

BASIC ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM FIELD EXERCISE GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION

Field exercises are an important component of the Basic Environmental Health Program (BEHP). The exercises are designed to provide hands-on experience to aid the student in understanding important basic concepts of various public health programs. Students are not expected to be able to independently perform inspections of the identified facilities (field exercises) without substantial additional training and mentoring. It is the responsibility of the local health department where the participant is employed to provide for meaningful and successful field exercises. A copy of these guidelines should be shared with the student's supervisor and mentors to understand the roles and responsibilities of all parties.

ROLE OF LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT STAFF (Depending on the local health department, the responsibilities for the following roles may overlap)

A. Director of Environmental Health

- 1) Assigns a high priority to a timely and thorough completion of field exercises.

B. Student's Supervisor

- 1) Arranges for appropriate, qualified mentor from local or another health department to work with the student.
- 2) Arranges for field exercise and sees that the field exercise and written components are completed by the course due date(s). Allows student adequate time for completion of the field exercise.
- 3) Reviews completed exercise with student resolves any issues or questions and signs off on completed exercise that the learning objectives were met.
- 4) Submits copy of exercise to the School of Public Health, One University Place, Rensselaer, NY 12144, (fax- 518-402-1137) prior to the scheduled class date.

C. Mentor

- 1) Qualifications include
 - a) Being an effective communicator/trainer/motivator who is enthusiastic about the mentor assignment.

- b) Being a recognized technical expert, knowledgeable on applicable State Health Department regulations and policies and has current field experience and/or credential certificates in the program area assigned. (Food exercise must be completed by a FSIO 2)

2) Responsibilities

- a) Assists student in understanding and completing learning objectives outlined on individual field exercise reports.
- b) Demonstrates requisite skills/procedures and provides oral and written resource information such as the Environmental Health Manual, Codes, books and brochures.
- c) Encourages the student to do as much of the hands-on, practical aspect of the exercise as possible.
- d) Reviews the completed exercise with the student and resolves issues or questions prior to signing off on the exercise form.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- A. Each field exercise is expected to involve less than a day in the field and no more than one hour to complete the written work.
 - 1) Field exercise assignments should be completed and submitted to the School of Public Health, One University Pl., Rensselaer, NY, 12144 (fax- 518-402-1137) prior to the applicable class date.
 - 2) If the local health department where the student works does not have an appropriate mentor in a given program area or does not have the required type of facility to visit, the local Director of Environmental Health or student's supervisor will be responsible for making arrangements with another local health department or the State Health Department regional office to complete the field exercise.
 - 3) If a public health hazard is identified during the field exercise, the mentor must assume responsibility for resolving the situation immediately, consistent with State Health Department policies/procedures for that program.
 - 4) Course instructors will be available during the class presentation to discuss additional program-specific guidance, where appropriate, if students have additional program or field exercise questions.

