



## California Department of Health Services

### Registered Environmental Health Specialist Program (REHS)

#### UPDATE APRIL 2005

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1. Continuing Education - The Education Sub-Committee of the Environmental Health Specialist Registration Committee (EHSRC) is developing a proposal for a voluntary continuing education (CE) program that will eventually become mandatory through the adoption of regulations. The Sub-Committee enjoys input from California Environmental Health Association (CEHA) and California Conference of Directors of Environmental Health (CCDEH). CEHA, CCDEH and EHSRC support mandatory CE and are working together to develop an acceptable plan.

- 30 contact hours biennially.
- Approved CE may include: CEHA sponsored training including venues at the Annual Educational Symposium, state and county sponsored training, formal college courses, and distance learning,
- Course content must be relevant to the practice of environmental health.

2. Revising the exam - Results from the Knowledge Skills and Abilities questionnaire were distributed between two lists: important tasks or activities of the REHS and important knowledge and skills needed at registration. From this information the new test plan and new study guide was created. Changes in the test plan were relatively minor, however, questions in the following program areas were augmented:

- Hazardous Materials (HazMat)
- Solid / Medical Waste
- Wastewater
- Disaster Sanitation and Bioterrorism
- Air Pollution
- Basic Science

Questions on the following program areas were reduced:

- Noise (now part of Land Use)
- Radiation (now part of Disaster)

- Occupational Health (now part of General Environmental Health and HazMat)
- Math

In each case the change was five questions or less.

3. Recruitment - Powerpoint presentations are available to download from our web site:

- Food and Consumer Protection, Public Pools and Recreation, Laws, Regulations and Administrative Processes, On-Site Sewage Disposal, Hazardous Materials and Hazardous Waste, Recruitment.
- Due to the file size the Department of Health Services (DHS) and San Mateo recruitment powerpoint presentations are only available on CD. We will mail you a copy upon request.

4. Environmental Health Capacity in California - Loma Linda University has received a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to study the environmental health capacity in California. They are using the REHS records to analyze 1) the number of REHS in local, state, and private industry; 2) the average age of the REHS to predict an upcoming shortfall due to retirement; and 3) the geographical spread.

5. Listing of REHSs - We will be posting on our web site the names, REHS # and expiration date for all current and active REHSs. The list will be updated quarterly.

6. Disciplinary Actions - REHS is a professional certification that includes ethical standards and mandates, and any deceit, fraud, negligence, crime, etc., related to the functions or duties of an REHS could result in loss of the registration. Registration as an EHS is not just taking a test, getting a piece of paper, and a salary step increase--it's a professional license. Failure to pay biennial registration fees will result in the suspension of your registration. Your registration is revoked if the biennial fee is not paid within three years.

Registration may be revoked, suspended, denied, or refused to renew for cause:

- False statement of fact on the original application or renewal;

- Convicted of a crime (if related to the job - qualifications, functions or duties);
- Committed act of deceit, misrepresentation, violation of contract, fraud, negligence, professional incompetence, unethical practice.

As of 12/31/2004, 260 REHSs are suspended for failure to pay and 90 registrations were revoked.

In the past 5 years:

- An REHS in San Diego voluntarily gave up registration in order to suspend an investigation into allegations that bribes were solicited.
- In Los Angeles a registration was revoked after a court convicted the REHS on charges of taking bribes for letter grades in restaurant inspections.
- A Septic system designer was investigated for malpractice but the evidence in the case was inconclusive. The committee ruled that if further information comes forward the case will be reopened.
- A current case involves a charge of impersonating an REHS. The local District Attorney is filing charges.

7. Environmental Health Specialist Registration Committee (EHSRC) - The purpose of the EHSRC is to advise and make recommendations to the Department of Health Services regarding the proper administration and enforcement of the registration act.

- 10 members:
  1. 2- Directors of environmental health
  2. 1- private industry member\*
  3. 1-public sector
  4. 1-CEHA
  5. 1-Health Officer\*\*
  6. 2-University professors
  7. 2-public members outside environmental health or regulated community (1-senate, 1-assembly)

\* Todd Frantz, REHS, Disneyland Resort, has recently been appointed as the new private industry member.

\*\*Dr. Dean Kelaita, MD, Health Officer of Calaveras County has recently been appointed as the CCLHO representative.

- Meets annually at the CEHA Annual Education Symposium the day prior to the conference and again in the fall.
- Subcommittee work includes:
  - Review and approval of environmental health University programs
  - Review of County Training Plans
  - Continuing Education development
  - Evaluation of current curriculum requirements

8. Training Coordinator meetings are facilitated by DHS. Approximately, twice a year we meet and discuss training issues of interest to the group. Recent topics have included training plan requirements, the new exam test plan, national guidelines for food inspectors, and continuing education. The next regular meeting will be May 25, 2005 at the Alameda County Environmental Health Department. We will also present a workshop at the CEHA, AES in Monterey April 27, 2005 describing the components of a Training Plan.

9. REHS Program Web Page - We encourage you to visit the REHS program web page at:

<http://www.dhs.ca.gov/ps/ddwem/environmental/rehs/rehs.htm>.