
Plans, Permits, and Reviews	
Abandoned Wells	56
Hazardous Materials Business Plans	270
Body Art	4
Monitoring Wells/ Water Wells	190
Food Facilities	103
Public Swimming Pools/Spas	69
Underground Storage Tanks Plans and Permit Reviews	6
Land Use	11
Local Oversight Program	3
Cross Connection Permits (Blue Tags)	1992
Total	2704
Imaging	
Document Pages Imaged	16464