

# **Environmental Health Services**

## **Legislative Briefing**

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**Developed by:**

**Environmental Health Services**

**Public Health and Clinical Services**

**Nevada State Health Division**

**Department of Health and Human Services**

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## BA 3194

### Public Health and Clinical Services

#### Environmental Health Services

#### Environmental Health History

Environmental health is the branch of public health that is concerned with all aspects of the natural and built environment that may affect human health. Areas of concern include food safety, sanitary processing and disposal of sewage, unsanitary conditions that result in the spread of disease and emergency response in time of crisis. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimated recently that one out of every six Americans gets sick from foodborne illnesses each year, and 3,000 die. Improperly installed or poorly maintained septic systems have often been linked to contamination of drinking water sources. From 2005-2007 there was an annual average of 385 pool and spa related drownings for children younger than 15. In a state such as Nevada, which relies heavily on tourism to survive, it is imperative that the safety of its residents and visitors be paramount.

#### Mission Statement

Environmental Health Services (EHS) is responsible for safeguarding the health of Nevada residents and visitors by preventing avoidable death and disease. From our proactive stance, we utilize the following public health protection tools: education, frequent inspections and enforcement action, when necessary. EHS establishes reasonable standards, issues permits, and operates in the following public health arenas: food establishments, drug and cosmetic manufacturers, dietary supplement manufacturers, public bathing, correctional facilities, schools, RV parks, state parks, child care facilities, private on-site sewage systems, septic pumpers and landfills. EHS staff respond to emergencies impacting public health such as food truck wrecks, floods, sewage discharge, fires, and foodborne illness outbreaks.

#### Program Staffing

The EHS program consists of 18.5 FTE positions and is comprised of a Public Health Engineer, an Environmental Health Section Supervisor, a Rating and Survey Officer, 13 Environmental Health Specialists and 2.5 Administrative Assistants. Office locations include Carson City, Fallon, Winnemucca, Elko, Ely and Las Vegas.

## Certification Requirements

Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) 625A.900 requires that a person engaged in the practice of environmental health must hold a certificate of registration as an environmental health specialist or trainee.

## Statutory Authority

The following NRS provide EHS the authority to regulate the respective public health programs:

- NRS 432A – State Health Officer designee shall inspect child care facilities annually.
- NRS 439 – Health Division shall oversee local health officers for compliance with NRS. Health Authority shall regulate bottled water.
- NRS 444 – Health Division shall regulate institutions to include Department of Corrections and Nevada System of Higher Education facilities. Health Authority shall regulate public swimming pools and spas, RV parks, temporary mass gatherings, sterilization of used bedding, labor camps, jails, schools and residential individual sewage disposal systems.
- NRS 446 - Health Authority shall regulate food establishments.
- NRS 583 – Health Division shall regulate meat and poultry.
- NRS 585 – Food and Drug Commissioner shall regulate food, drugs and cosmetics.

## Urban Services Provided

In Washoe, Clark and Carson Counties EHS regulates State Institutions, food and drug manufacturers and shellfish processors. EHS also conducts contracted inspections of FDA food processors. The following table breaks down the workload:

County	Food Establishments at State Institutions	Public Pools and Spas at State Institutions	FDA Contracted Inspections
Carson	33	1	1
Clark	266	11	26
Washoe	96	5	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>52</b>

## Rural Services Provided

EHS provides direct services in the regulation of health programs in the 14 rural Nevada counties. The following table breaks down the workload in 3 public health programs:

County	Food Establishments	School Inspections	Public Swimming pools and Spas
	Food establishments inspected annually	Schools inspected once per semester	
Churchill	168	8	15
Douglas	533	19	93
Elko	452	25	37
Esmeralda	23	3	1
Eureka	32	3	2
Humboldt	133	13	19
Lander	57	6	9
Lincoln	60	9	3
Lyon	272	19	19
Mineral	52	4	4
Nye	342	23	48
Pershing	55	4	4
Storey	72	4	8
White Pine	124	8	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>2375</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>272</b>

The residential individual sewage disposal is regulated by EHS in Elko, Nye (with the exception of Pahrump), Storey and White Pine Counties. EHS also regulates food service and sanitation at the annual Burning Man mass gathering event in Pershing County.

## Program Funding

The EHS program historically has been funded through a combination of fees and general fund. The current funding for EHS programs are as follows:

NRS/Activity	Fees	General Fund
NRS 432A/child care facilities	No	Yes
NRS 439/bottled water	Yes	No
NRS 444/sanitation	Yes	No
NRS 444/schools	No	Yes
NRS 446/food	Yes	Yes
NRS 583/meat and poultry*	No	No
NRS 585/food, drugs & cosmetics**	No	No

\* NRS 583 activities (meat and poultry) have no fees, however, the majority of facilities regulated under this NRS are permitted under NRS 446 so activities can be combined.

\*\* NRS 585 activities (food, drug and cosmetics) have no fees, however, the majority of facilities regulated under this NRS are permitted under NRS 446 so activities can be combined.

The 2012 budget proposes that the local government provide funding to the Health Division for EHS activities within their county when fee revenues do not cover program costs.

## Performance Measures

The EHS program recently completed an LCB audit which identified several program deficiencies. A new electronic inspection system (Steton) was recently implemented and along with performance monitoring, several program milestones have been reached to include:

- 100% of mandated food establishment inspections for the 2010 calendar year were completed.
- 100% of mandated bi-annual school facility inspections for the 2010 calendar year were completed.
- 100% of mandated child care facility inspections for the 2010 calendar year were completed.
- 100% of mandated school (kitchen and non-kitchen) facility inspections for the 2010 calendar year were completed.

## Challenges

Upcoming challenges for the EHS program include:

- Balancing program funding between fees and government (local, state and federal) contributions.
- Funding Public Health and Clinical Services (P) EHS activities in rural counties should select counties regionalize or locally administer health programs.
- Anticipated increases in food related inspections related to the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act due to be released in the near future.
- Implementation of the Virginia Graham Baker Pool and Spa Act (prevention of injury and death associated with drain entrapment).