



WHITMAN COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Whitman County Environmental Health

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Food Protection Program

In July 2015, the Food Protection Program Coordinator departed Whitman County. As a result, the remaining staff have been required to continue to provide inspection, permitting, and database management assistance. While all staff are cross-trained as an EH generalist, the additional time required to support the food protection program has had an impact on the other EH programs and services provided. Since the departure of the coordinator, temporary event applications have continued to rise. Nearly every weekend in July, August, and September have been spent inspecting temporary food events, including, WSU Football games, Palouse Empire Fair, Lentil Festival, and Webb's Slough Boat Races.

During the last week of August, Washington State Department of Health staff assisted/evaluated/trained EH staff in conducting inspections based on the FDA Standardization process. Food Safety Specialist Helena Barton commented that she was impressed with their level of knowledge, their confidence during inspections, and their communications with facilities.

Beginning in October, Environmental Health staff and Meghan Johns (Pullman office support staff) will begin the process of invoicing and permitting all EH programs. Additionally, as the 2015 fee schedule soon will have been in effect for a full calendar year, the overall impacts will be evaluated to determine if costs are appropriate. Recommendations will be made for the 2017 fee schedule in early 2016 (per county code).

SEPTEMBER 2015 BOH REPORT

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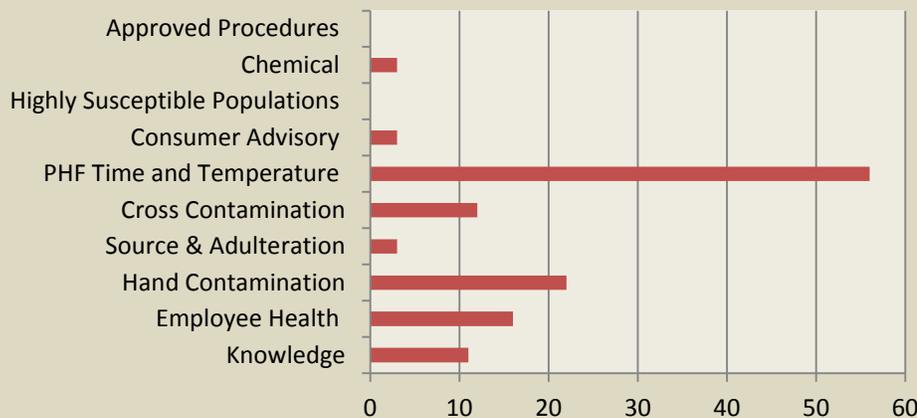
Year-To-Date Inspection Summary

- 174 Total Inspections (27 FSE)
 - Re-Inspections
 - Pre-Operational
 - Complaint-Based
 - Failed
 - Educational
 - New Establishments/Permits -5
 - Pullman-2
 - Oakesdale-1
 - St. John-2

The second round of Food Service Establishment inspections are now concentrating on high risk/complex menus and those facilities that have demonstrated an overall lack of compliance with previous inspections. Utilizing a risk-based approach, areas that are known to be an issue or a direct cause of foodborne illness will be highlighted during inspections.

Inspection Results and Violations

Red High Risk Factor Violation Citations YTD 2015



Improper holding of cold foods continues to be the primary violation observed. Cold temperatures are essential in food storage as it slows the growth of harmful bacteria found on foods. Special concern for *Listeria* and "deli foods". Food Protection Program staff identified improper techniques, equipment failures, and equipment limitations as primary causes. Educational strategies will be discussed with the Whitman County Food Advisory Committee on September 29th.

Onsite Sewage Program



Working with Department of Ecology, Environmental Health staff were able to permit an OSS that serves both a private residence as well as a future veterinary clinic outside of Palouse, WA.

Beginning in July, Onsite Sewage (OSS) numbers began to drastically increase, bringing 2015 back into average with the previous 5 years of OSS activity. While the first half of the calendar year saw record lows for permitting, the second half's drastic increase has kept Environmental Health busy.

OSS pumpers continue to submit pump reports and the database of OSS system is greatly increasing. EH staff are looking into several different options for data management, including updating existing Excel or Access databases or pre-packaged software.

OSS Permitting Summary (July-September 2015)

Total Number of Permits -9 (Year to date 15)

- Failures/Repairs- 7 (9)
- Site Evaluations- 5 (20)
- Pump Reports- 28 (68)
- Building Permits- 10(+pending) (22)
- Planning Department
 - RHC's- 5 (9)
 - Parcel Divisions-1 (5)

Air Quality Impacts Region



Regional fires in Washington and Idaho blanketed Whitman County for several days. A Public Health Advisory was issued by the Whitman County Health Officer, Dr. Brad Bowman.



The average household septic system should be inspected at least every three years by a septic service professional. Household septic tanks are typically pumped every three to five years. Alternative systems with electrical float switches, pumps, or mechanical components need to be inspected more often, generally once a year. A service contract is important since alternative systems have mechanized parts.

Four major factors influence the frequency of septic pumping:

- Household Size
- Total Water Generated
- Volume of Solids in Wastewater
- Septic tank size

Whitman County residents spent several days during August attempting to adjust to declining air quality as a result of smoke from large fires burning throughout Washington State and Idaho. The Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Ecology had the air quality listed as "unhealthy" or "hazardous" for much of the time near the end of the month. Several area events were cancelled or closely monitored for potential impacts.

Environmental Health staff worked with local partners Washington State University, Schweitzer Engineering, and Pullman Transit to assist in the development of strategies to limit the impact employees and the general public.



Environmental Health is Getting LEAN

In 2005, voters approved Initiative 900 in Washington State and as a result gave the Washington State Auditor's Office the responsibility to conduct independent performance audits of state and local government programs. The performance audits will typically examine the effectiveness and overall efficiency of a government program. The State Auditor's Office may analyze the services of the entire agency or division, compare actual agency practices against the practices called for in law or policy, seek possible cost savings, or identify the outcomes achieved by a program or service. In order to improve public service, the State Auditor's Office will provide specific actions or recommendations that will address the issues we raise, and provide valuable information to the public, program leadership and elected officials.

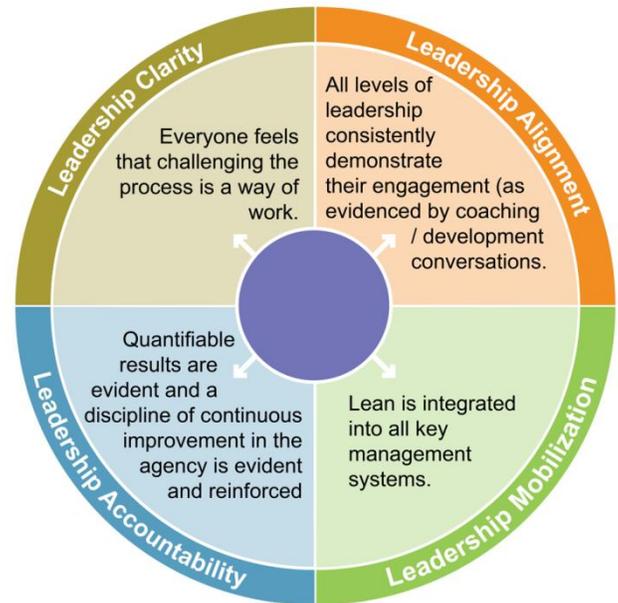
LEAN Management is basically a simplified version of the scientific method. If the data isn't there to support the work, then we shouldn't be doing it.

-Chris Skidmore

One of the most effective ways identified to help in the Performance Audit is the implementation of a LEAN Management approach. A Lean Management System is a set of principles and tools that help people identify and eliminate waste following a methodology that is ***customer focused*** and ***employee driven***. The ultimate goal is create a better work flow through the elimination of wastes.

- Lean is a process used to look for efficiencies in workflow, paper processing, number of steps in a process, etc.
- Lean focuses on processes – ***NOT*** People and is a philosophy of continuously simplifying processes and eliminating symptoms of non-value.
- Lean allows an organization to respond to changing customer demands.
- The goal is to enhance the ability to provide services in an effective and efficient manner.

It's about working *smarter*, not *harder*!



All Environmental Health Programs are currently under review to identify and develop a more effective way to deliver mandated and requested services.

Working with the Washington State Environmental Health Association, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, and the Washington State Auditor's Office, Whitman County Environmental Health staff have started the process of reviewing the way information is requested and provided as well how local environmental public health services are implemented. Whitman County Environmental Health Director Michael Baker (current WSEHA President) and Chris Skidmore (East Region Vice-President) [a position formerly held by EH staff member Chelsea Cannard] assisted in the development and delivery of the training that had a target audience of all levels of environmental health staff. Environmental Health Directors, field workers, and support staff from eastern Washington participated in the training that was originally presented in Ephrata last month. A second training will be held in Tacoma later this month. Additionally, the LEAN Management approach will be a focus of the 2016 WSEHA Annual Educational Conference.

LEAN Management is becoming a recognized process in many local public health departments as resources and sustainable funding become more difficult to secure. The motto of "Doing more with what you have" is being applied across all responsibilities.

Solid Waste



Solid waste complaints and illegal dumping continues to demand EH staff time and resources

The Waste 2 Resources' (Washington State Department of Ecology) Coordinated Prevent Grant (CPG) details have been finalized. Whitman County Environmental Health was not impacted as negatively as originally expected. For the 2015-2017 grant cycle, the Environmental Health Department received a total eligible cost of \$91,205.33. After meeting with David Nails and the Whitman County Landfill/Transfer Station, it was determined that a partnership with the Environmental Health, the Landfill, and the Palouse-Clearwater Environmental Institute would be the best way to address the reductions in funding but still allow for the educational outreach necessary as a part of the grant deliverables.

Paint Product Stewardship: During the Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) the Northwest Stewardship Council spoke to us about adopting a Paint Stewardship Program here in Whitman County.

- Product Stewardship is a policy approach that shifts financial and physical responsibility for end-of-life management of consumer products from local governments to those who benefit economically from the sale of the product they produce and to those who use the products.
- Paint is the second largest waste stream (second only to used oil) collected at hazardous waste facilities in Washington State.
- 10% of paint purchased in Washington State becomes leftover paint.

Water Recreation Facilities



All of the seasonally permitted water recreation facilities in Whitman County have received at least one full facility inspection during 2015. The top violation found by Environmental Health staff was under chlorination; which was a result of insufficient training of pool staff and/or mechanical failures of the chlorination system. Those facilities that had a Certified Pool Operator (CPO) on staff received fewer violations by way of comparison. Beginning in October 2015, Environmental Health staff will be sending letters to the outlying community pools in order to provide them with resources and information on how to apply for grant money to get improvements made to their facilities.

