



IDENTIFICATION

Department	Position Title	
Health and Social Services	Chief Environmental Health Officer	
Position Number	Community	Division/Region
49-5858	Yellowknife	Health Protection/HQ

PURPOSE OF THE POSITION

The Chief Environmental Health Officer is the territorial authority accountable for the overall integrity, effectiveness, and risk management of the environmental public health system in the Northwest Territories. This position provides strategic leadership, regulatory oversight, and executive direction for the development, implementation, and continuous improvement of environmental public health legislation, policies, and programs.

SCOPE

Located in Yellowknife, the Chief Environmental Health Officer (CEHO) reports operationally to the Director of Health Protection (Director), and functionally to the Chief Public Health Officer (CPHO), and serves as the territorial authority for environmental public health. The CEHO is appointed as a Public Health Officer under the NWT *Public Health Act* and an Inspector under the *Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Act*, *Smoking Control and Reduction Act*, *Pesticide Act*, exercising independent statutory authority to interpret, apply, and enforce legislation and regulations across the Northwest Territories (NWT).

The CEHO provides strategic leadership, authoritative advice, and recommendations to the CPHO, Deputy CPHO, Ministers, Deputy Ministers, and senior management within the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), Health and Social Services Authorities (HSSAs), and across government.

The CEHO is accountable for protecting population health outcomes across the NWT by anticipating, assessing, and mitigating complex and high-risk environmental health threats. As the GNWT's senior expert and decision-maker on environmental public health matters, the CEHO exercises statutory authority, influences territorial and national policy, and ensures that environmental public health risks are effectively managed in a manner that protects public safety, supports sustainable development, and maintains public confidence.



This position operates with a high degree of autonomy and professional discretion, ensuring that environmental public health risks are appropriately managed in a manner that protects population health while balancing legal, economic, and social considerations.

The CEHO is accountable for Environmental Health matters across the NWT, encompassing a broad and diverse range of responsibilities aimed at protecting and promoting public health.

The CEHO ensures health and safety in areas including, but not limited to:

- Drinking water quality and safety throughout production and distribution
- Food safety in all types of production, supply, processing and consumption environments
- Personal services, allied health and wellness services safety
- Communicable disease control in Environmental Public Health, including outbreak prevention and response
- Health protection programs for climate change, air quality and environmental contaminants impacts
- Waste management and sanitation and pesticide control
- Recreational water safety standards
- Tobacco, vape and smoking control across territories
- Environmental public health responses during emergencies and disasters
- Environmental public health considerations in land use and development

The incumbent directs and manages a geographically dispersed, multidisciplinary team including Environmental Health Officers and technical specialists located across multiple regions in three (3) offices (Yellowknife, Inuvik, and Hay River). The CEHO ensures consistent, risk-based program delivery in remote and diverse communities, establishes operational priorities, oversees quality and professional standards, and is accountable for an annual operating budget of approximately \$1.4 million, while also influencing broader territorial resource allocation and strategic priorities.

Operating within a highly complex, geographically dispersed, and resource-constrained environment, the CEHO makes decisions that have direct and significant implications for population health outcomes, legal and regulatory risk, economic activity, and government reputation. The incumbent routinely addresses emergent environmental public health risks under conditions of uncertainty and limited precedent, requiring analytical capability, sound judgment, and the ability to respond rapidly to evolving situations. Decisions may include the issuance of public health orders, advisories, and enforcement actions that carry immediate and long-term consequences.

The CEHO navigates competing stakeholder interests and provides leadership in complex, and often sensitive, intergovernmental and cross-sector environments. This includes collaboration



and negotiation with Indigenous governments and organizations, federal departments, municipalities, industry stakeholders, regulatory bodies, and the public.

The incumbent monitors and evaluates emerging scientific evidence, environmental trends, and regulatory developments at territorial, national, and international levels. The CEHO translates this information into strategic advice, program innovation, and legislative or policy development to address evolving environmental health risks, including those associated with climate change, infrastructure gaps, and northern development pressures.

The CEHO represents the GNWT in national and intergovernmental forums, contributing to the development of standards, regulations, and policies that shape environmental public health practice across jurisdictions. This external influence extends the impact of the role beyond territorial boundaries and ensures alignment with national best practices while advancing northern priorities.

A critical dimension of the role is advancing health equity and addressing the impacts of colonialism and systemic anti-Indigenous racism within environmental health systems. The CEHO ensures that programs, regulatory approaches, and service delivery models promote cultural safety, respect Indigenous knowledge systems, and contribute to improved health outcomes for Indigenous populations across the NWT. The CEHO holds a unique regulatory position where the incumbent will exercise enforcement and legal powers affecting any member of the public, organizations, government, including GNWT, ministers or senior officials.

Overall, the CEHO is accountable for decisions and recommendations that have territory-wide impact, where the consequences of decisions are significant, far-reaching, and enduring.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1. Uphold and consistently practice personal diversity, inclusion, and cultural awareness, as well as safety and sensitivity approaches in the workplace. Prioritize staff mentorship and on-the-job training, including staff development in annual general objectives.**
- 2. Provide Strategic Leadership and System Oversight for Environmental Public Health.**
 - Establish and articulate the territorial strategic vision, long-term priorities, and performance expectations for environmental public health programs across the NWT, ensuring alignment with departmental, governmental, and Indigenous health priorities.
 - Lead the end-to-end design, development, implementation, and continuous improvement of environmental public health legislation, regulations, policies, standards, and programs, ensuring they are integrated, evidence-informed, and responsive to northern realities.



- Proactively anticipate, identify, and assess emerging and re-emerging environmental public health risks, including those associated with climate change, industrial and resource development, infrastructure gaps, and changing population health patterns, and determine appropriate system-level mitigation and response strategies.
- Ensure the integration of scientific evidence, regulatory best practices, and culturally appropriate approaches, including meaningful collaboration with Indigenous governments and communities, and the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge systems into program and policy design.
- Define, implement, and monitor territorial performance indicators, quality standards, and outcome measures, ensuring accountability for program effectiveness, risk reduction, and population health outcomes.
- Provide leadership in aligning environmental public health programs with broader health system transformation initiatives, ensuring integration across public health, primary care, and community-based services.
- Align the Territorial Environmental Public Health Programs with national best practices and make updates to reflect the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors (CIPHI) policy and practice update for professional practice.
- Ensure representation and bilateral collaboration with CIPHI National and CIPHI Alberta/Northwest Territories/Nunavut branch.

3. Exercise Statutory Authority and Provide Expert Decision-Making.

- Exercise independent statutory authority under the *Public Health Act* and *Tobacco and Vapour Product Control Act* to interpret, apply, and enforce environmental public health legislation, including making binding, high-impact decisions in complex, high-risk, and time-sensitive situations.
- Determine, authorize, and oversee regulatory compliance and enforcement actions, including inspections, orders, closures, advisories, and penalties, ensuring decisions are consistent, proportionate, evidence-based, and legally defensible.
- Provide authoritative interpretation of legislation, standards, and regulatory frameworks, resolving complex, ambiguous, or unprecedented issues where precedents may be limited or non-existent.
- Oversee or directly adjudicate matters subject to appeal, review, or legal scrutiny, ensuring procedural fairness, transparency, and adherence to legislative and administrative law requirements.
- Serve as the territorial subject matter authority on environmental public health risks, providing expert direction and guidance during routine operations, high-risk inspections, and public health incidents or emergencies.
- Balance public safety, regulatory compliance, economic considerations, and stakeholder impacts when making decisions with significant legal, social, and economic implications.



4. Influence Policy, Legislation, and Intergovernmental Initiatives.

- Lead and direct the development, modernization, and amendment of environmental public health legislation, regulations, standards, and guidelines to address evolving risks and align best practices and emerging evidence.
- Provide strategic, evidence-based policy advice and recommendations to senior leadership, including the Director, CPHO, Deputy Minister, and Minister, influencing high-level decision-making and government direction.
- Represent the GNWT as the environmental public health authority in territorial, national, and intergovernmental forums, committees, and working groups.
- Influence federal, provincial/territorial, and national policy and standard-setting processes, ensuring that NWT perspectives, priorities, and unique northern contexts are reflected in broader frameworks and agreements.
- Lead and support intergovernmental negotiations and collaborations, including engagement with Indigenous governments, federal departments, municipalities, and regulatory agencies on shared environmental health priorities and risks.
- Integrate environmental public health considerations into land use planning, environmental assessment processes, infrastructure development, and resource extraction projects, ensuring potential risks are identified and mitigated early.
- Supporting activities of the above responsibility.

5. Lead Environmental Public Health Response during Emergencies and advise Emergency Management Leadership.

- Provide strategic and operational leadership in anticipating, planning for, and responding to environmental public health emergencies and incidents, including disease outbreaks, contamination events, and infrastructure failures.
- Direct the development, implementation, and continuous refinement of emergency response plans, protocols, and coordination mechanisms, ensuring alignment with Environmental Public Health management frameworks.
- Make rapid, high-stakes decisions under conditions of uncertainty, incomplete information, and significant time pressure, balancing public safety, operational feasibility, and legal and stakeholder considerations.
- Lead multi-jurisdictional environmental public health responses involving Indigenous governments, federal partners, municipalities, and other agencies, ensuring a cohesive and effective approach to risk mitigation.
- Lead risk communication strategies, ensuring timely, accurate, and transparent communication with the public, media, stakeholders, and leadership during high-profile or sensitive situations.
- Evaluate post-incident outcomes and incorporate lessons learned into Environmental Health system improvements, policy adjustments, and preparedness planning.



6. Direct Organizational Leadership and Resource Management.

- Provide strategic leadership to a multidisciplinary, geographically dispersed team of environmental health professionals, fostering a high-performing, accountable, and collaborative organizational culture.
- Establish clear roles, expectations, and performance standards, while supporting professional autonomy and ensuring consistency in decision-making and service delivery across regions.
- Lead workforce planning, recruitment, retention, and professional development strategies, ensuring the sustainability of specialized expertise in a challenging northern environment.
- Oversee financial planning, budgeting, and resource allocation, ensuring effective stewardship of public funds and alignment with strategic priorities and risk-based approaches.
- Identify and address resource gaps, operational pressures, and emerging demands, making informed trade-offs and recommendations to senior leadership to optimize system performance.
- Ensure compliance with human resource policies, collective agreements, occupational health and safety standards, and financial management requirements, while maintaining operational effectiveness.
- Promote a workplace culture that advances cultural safety, anti-racism, and respect for Indigenous perspectives, ensuring inclusive and equitable service delivery and professional practice.

7. Develop and deliver public communication on Environmental Public Health programs, developments and emerging issues.

- Provide strategic leadership for the development and delivery of clear, accurate, and timely public communications related to environmental public health programs, regulatory actions, and emerging risks across the NWT.
- Oversee the design and implementation of proactive communication strategies that enhance public awareness, understanding, and confidence in environmental public health programs, ensuring messaging is evidence-based, accessible, and culturally appropriate.
- Serve as a trusted and authoritative spokesperson on environmental public health matters, communicating complex technical information to diverse audiences, including the public, media, Indigenous governments, stakeholders, and senior leadership.
- Lead risk communication during environmental public health incidents and emergencies, ensuring that messaging is timely, transparent, coordinated, and responsive to evolving situations and public concerns.
- Ensure that communication approaches reflect cultural safety principles and incorporate Indigenous perspectives, knowledge systems, and languages where appropriate, supporting equitable access to information across diverse communities.



- Collaborate with communications specialists, senior leadership, and intergovernmental partners to align messaging, manage sensitive or high-profile issues, and maintain consistency across government and jurisdictions.
 - Anticipate and manage reputational risks associated with environmental public health issues, providing strategic advice to leadership on communication approaches that balance transparency, public reassurance, and legal considerations.
 - Monitor public, stakeholder, and media responses to environmental public health messaging, and use insights to continuously improve communication strategies and approaches.
 - Ensure compliance with legislative, policy, and privacy requirements in all public communications, while maintaining the integrity and credibility of the environmental public health system.
- 8. Participate in intergovernmental policy, programs and activities by leading the development of and/or providing DHSS and OCPHO positions and perspectives on shared policy and initiatives.**
- Represent the GNWT at Federal/Provincial/Territorial (FPT) meetings related to Environmental Public Health and pan - Canadian initiatives.
 - Lead DHSS contributions for the development of both internal and national initiatives that support modernized NWT public health surveillance and health protection systems.
 - Liaise with FPT counterparts in the preparation of joint policy papers.
 - Lead the research, analysis, and development of recommendations on key issues with legislative or policy implications for DHSS.
 - Ensure completion of commitments made at relevant FPT tables.
 - Coordinate the review and development of interdepartmental/governmental protocols and agreements.
 - Maintain constant and effective communication with colleagues across the GNWT and all other jurisdictions.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Physical Demands

No unusual demands.

Environmental Conditions

During field assessment work, the incumbent may be exposed to hazardous, obnoxious and potentially infectious substances, odours and fumes, and high noise levels during inspections, approximately 8 to 12 hours per month.



Sensory Demands

No unusual demands.

Mental Demands

Travel by air (commercial and small charter) and vehicle is required, and the incumbent would be away from home approximately 20 nights per year.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

- Knowledge of environmental public health science, regulatory systems, and risk assessment methodologies.
- Knowledge and skills relating to research methodologies, epidemiology, evaluation and assessment techniques and interpretations of highly scientific knowledge on human health risk assessment.
- Knowledge and understanding of Indigenous rights, governance, and community priorities to ensure environmental health programs are culturally appropriate, responsive, and aligned with broader health equity objectives.
- Legislative and policy knowledge and application, including the ability to read and interpret legislation, regulation, and policy, and to understand the impact of policy changes on programs and services
- Knowledge of Northern and remote environmental public health system and context of shared responsibility with various stakeholders.
- Knowledge of and/or the ability to acquire and apply knowledge of the impacts that colonization, institutional and structural racism and biases have had on society and the Indigenous populations.
- Analytical and conceptual thinking skills, including the ability to develop innovative solutions where limited precedent exists.
- Interpersonal, leadership and communication skills to advise senior leadership, engage stakeholders, represent the organization publicly, and build effective partnerships.
- Leadership, decision making and management skills including decision making skills; the ability to assign, delegate, and coordinate work assignments and projects; and ability to manage conflicting and rapidly changing priorities.
- Ability to interpret and apply legislation, including enforcement and compliance frameworks.
- Ability to influence policy, legislation, and decision-making at senior organizational and intergovernmental levels.
- Ability to provide strategic leadership in complex, ambiguous, and high-risk environments.
- Ability to balance competing priorities, stakeholder interests, and political considerations.
- Negotiation and diplomacy skills in order to calmly and assertively express and defend the views of the GNWT, OCPHO and DHSS.

- Ability to commit to actively upholding and consistently practicing personal diversity, inclusion and cultural awareness, as well as safety and sensitivity approaches in the workplace.

Typically, the above qualifications would be attained by:

A master's degree in the field of Environmental Public Health or a related healthcare field and five (5) years of senior environmental public health officer experience, including one (1) year of supervisory or team lead experience..

Equivalent combinations of education and experience will be considered.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Certification as a Public Health Inspector in Canada issued by the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors is mandatory.

Active membership in good standing and continuous professional education is required to maintain competency and certification as a Public Health Inspector in Canada.

Valid Class 5 NWT Driver's License is required

Position Security

- ☐ 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 if applicable)

- ☐ French required (must identify required level below)
 Level required for this Designated Position is:
 ORAL EXPRESSION AND COMPREHENSION
 Basic (B) ☐ Intermediate (I) ☐ Advanced (A) ☐
 READING COMPREHENSION:
 Basic (B) ☐ Intermediate (I) ☐ Advanced (A) ☐
 WRITING SKILLS:
 Basic (B) ☐ Intermediate (I) ☐ Advanced (A) ☐
- ☐ French preferred

Indigenous language: Select language

- ☐ Required
- ☐ Preferred