

# Conducting Health Surveillance in Emergency Shelters

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. What is the goal of conducting health surveillance in emergency shelters?

- The goal of health surveillance in emergency shelters is to recognize and prevent the spread of communicable diseases and outbreaks and to monitor for injuries. In the event or onset of an outbreak, control measures will be implemented to prevent the further spread of communicable diseases and prevent injuries.

### 2. What state or federal mandate requires health surveillance in emergency shelters?

- The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend health surveillance at congregate locations to identify cases of illness, injury, and exposure within mass care populations especially during an incident. The state does not mandate the surveillance of shelters. The state highly recommends that health surveillance in shelters is conducted and will support local shelter managers with the process.

### 3. What documents are needed for conducting health surveillance in emergency shelters?

- Review of the *Guidance for Conducting Health Surveillance in Shelters* and completion of the following three documents:
  - Natural Disaster Morbidity Surveillance “Individual Form”*
  - Natural Disaster Morbidity Surveillance “Summary Report”*
  - Environmental Health Assessment Form*

### 4. Where are the documents located?

- All general shelter management forms and guidance are located on the E-Preparedness eStudio in the General Population Shelter folder under Forms and Tools. The forms are also available on WebEOC in the library under “Shelter Surveillance”.

### 5. Who at the state should be contacted to discuss shelter surveillance concerns/issues?

- Shelter managers or designee can contact NH DPHS Communicable Disease hotline at 603-271-4496 when they have questions about communicable diseases; suspect an outbreak; or when three or more residents, visitors, and / or shelter workers with similar symptoms report for medical care in a 24 hour period. Additional assistance is available through the SEOC ESF 8 Desk Coordinator at 603-223-3729.

### 6. When should the “*Individual Form*” be conducted?

- The “*Individual Form*” should be completed when a shelter resident, visitor, or worker presents to the Medical Unit or First Aid Station with symptoms of or similar to a communicable disease (e.g., cough, fever, vomiting, etc.).

### 7. When should the “*Summary Report*” be conducted?

- The “*Summary Report*” should be completed using the information from the “*Individual Forms*” by the Medical Unit Leader or designee. The “*Summary Report*” should be conducted at the end of every operational period or Medical Unit shift.

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#### 8. When should the CDC's *Environmental Health Assessment Form* be conducted?

- An Environmental Health Assessment should be conducted prior to opening a shelter, daily (consider at the end of operational periods), and upon demobilization of the shelter.

#### 9. Who should complete the CDC's *Environmental Health Assessment Form*?

- The *Environmental Health Assessment Form* should be completed by the municipality's Health Officer or someone experienced with environmental / sanitation procedures.

#### 10. What forms need to be sent to the SEOC ESF 8 Desk?

- At the end of each operational period or when there is an injury or suspect communicable disease the *Summary Report* should be faxed to the SEOC ESF 8 Desk Coordinator at 603-225-7341 by the shelter manager or designee. If needed, data can also be provided through secured email, phone (landline, mobile, satellite), or HAM radio.

#### 11. How and where should the health surveillance forms be stored?

- All documents associated with shelter operations not managed by the NH Red Cross should be kept by the municipality in a designated and secured area or as advised by the municipality's legal counsel.

#### 12. What if the emergency shelter is managed by NH Red Cross? Do they conduct health surveillance?

- Yes. The NH Red Cross does conduct health surveillance when they manage a shelter. American Red Cross shelter management documents include a *Client Health Record* and a *Disaster Health Services Aggregate Morbidity Form* to capture communicable diseases and injuries. The forms are very similar to the CDC's *Natural Disaster Morbidity Surveillance "Individual Form"* and "*Summary Report*". Some information on the *Environmental Health Assessment Form* is included on the NH Red Cross *Shelter Facility Survey Form*. This form addresses much of what is needed to know prior to opening a shelter. It is also utilized at closing to determine what conditions NH Red Cross may be responsible for repairing over the course of shelter operation. NH Red Cross managed shelters follow national American Red Cross procedures for the storage of shelter management documentation.

#### 13. How can CERTs, MMRS, MRCs, or municipalities receive training on conducting health surveillance in emergency shelters?

- Training is available by contacting either Darlene or Ashley.
  - Darlene Morse** at 603-271-4494 or [darlene.m.morse@dhhs.state.nh.us](mailto:darlene.m.morse@dhhs.state.nh.us)
  - Ashley Conley** at 603-589-4552 or [conleya@nashuanh.gov](mailto:conleya@nashuanh.gov)