

FDOH Environmental Health Strike Teams

Department of Health (DOH) Environmental Health Strike Teams stand ready to protect Florida's residents and visitors against injury and disease related to any manmade or natural extraordinary event through response and recovery activities. When a local request for support is received through the State Emergency Operations Center for Health and Medical (ESF8) an Environmental Health Team may be activated. Using the Incident Command System, Environmental Health Strike Team response achieves their mission by controlling environmental risks through a comprehensive set of surveillance, investigative, and science-based environmental health standards and programs listed below:

- **Food Safety:** Surveillance of all storage handling, preparation and disposal of food in places regulated by the Department of Health. Advise the public on the safety of existing food supplies. Inspect temporary food operations at shelters and mass feeding sites set-up for disaster response. Locate and inspect feeding stations (Red Cross, Salvation Army, Shelters, and Community Reception Centers). Investigate complaints that may constitute an immediate public health risk.
- **Potable Water Safety:** Assuring the public where and how safe drinking water can be acquired. Assess and monitor public drinking water systems to ensure that boiled water notices are issued to their customers and that water meets minimum federal safe drinking water standards. Drinking water systems will be contacted to verify status. Provide water sampling and laboratory analysis support.
- **Radiation Exposure Prevention:** Assist Florida Department of Health, Bureau of Radiation Control, which is the lead agency for events of this type, as requested. Support operations should there be a release of radiation from the St. Lucie Nuclear Power Plant requiring initiation of its Emergency Response Distribution of Potassium Iodide (KI) for the Public. Work in conjunction with other agencies should evaluation determine that radiation has affected the ingestion pathway.
- **Hazardous Material Exposure Prevention:** When assessing public health threats from known releases or presence of hazardous materials in the environment, education of the affected public as to the health risks posed by chemical agents and environmental clean-up and disposal of wastes. Ensure that biomedical waste continues to be disposed of by generators in a safe manner according to state code.
- **Sanitary Nuisance Exposure Prevention:** Inspect and evaluate reports of potential sanitary nuisances. Issue notices regarding recreational waters, when appropriate.
- **Zoonotic and Other Vector-borne Disease Exposure Prevention:** Assist and/or support agencies in the control of mosquitoes, flies, rodents and with related public health issues. Provide public education and information on rodent control, abatement and community hygiene.
- **Solid Waste Management and Disposal:** Investigate sanitary nuisance complaints related to the effective storage, collection and disposal of garbage.
- **Environmental Epidemiology:** Investigate reports of foodborne, waterborne, vector borne and other diseases of animal or environmental origin. EH will provide surveillance for injury prevention and vector borne disease control. Corrective actions may require control measures and additional inspections.
- **Group Care Safety:** Perform damage assessments of DOH regulated group care and residential care facilities. These may include adult living, residential treatment, and detention facilities, as well as public and private schools. This assessment includes an overall status of the facility, power supply, potable water supply, food service operations and supplies, biomedical waste disposal, sewage disposal and any other observed public health threat.

- **Outdoor and Indoor Air Quality:** DOH has no jurisdiction regarding outdoor air quality. Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is the lead agency in an emergency with potential environmental impacts. DOH will provide support to the DEP in educating the public as to the potential health risks and protective measures for minimizing exposure to outdoor air based on the release of known toxic substances. Provide educational materials or information to the public related to outdoor and indoor air hazards. DOH may perform indoor air quality assessments; this includes a visual inspection with recommendations. Typically, DOH has no enforcement authority.
- **Sewage and Wastewater Disposal: Sanitation:** Surveillance of sewage disposal practices. Advising the public how to provide temporary sanitary toilet and bathing facilities. Evaluation of sewer lift stations in affected areas. Residential areas and/or facility may require portable toilets, hand washing stations, dumpsters and showers. Issue advisories about dangers of storm water (floodwaters). Spills will be reported to the State Watch Office at 800-320-0519.
- **General Sanitation:** Provide surveillance and facility monitoring to help assure the safety and well-being of clients and others in public shelters. Inspect migrant labor housing, mobile home and recreational vehicle parks, and temporary housing to evaluate sewage disposal systems, water potability and other sanitary conditions.

During an extraordinary event, Department of Health (DOH) will provide communications to educate and advise Florida's residents and visitors. DOH Environmental Health Teams will support local environmental health staff.