Environmental Health Role in Emergencies

Veronica Bryant, Emergency Preparedness and Outbreak Coordinator



Possible roles of EHS during disaster

- Food Safety
- Potable Water
- Wastewater
- Shelters
- Vector Control
- Responder Safety
- Disaster Management
- Solid Waste and Hazardous Materials
- Building Assessments
- Population Monitoring



Source: DisasterAssistance.gov



Assessing facilities after storm

- Handout for EHS provided in preparedness manual
- EHS safety is key during a disaster
- Rely on partners: fire inspector, building inspector, etc.

Food Safety After a Storm:

A Guide for Environmental Health Specialists

Assessing Facilities

- DO NOT ENTER a building that has severe damage, contact local building authorities if there is a question about structure safety
- Avoid walking through flood waters or into areas without adequate lighting
- Check refrigerators and freezers for proper temperature, get voluntary disposal of TCS foods that have been out of temperature
- Check for signs of defrosting and refreezing in freezers (excess ice build-up, moisture on boxes)
- Ensure adequate hot and cold water is available for cleaning and handwashing
- Discuss cleaning/sanitizing procedures and make sure all food contact surfaces and utensils are sanitized if there is flooding or damage
- Make sure all ice machines and automatic beverage dispensers are emptied and sanitized if water interruption or contamination occurred
- Assess storage rooms for damaged packaged foods or single service

Questions?

Veronica Bryant Emergency Preparedness and Outbreak Coordinator (919)218-6943



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Storm Assessment of Restaurants









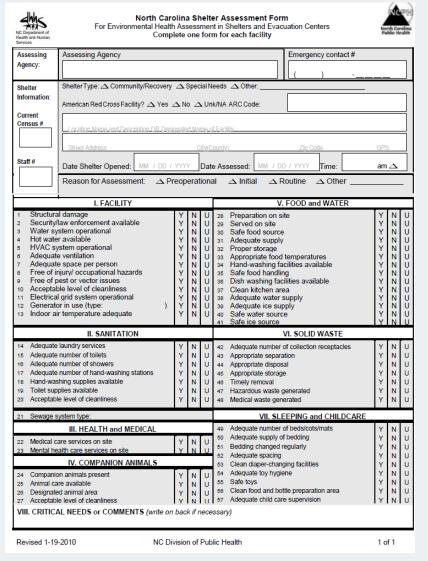
Reopening Establishments

- Must be able to meet water, power, refrigeration requirements
- Voluntarily closed vs. permit suspension
- Emergency water plans
- Prioritize use of resources
- Product disposition or embargo?



Shelter Assessments

- EHS provide assessments of shelters
- Pre-opening, initial, and routine
- Modeled after CDC shelter assessment program





Water Emergencies

- Loss of Water/Low Water Pressure: no water or insufficient water for handwashing or cleaning
- System Pressure Advisory: loss of pressure, awaiting testing
- Boil Water Advisory: positive fecal coliform or e. coli test results in water
- Do Not Use Advisory: chemical or other contaminants



Water Emergencies

- Facility cannot operate without water, or if water pressure cannot support handwashing, utensil washing
- System Pressure: can give recommendations, no requirement to close
- Boil Water Advisory: do not allow facilities to operate
- Do Not Use: do not allow facilities to operate



Emergency Take-Away Messages

- Every situation will be unique
- Be flexible and personally prepared
- Understand emotions of the situation
- Safety of EHS is priority, do not enter a situation that feels unsafe
- Follow incident command and protocols for each incident



Questions?

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919-218-6943 mobile

veronica.bryant@dhhs.nc.gov

