

Environmental Health Epidemiologic Capacity Assessment

Environmental epidemiologists (EE) in state and territorial health departments are persons who collect, analyze, interpret and disseminate data related to acute and chronic diseases or risk factors where an environmental exposure is important. . EEs may be involved with surveillance and epidemiology of conditions related to chemical or radiological exposures in the general population. In some states, EEs may be involved in epidemiologic activities for environmentally related communicable diseases via food and water. And in some states, they may also support epidemiological activities associated with occupational exposures if there isn't a designated occupational epidemiologist.

For this assessment, environmental epidemiologists are classified as persons who:

- Work at least 50% of their time at the health department doing health department related environmental epidemiologic work
- Work in health department even if they receive their paycheck from another organization (e.g., an academic institution)
- CDC/CSTE Applied Epidemiology fellows and other 'fellows' designated for EE should be included

We strongly recommend reviewing and completing the [PDF version](#) of the assessment before proceeding with this online form. It may be helpful to consult state health department staff in subject-specific program areas, organizational charts, or other documents to complete portions of the ECA. You may start and stop this online assessment as many times as needed. Your progress will be saved as you move from page to page or when you click the "save" button. You will not be able to skip pages unless all responses on that page have been filled.

START

? 1. Does the health department have at least one environmental epidemiologist who is responsible for environmentally-related activities?

Yes No

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Prompted to answer if there is at least one EE in your STATE HD. If there is no EE in your STATE HD, please skip to Q30.

? 2. During the past 12 months, have EEs in your health department done work related to:

EXPOSURES:

Radiation

Yes No

Lead

Yes No

Chemical Poisonings (in addition to those listed separately)

Yes No

Pesticide Poisonings

Yes No

Substance Abuse

Yes No

Carbon Monoxide

Yes No

Mercury

Yes No

Arsenic

Yes No

Other exposures

Yes No

HEALTH OUTCOME:

Heat-related illness

Yes No

Birth outcomes

Yes No

Asthma

Yes No

Cancer

Yes No

Infectious Diseases

Yes No

Other diseases

Yes No

Other diseases

Yes No

ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAM FOCUS:

Occupationally related disease

Yes No

Healthy Homes

Yes No

Health Impact Assessments (HIA)

Yes No

Environmental Public Health Tracking or program which links broad environmental data and health outcome data

Yes No

Built Environment

Yes No

Biomonitoring

Yes No

Climate Change

Yes No

ATSDR Site Assessment

Yes No

Disaster/Other Preparedness Response

Yes No

Other Env Program focus

Yes No

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? 3. In order to better understand the overall scope of your EEs' functions, please select activities from the list below that EEs in your health agency have participated in during the last 12 months.

Public health surveillance

Routine/Frequently Rarely/ Not at all

Investigation of acute environmentally related diseases/poisonings that are reportable in your state

Routine/Frequently Rarely/ Not at all

Investigation of acute environmentally related diseases/poisonings that are NOT reportable in your state

Routine/Frequently Rarely/ Not at all

Analysis of chronic disease data associated with environmental exposures

Routine/Frequently Rarely/ Not at all

Hypothesis-testing research related to environmental health

Routine/Frequently Rarely/ Not at all

GIS/mapping activities supporting environmental investigations

Routine/Frequently Rarely/ Not at all

Other

Yes No

Routine/Frequently Rarely/ Not at all

Other

Yes No

Routine/Frequently Rarely/ Not at all

Other

Yes No

Routine/Frequently Rarely/ Not at all

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? 4. What are the funding sources for EE epidemiology staff within the STATE HD? (Specify value for percentage (e.g., "40" for 40%) of total funding for each source. If no funding, enter "0" for that source. Values should total 100.)

Federal Funds

State Funds

Other, please specify

Total 'must equal 100'

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? 5. Does your state health department have adequate Environmental Epidemiologic capacity to provide the following essential environmental public health services and related activities? (For more information about these services, click [here](#) or visit <http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/home/healthservice.htm>).

For question 5, please use the following scale:

Not at all None of the activity, knowledge or resources described within the question are met.
Minimal Less than 25 percent (but greater than 0 percent) of the activity, knowledge or resources described within the question are met.
Partial 25 percent or greater (but less than 50 percent) of the activity, knowledge or resources described within the question are met.
Substantial 50 percent or greater (but less than 75 percent) of the activity, knowledge or resources described within the question are met.
Almost Fully 75 percent or greater (but less than 100 percent) of the activity, knowledge or resources described within the question are met.
Full 100 percent of the activity, knowledge or resources described within the question are met.

Monitor environmental and health status to identify and solve community environmental public health problems

- None, Not at all
- Minimally
- Partially
- Substantially
- Almost Fully
- Full

Diagnose and investigate environmental public health problems and health hazards in the community

- None, Not at all
- Minimally
- Partially
- Substantially
- Almost Fully
- Full

Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based environmental public health service

- None, Not at all
- Minimally
- Partially
- Substantially
- Almost Fully
- Full

Research for new insights and innovative solutions to environmental public health problems

- None, Not at all
- Minimally
- Partially
- Substantially
- Almost Fully
- Full

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? 6. Does one or more of the EE staff have access to the following data sets?

"Access" means that the epidemiologist has access to the data set for analyses (not necessarily on their own desk top) plus the coding and variable descriptions necessary to understand the structure and meaning of the data

State mortality data (not via WONDER)/ Vital Statistics

Yes No Don't know

State hospital discharge data

Yes No Not collected in our state Don't know

State-wide cancer registry data

Yes No Not collected in our state Don't know

State Medicaid data

Yes No Don't know

Medicare data for your state

Yes No Don't know

State BRFSS data (not via CDC web site)

Yes No Don't know

State emergency department data

Yes No Not collected in our state Don't know

Poison Control Center data

Yes No Not collected in our state Don't know

State EMS data

Yes No Not collected in our state Don't know

Syndromic surveillance data

Yes No Not collected in our state Don't know

Birth Defect data

Yes No Not collected in our state Don't know

Birth Certificate data

Yes No Don't know

Air Quality data

Yes No Not collected in our state Don't know

Childhood Lead data

Yes No Not collected in our state Don't know

Public Drinking Water Quality data (public drinking water, private drinking water)

Yes No Not collected in our state Don't know

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? 7. Do EEs have access to the following software packages:

SAS

Yes No but needed No not needed

SPSS

Yes No but needed No not needed

STATA

Yes No but needed No not needed

SUDAAN

Yes No but needed No not needed

EpiInfo

Yes No but needed No not needed

Encryption software

Yes No but needed No not needed

GIS (geographic information system) software

Yes No but needed No not needed

SQL

Yes No but needed No not needed

Other software

Yes No but needed No not needed

Other software

Yes No but needed No not needed

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? 8. Does your state have a public access interactive or queryable on-line system that displays environmentally related epidemiologic data?

Yes No Don't know

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? 9. In the past 12 months, have grant or cooperative agreement applications been submitted where EE staff prepared “epidemiology” sections or where an EE was the primary preparer?

Yes No Don't know

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? 10. In the past 12 months, have EE staff published one or more state or territorial “burden” or “epidemiology” or “surveillance” reports on an environmentally-related disease topic?

Yes No Don't know

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? 11. In the past 12 months, have scientific presentations or posters at state or national meetings requiring abstract submission been given by EEs?

Yes No Don't know

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? 12. In the past 12 months, have EE staff been authors/coauthors on any peer reviewed published literature related to one or more environmentally related disease topics?

Yes No Don't know

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? 13. Where are the majority of EEs located within your health agency? (select the answer that most closely matches your department)

- Individual EEs are embedded within separate categorical disease and surveillance program units (e.g., cancer, communicable)
- Within an environmental public health program
- Within an epidemiology or population health program (unit that includes other epidemiologists such as infectious disease or MCH epidemiologists)
- In another institution or agency outside of the health department
- Other unit such as regulatory program, preparedness group, etc (specify)



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? 14. In the past 12 months, have there been changes in the organizational structure of your department of health (DOH) which have impacted EE activities?

Yes No Don't know

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[Prompted to answer if previous question's answer is affirmative.]

? 15. Please describe organizational changes (check all that apply)

- EE activities moved to another agency outside of the health department
- EE program broken up and embedded in other groups or units within agency
- New EH structure created which contains EE activities
- Merged from another program(s) into a separate EH program
- Consolidation of EE activities and embedded into a non-EH program group within agency
- Other (specify)

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? 16. Looking forward to the next 12 months, do you anticipate changes in the organizational structure of your DOH which will impact EEs?

- Yes No Don't know

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[Prompted to answer if previous question's answer is affirmative.]

? 17. Please describe organizational changes (check all that apply)

- EE activities moved to another agency outside of the health department
- EE program broken up and embedded in other groups or units within agency
- New EH structure created which contains EE activities
- Merged from another program(s) into a separate EH program
- Consolidation of EE activities and embedded into a non-EH program group within agency
- Other (specify)

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? 18. In the past 12 months, has there been any change in the number of staff related to EE programs, functions or activities?

Increase Decrease Stay the same

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? 19. In the past 12 months, have there been changes in the amount of state or territorial funding for EE related activities?

Increase Decrease Stay the same

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? 20. In the past 12 months, have there been changes in the amount of federal or other grant funding supporting EE related programs, function or activities (without considering the ending of federal funding for lead/healthy homes activities)?

Increase Decrease Stay the same

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? 21. In the past 12 months, have EEs given university lectures, supervised student internships or theses, or had other important collaborations with an academic center?

Yes No Don't Know

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? 22. In the past 12 months, have EEs collaborated closely on projects (e.g., publication of a report, preparation of an application, design or evaluation of a program or intervention) with one or more of the following agencies and/or organizations:

Private voluntary organizations (health directed) (e.g., American Heart Association)

Yes No Don't Know

Private voluntary organization (environmental advocacy related) (e.g., Sierra Club)

Yes No Don't Know

Managed care organizations (e.g., Kaiser Permanente)

Yes No Don't Know

Associations of health care organizations and professionals (e.g., state medical society, hospital association)

Yes No Don't Know

Colleges or Universities

Yes No Don't Know

Industry or trade organizations

Yes No Don't Know

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? 23. Which of the following best characterizes the current level of collaboration between EEs and epidemiologists in other health department program areas?

Infectious Disease

Strong Some Very Little No collaboration at this time No epidemiologists in this program area in our state

Public Health Preparedness

Strong Some Very Little No collaboration at this time No epidemiologists in this program area in our state

Injury

Strong Some Very Little No collaboration at this time No epidemiologists in this program area in our state

Cancer

Strong Some Very Little No collaboration at this time No epidemiologists in this program area in our state

Mental Health

Strong Some Very Little No collaboration at this time No epidemiologists in this program area in our state

Substance Abuse

Strong Some Very Little No collaboration at this time No epidemiologists in this program area in our state

Maternal & Child Health

Strong Some Very Little No collaboration at this time No epidemiologists in this program area in our state

Other Chronic Disease

Strong Some Very Little No collaboration at this time No epidemiologists in this program area in our state

Occupational Health

Strong Some Very Little No collaboration at this time No epidemiologists in this program area in our state

Vital Statistics

Strong Some Very Little No collaboration at this time No epidemiologists in this program area in our state

Other

Yes No

Strong Some Very Little No collaboration at this time No epidemiologists in this program area in our state

Other

Yes No

Strong Some Very Little No collaboration at this time No epidemiologists in this program area in our state

? 24. Do EEs have access to current medical, epidemiologic, and public health journals through either a conveniently located major science library, or a service that provides full-text electronic or hardcopy articles?

Yes No Don't Know

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? 25. Do EEs have access to adequate IT infrastructure and services (e.g., adequate hardware, server space, virus protection, back-up mechanisms, and timely technical support)?

Yes No Don't Know

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? 26. Are your EEs involved in work with national workgroups and/or local medical groups to collaborate on making electronic medical records useful for disease surveillance, prevention, or control purposes?

Yes No Don't Know

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? 27. Please, briefly describe how are your EEs involved in work with national workgroups and/or local medical groups

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? 28. Do EEs in your agency have adequate funding support to travel to national meetings (CSTE, NEHA, etc.)?

Yes Some funding but not adequate No

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? 29. Are EEs in your agency restrained from travel to national meetings for reasons other than funding (e.g. agency or state-wide travel bans)?

Yes No Don't know

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? 30. Would you like to comment on this assessment? What should have been covered but was not? What was covered but not in enough depth? What was covered that could have been omitted?

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FINISH