

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH REGISTRATION COMMITTEE MINUTES
Registration Process Subcommittee
Wednesday January 21, 2015
2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Subcommittee Members Present

Mr. Dave Conway, REHS, Director of Environmental Health, Mariposa County, Chair of Subcommittee

Ms. Terri Williams, REHS, Chair of EHSRC, Assistant Director of Environmental Health

Ms. Sarah Crossman, REHS, Public Sector REHS

Ms. Graciela Garcia, REHS, CEHA Representative, Ventura County

Ms. Catherine Caldwell, MS, Senate Rules Committee Appointee

Environmental Health Specialist Registration Program Staff Present

Ms. Veronica L. Malloy, REHS, EHS Registration Program Administrator

1. Review the Use of non REHS staff to conduct inspections, write permits and develop/manage various environmental health programs update from Terri Williams

The REHS Program is receiving emails from Imperial County staff to report that the county is using non-REHS staff to conduct inspections and other activities which they believe are the sole duty of a registered environmental health specialist. More recently, the staff was given the instruction to have the non-REHS phone into the office and accept verbal permission from the REHS for pool closures. Ms. Terri Williams contacted Imperial County to ask about this protocol. She informed the subcommittee that the county does not have enough staff and may use a non REHS during the busy times, which in turn makes referrals to the REHS in a phone call. Ms. Malloy read the excerpt from the California Code of Regulations, Section 65545 The “enforcing agent” definition states “ is a health officer, director of environmental health, registered environmental health specialist or an environmental health specialist trainee”. Closure for unsanitary, unsafe or unhealthful conditions requires approval by the enforcing agent. (Reopening requires correction and written approval of the enforcing agent.) Ms. Caldwell points out that the language does not give the detail to indicate the unsanitary, unsafe or unhealthful conditions must be witnessed by the REHS.

Some of the other duties and tasks areas Imperial county staff is concerned about is listed below:

Temporary Food Facility Program Scenario – A non-registered person is coordinating the program and releasing permits after reviewing applications. No field inspections are performed. The non-REHS coordinates the county fair and has performed opening inspections for facilities at the fair, maybe five or less each year. The subcommittee members saw this as a clear violation of the California Retail Food Code (CFRC).

Body Art Scenario – A non-registered person is tasked with developing the body art program. The non-REHS performed inspections with the Director in the field. The program is being developed at this time by the non REHS.

Liquid Waste Scenario – A non registered person approves septic system permits, issues permits and conducts field inspection of systems. An REHS also approves

permits and possibly conducts field inspections from time to time. It has been verified that many records indicate a non-registered person issues the permit , approves the plans and inspects the system.

Director of Environmental Health – The job description for the Director of Environmental Health does not indicate that the minimum qualifications include the candidate be a Registered Environmental Health Specialist, is this a problem?

ACTION ITEM: Ms. Williams and Mr. Conway will take the complaint back to CCDEH and make recommendations to this subcommittee at the next meeting.

2. This subcommittee’s role in reviewing results of the most recent REHS Exam. Recent exam results.

Mr. Conway requested a brief description of this subcommittees’ role in reviewing the most recent examination results as outlined in the ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SPECIALIST REGISTRATION COMMITTEE AND SUBCOMMITTEES document dated and adopted April 15, 1997. Ms. Malloy stated she researched the historic agendas of this subcommittee and could not find where this role was established nor could she find any activities that this subcommittee undertook in reviewing examination results. She explained this document may have been adopted during the time the REHS Program transitioned from the New York PERS test (December 1996) to one given by this department. Ms. Malloy explained the most beneficial role for this subcommittee is to evaluate the candidates who fail the exam and compare their results to the training plan or university curriculum and make recommendations for improving those plans or curriculum.

ACTION ITEM: This subcommittee will begin to review the reports from candidates who fail the March 2015 and will review the training plan or curriculum to determine areas of improvement.

3. Discussion regarding the process for setting the passing score on the REHS Exam

Ms. Malloy distributed a power point presentation to the subcommittee members given to the panel of experts who gathered in December 2014 here in Sacramento. She explained the exam questions are developed by a group of individuals who are known to be experts in a particular field of environmental health. They are chosen from the public, private and academic sectors and typically have at least 10 years of experience in environmental health practice. The current SME panel members are faculty who are affiliated with the Option V schools in California. They gather two times a year to review and score new exam questions that have never been used or that have come back to the panel from exam candidate challenges. The SMEs score the questions on a range of difficulty. The exam is then produced from a question bank and the Anghoff is the average difficulty rating of the questions as a whole. The cut score is equivalent to the Anghoff and determines how many candidates pass and how many fail.

4. August 2014 REHS exam results vs. November 2012 Results

This item was removed from the agenda by Mr. Conway

5. Continuing Education Hours – What if hours are not completed. Law is incomplete and does not provide any process to obtain the hours after the

registration is due. Does a person that did not complete the hours just lose their REHS period? A renewal application that does not include the Continuing Education Verification form listing the 24 hours of continuing education is deemed incomplete and is returned to the applicant along with the renewal fee. The application then falls into suspension. A registration which remains in suspension for 3 years is revoked. Ms. Williams explained that the REHS Program started sending the renewal applications early in July so a registrant would be notified that they still have 6 months left to finish the required 24 units. Ms. Malloy explained that there are a number of individuals who call throughout the year to ask if courses will meet the requirement.

6. Training Plans – Sarah and Graciela are working with Veronica to develop a draft model plan. Update

The training plans from San Diego, Contra Costa and Alameda counties were sent and the project is underway to combine the best of these programs to come up with a “model” plan.

7. Review Submitted training plans from:

- a. Alameda County EH
- b. Butte County EH
- c. City of Berkeley
- d. Madera County EH
- e. Marin County EH
- f. Orange County EH
- g. Plumas County EH
- h. Shasta County EH
- i. Yolo County EH
- j. Yuba County EH

For lack of time, this item will be continued at the next meeting.