



Environmental Health

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End of Year Summary-2014

Program Summaries

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ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH STAFF MAKE GREAT STRIDES IN SHORT TIME

Beginning in May , Whitman County Environmental Health welcomed three new Environmental Health Technicians.

The three Environmental Health Technicians (Chelsea Cannard, Chris Skidmore, and Jeffrey Wilmoth) have recently completed their probation period and each has been recommended for promotion to Environmental Health Specialist . Program coordinators have also been granted the ability to make modifications to their individual programs and have been training the other EH Specialists in the changes and the best ways to move forward.

The emphasis on proper documentation and the creation of “user-friendly” applications and permits has greatly increased the department’s ability to not only track ongoing work assignments, but has also increased the percentage of completed applications that are received by the staff; allowing for a more efficient delivery of services.



Whitman County Environmental Health Staff:
Michael Baker (Director), Chelsea Cannard (EHS I),
Chris Skidmore (EHS I), Jeffrey Wilmoth (EHS I).

Opportunities and Challenges for Environmental Health

Environmental Health (EH) practitioners in Whitman County are on the front lines in illness prevention. We ensure the safety of food service establishments, will investigate environmental causes of food and waterborne outbreaks, and respond to environmental emergencies and other disasters. The EH programs in Whitman County are very diverse, with each staff being an overall generalist and also a coordinator for a specific EH program. In addition to food and water, the EH service system is also increasingly engaged in areas of sustainable/ongoing development, vector control, air quality, injury prevention, and climate change.

The economic downturn has placed additional strain on an already vulnerable and fragmented EH system nationwide. A recent survey by the National Association of County and City

Health Officials (NACCHO) found that more than half of the nation’s local health departments had either laid off employees or lost them through attrition and have not replaced them. Other departments, like Whitman County, have had difficulty in recruiting and retaining a stable workforce. In addition to training gaps among current EH staff and professionals, the lack of accredited EH college programs poses a challenge in meeting the demand for much-needed practitioners that can perform necessary services. As formal education in Environmental Health may not be available, Whitman County EH relies heavily on on-the-job training. This further increases the impacts caused by the turnover rate locally.

Development and Growth in Whitman County Impacts Environmental Health Services



Onsite Sewage and Septic Systems (OSS)

The Onsite Sewage Program is designed to monitor and regulate those systems that have a flow rates of less than 3,500 gallons per day. OSS that are properly designed, installed, and maintained can effectively treat residential wastewater for a long time. However, system failures can occur and are typically due to bad system designs, improper maintenance, or because the system has reached the end of its life expectancy. Overall, numbers for the onsite sewage program have increased this year in comparisons to recent years. By way of comparison:

- 2014- 76 OSS Projects
- 2013- 54 OSS Projects
- 2012- 47 OSS Projects
- 2011- 38 OSS Projects
- 2010 – 43 OSS Projects

Additionally, properties that receive a site evaluation are also moving forward with the overall process.

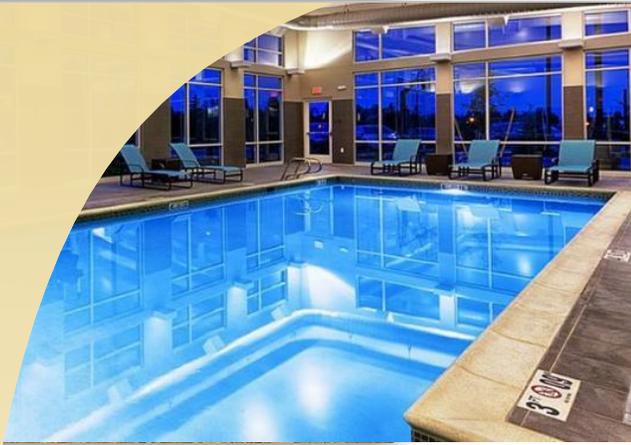
The Onsite Sewage Program Works Closely With Planning and Building Departments, Assessors Office, and Cities/Towns of Whitman County

WAC 246-272A and WAC 246-272C



- **76 Overall Onsite Sewage Projects**
- **27 O&M Assessment & Pump Reports**
- **30+ Permits**
 - 18 Repairs
 - 13 New
 - Incomplete or pending payments
- **50 Site Evaluations**
- **Planning Department**
 - 30 RHCs
 - 7 BLA
 - 23 RRSR
 - 4 Short Plats
- **Building Department**
 - 31/177

Environmental Health staff are required to travel throughout Whitman County to conduct site evaluations, construction inspection, and final inspections on all onsite sewage system located in Whitman County.



Recreational Waters

WAC 246-260 & WAC 246-262

Whitman County Living Environment Programs are designed to improve and ensure the physical safety and social well-being of Whitman County residents.

The Living Environment Programs consists of:

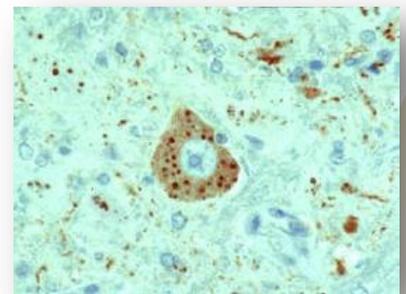
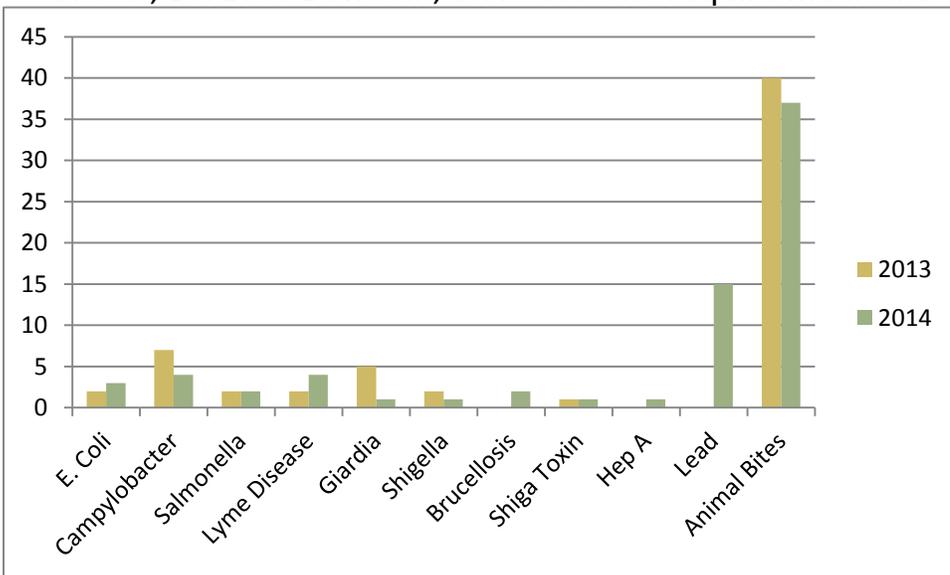
- Water Recreation facilities
- School Health and Safety
- Chemical/Physical Hazards
- Housing/Public Building
- Fraternity/Sorority Inspections (Partnership with WSU)

- ✓ 16 Water Recreation Facilities Inspected Since June 2014.
- ✓ Compliance Schedules Established for Facilities With Construction/Operational Issues
- ✓ 2 Pools Temporarily Closed Due to Chemical Levels
- ✓ New Outdoor Pool Opened (with Pullman Building Department and DOH)
- ✓ New Plans Under Review
 - Campus Commons
 - City of Pullman

Communicable Disease Investigations

WAC 246-101 & WAC 246-301

Whitman County Environmental Health staff respond to all notices from doctors' offices, hospitals, laboratories, and individuals about communicable diseases related to food, water, and environmental exposures. As needed, environmental health staff will work with the Health Officer, Dr. Brad Bowman, on issues that require medical attention or guidance.



5 Specimens Submitted to State Virology Laboratory for Rabies Confirmation (2 dogs, 2 cat, 1 cow)

Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response (PHEPR)

Environmental Health serves in the role of Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response (PHEPR) and works to improve the community's ability to respond to local disaster, including; large-scale public health emergencies, mass fatality incidents, outbreaks of infectious disease, bioterrorism, and other issues that can overwhelm the local support infrastructure. The core of the PHEPR program remains our partners. The local emphasis on building these is essential for responding to disasters in our rural communities. The primary partner in the PHEPR program is the Whitman County Department of Emergency Management. Recently a grant through Region 9 allowed for the purchase of a portable satellite phone greatly increasing the communications capabilities in rural and isolated portions of the county.



Drinking Water

WAC 246-290 & WAC 246-291

Joint inspections with Office of drinking Water

- ✓ Town of Steptoe
- ✓ Port of Wilma
- ✓ James Toyota
- ✓ Palouse Empire Fairgrounds

Drinking Water Advisory Group

Investigate and Address Citizen Complaints

Technical Assistance-Farmington

2015 Sanitary Survey List

- ✓ Dusty Country Store
- ✓ Evangelical Free Church
- ✓ Klemgard County Park

Small Water System Management Plans



The W.H.E.A.T. Team

In October, the PHEPR program began the development of the WHEAT Team. The mission of the Whitman County Health Emergency and Alerts Team (WHEAT) is to ensure the coordination of county-wide healthcare providers and Whitman County Public Health (WCPH) for the purpose of partnering in preventing, preparing, responding, and recovering from health related events that may impact the overall health of our community



- *Share Health Information*
- *Discuss Emerging Issues*
- *Identify Health Priorities*
- *Promote Healthy Behaviors*
- *Respond to Disasters*
- *Coordinate Health Response*
- *Environmental Hazards*
- *Health Services Access*

All organizations and individuals within the healthcare systems are encouraged to participate as their resources allow.



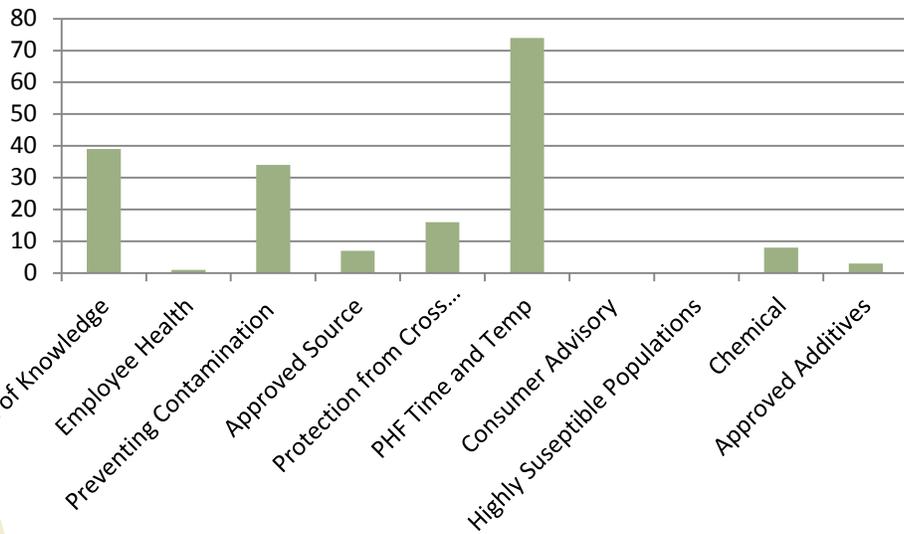
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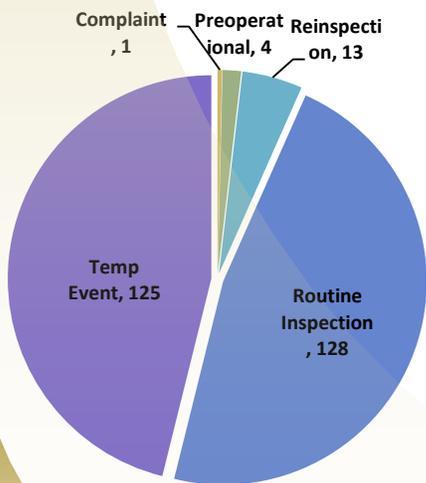
Food Protection Program

WAC 246-215 & WAC 246-217

2014 High Risk Factor Violation Citations



Inspection Summary



To date, the Food Protection Program has inspected a total of 271 Food Service Establishments including (one complaint, 4 preoperational, 13 re-inspections due to failure, and 125 temporary events)

2014 Food Program Accomplishments:

- ✓ New applications and forms to meet the State Code
- ✓ Updated FSE Database
- ✓ Regular inspection program
- ✓ Follow up and enforcement procedures
- ✓ FDA Standardization In-Person Training Completed
- ✓ 21 New Establishments/Permitted Facilities
- ✓ ServSafe Certifications
- ✓ Health Officer Meeting & Improvements

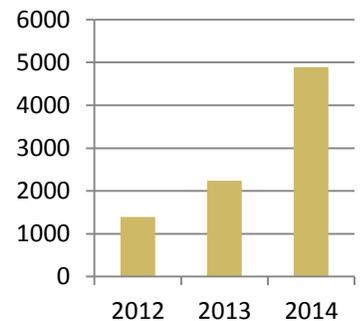
Goals for 2015:

- ✓ Risk-based inspection procedures
- ✓ Continue building on enforcement procedure
- ✓ Approved Kitchen Procedures and Policies

Online Food and Beverage Worker Cards Continues To See Growth.

The overall numbers of Food and Beverage Worker Cards (aka "food cards") has steadily increased since signing on to the online food card training in July of 2012. Historically, Whitman County has issued approximately 1, 000 annually through in-person classes. With the introduction of the online training, the numbers of cards issued has nearly doubled each year.

Food Cards Issued



trainings for large retail establishments and local service groups has allowed the Environmental health staff to remain the primary source for food safety education and information.

Staff continue to focus and build program and education based on the 2009 FDA Food Code.





Solid Waste Enforcement

WAC 173-350 & WAC 173-351

The primary role of Whitman County Environmental Health in solid waste regulation is mandated by WACs 173-350, 173-351, and the Solid Waste Management Act (RCW 70.95). The RCW requires the enforcement of the Department of Ecology's rules for solid waste facilities.

The Environmental Health staff issues permits, reviews plans, reviews operating procedures, and monitors performance of solid waste facilities including:

- Landfills
- transfer stations
- wood waste
- Inert waste facilities
- composting facilities

Complaints concerning improper disposal of solid waste, animal waste, and illegal dumping of garbage on the ground are investigated by staff and all efforts are made to alleviate the problem through requests for voluntary compliance. Enforcement action, if needed, is by civil infraction and is then referred to the Prosecutor's Office with potential fines through the Whitman County District Court.



All solid waste facilities in the County are inspected on a regular basis to ensure proper handling of wastes to prevent environmental contamination.

Currently, the following facilities are permitted:

- ✓ Carothers Road Transfer Station
- ✓ WSU Compost Facility
- ✓ Atlas Sand and Rock
- ✓ Steve Clark Inert Landfill

Each facility's permitted is reviewed and supported by the Washington State Department of Ecology. As the local liaison, Whitman County Environmental Health compliance with federal, state, and local requirements.

