



IDENTIFICATION

Department	Position Title	
Health and Social Services	Environmental Health Officer	
Position Number(s)	Community	Division/Region(s)
49-5431	Yellowknife	Population Health

PURPOSE OF THE POSITION

The Environmental Health Officer (EHO) is responsible for the protection of public health and safety through consultation, education, investigation, enforcement and delivery of a broad range of risk-based programs to control factors in the human environment that adversely affect people's health.

SCOPE

Reporting to the Chief Environmental Health Officer (Chief EHO), the EHO is appointed a Public Health Officer under the Public Health Act and an Inspector under the Tobacco Control Act. By virtue of these appointments and a delegation of responsibilities received from the Chief Public Health Officer, the incumbent has a statutory duty to enforce these Acts and accompanying regulations. The EHO works independently and can perform their duties in all regions of the NWT.

The EHO serves as a technical expert for the GNWT on environmental public health matters. The EHO implements environmental public health programs for drinking water, food service and supply, communicable disease investigation and control, air quality, solid and liquid waste disposal, community and environmental sanitation, recreational water safety, tobacco control, personal services (piercing, branding, tattoos, hair and nail establishments), disaster/emergency preparedness and response, injury prevention, environmental planning and impact analysis, long-range and local environmental contaminants, and control of any conditions likely to become injurious to public health. Program delivery occurs in settings such as restaurants, child care facilities, rental housing, water treatment plants, waste disposal sites, work camps, tourist facilities, public and non-public spaces.

EHOs are also assigned program areas or files to lead in order to build expertise and ensure continuity of program delivery within the Environmental Health Unit.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Delivers comprehensive environmental public health programs to identify and take corrective action on immediate and potential risks to public health.

- Interprets and enforces acts, regulations, standards, policies and guidelines for the protection of public health and safety, and implements progressive enforcement strategies to gain compliance.
- Assesses, responds to and mitigates risks to public health and safety by leading or assisting in responses to immediate public health and safety risks, including the following activities:
 - Conducts inspections of premises and activities, issues and rescinds permits.
 - Conducts risk assessments, gathers information and conducts investigations using the principles of risk characterization in order to meet unit objectives and policies.
 - Issues orders to mitigate real or potential risks to public health.
 - Conducts searches and seizures, lays charges, serves summons, prepares court briefs, and attends court or legal proceedings as a witness or to give expert testimony and works with legal counsel to determine appropriate penalties in the event of successful prosecutions.
 - Investigates food and water borne illnesses and human exposures to zoonotic diseases (eg., rabies) to determine cause, control spread, and takes actions to prevent future occurrences.
 - Conducts high-level risk analysis to categorize and communicate the health risk in complex circumstances.
 - Responds to complaints and inquiries as required.
- Works with colleagues and other GNWT, federal, municipal and First Nation government officials, the private and not-for-profit sectors, and others to maximize and expedite mitigations for public health and safety risks, and promote public health.

2. Provides technical expertise in accordance with professional standards, federal/territorial/municipal legislation and evidence-based best practice to ensure that NWT environmental public health program goals and objectives are met.

- Assists in the development of risk-based programs, including but not limited to the program areas listed under Scope.
- Interprets and provides advice on applicable acts, regulations, codes, policies and procedures, and conducts research on the development of these instruments.
- Reviews, assesses and approves plans and proposals. Examples include building and system plans for food establishments, water treatment plants, development proposals for mines and petroleum operations and identification of health risk associated with these developments.

- Develops and delivers educational and technical workshops, presentations and courses for target audiences such as operators of public drinking water systems, food service workers and regulatory agencies.
- Researches and develops program materials such as technical and non-technical brochures, forms, handouts and other educational materials for use by the general public or specific audiences.
- Participates in committees, working groups, conferences and public meetings that include government and non-government agencies and stakeholders.
- Participates in research projects.

3. Assists in providing operational continuity to and best practice within the Environmental Health Unit.

- Participates in cross-training and workplace safety initiatives.
- Maintains and updates knowledge in environmental health issues through methods such as reviewing literature, consultation with other professionals and attendance at relevant education programs.
- Participates in continuous quality improvement/quality assurance activities through methods such as evaluation and measurement of outcomes of programs, follow-up of unusual occurrences, identification and participation in research studies and contribution to the identification of new policies and best practices for the profession and the organization.

WORKING CONDITIONS

*(Working Conditions identify the **unusual and unavoidable**, externally imposed conditions under which the work must be performed and which create hardship for the incumbent.)*

Physical Demands

Normal office environment 50% of time. Occasional lifting of equipment and materials of up to 25 kilograms in weight is required. The incumbent is required to walk, bend, reach, drive and hike in order to conduct inspections, approximately 12 hours per month.

Environmental Conditions

The incumbent is exposed to hazardous, obnoxious and potentially infectious substances, odors and fumes, and high noise levels during inspections approximately 12 hours per month.

Potential for dog or cat bites when investigating possible human rabies exposure and when teaching lay vaccinators how to administer rabies vaccination injections.

Sensory Demands

Sight, touch, smell and hearing are required simultaneously when performing field work, which occurs 8 to 12 hours per month.

Mental Demands

Clients can be dissatisfied, emotional or potentially violent. Travel by air (commercial and small charter) and vehicle is required, and the incumbent is away from home approximately 20 nights per year.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

- Highly specialized technical knowledge of environmental health.
- Thorough knowledge of relevant legislation, policy and standards.
- Working knowledge of the judicial process.
- Decision making skills to act independently and to take appropriate action in relation to potential or existing immediate health hazards.
- Knowledge of the use of testing equipment and computer programs.
- Strong conflict resolution and negotiation skills.
- Ability to work in a cross-cultural setting.

Typically, the above qualifications would be attained by:

- A Bachelor's Degree in Environmental Health recognized by the Board of Certification, Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors. Certification as a Public Health Inspector in Canada is mandatory.
- Active membership in good standing with the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors is required.
- Continuous professional education is required to maintain competency and certification as a Public Health Inspector in Canada.
- Demonstrated 2 years of direct experience in delivery of environmental public health programs within the last 3 years.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Possession of a valid class 5 NWT driver's license is required.

Position Security (check one)

- No criminal records check required
- Position of Trust – criminal records check required
- Highly sensitive position – requires verification of identity and a criminal records check

French language (check one)

- French required
- French preferred
- French not required