Short Course

Environmental Health and Disaster Management (27 and 28 June 2013)

Facilitated by:

Dr Peter Davey, President, International Federation of Environmental Health
Ben Ryan, Director, Disaster Risk Reduction, International Federation of Environmental Health

Short Course Objectives

- Demonstrate how environmental health infrastructure and practices are linked to healthy cities, communities and healthy people.
- Provide an overview of key environmental health urban and regional infrastructure and how this can be affected by natural disasters and climate change.
- Understand what should be considered to mitigate the environmental health risks after a disaster.
- Provide guidance on responding, assessing and addressing the environmental health impacts of a disaster using a population-based focus.

Background

There has been a steady increase in the quantity and frequency of disasters in the past few decades. During the last quarter century, more than 3.4 million lives have been lost due to disasters, with billions more affected, and tens of billions of dollars spent on repairing damage and reconstructing lives. Between 1980 and 2005, 90 per cent of the natural disasters, 72.5 per cent of casualties and 75 per cent of economic losses were caused by weather, climate and water related hazards such as droughts, floods, windstorms, tropical cyclones, storm surges, extreme temperatures, landslides and wild fires, or by health epidemics and insect infestations.

Good environmental health disaster management has a significant role in addressing the impact of disasters on environmental health infrastructure and consequently the public. This includes protecting and mitigating risks to systems required for general health and wellbeing, such as water supply, food safety, sewerage, waste management and stormwater.

As the world’s population and density continues to increase, the risk disasters pose to environmental infrastructure and conditions will continue to rise. Furthermore, increased urbanisation and industrialisation place a greater proportion of the world community at risk with the majority of the population migrating to urban disaster-prone areas that are often without an adequate level of environmental health protective infrastructure.

This short course will aim to identify the critical role you may have in mitigating environmental health risks during a response to a disaster. This includes the need to conduct assessments to identify and address key risks such as those relating to drinking water, shelters, overcrowding, food safety, wastewater, disease-causing vectors, solid waste and hazardous materials. Many of these risks are within the existing roles of many environmental and health professionals, however, a disaster response has unique challenges and a specific skill set is required from a range of professions and all levels of government.

The content of the short course will be guided by a partnership between the Malaysian Association of Environmental Health, Public Health College Kuching, International Federation of Environmental Health, Griffith University and the successful Environmental Health Training in Emergency Response (EHTER) Course run by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention across the USA.

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Thursday 27 June 2013 – Disasters and their impact on environmental health

08.30-09.00  Welcome and Introductions  
Dr Peter Davey, President, International Federation of Environmental Health

09.00-09.30  Theme: Planning  
Community based planning and disaster management  
Dr Peter Davey, President, International Federation of Environmental Health

09.30-10.30  Theme: Environmental health considerations  
Environmental health aspects of disasters  
Mr Ben Ryan, Director, Disaster Risk Reduction, International Federation of Environmental Health

10.30-11.00  Break

11.00-12.15  Theme: Disaster management Arrangements  
Disaster Management Arrangements and environmental health  
Local presenter

12.15-13.00  Lunch

13.00-14.00  Food safety

14.00-14.45  Waste water

14.45-15.00  Break

15.00-16.15  Waste management

Friday 28 June 2013 – Environmental health issues in disasters

9.00-9.45  Drinking water

9.45-10.30  Shelters

10.30-10.45  Break

10.45-11.30  Vectors and pests

11.30-12.30  Disaster response strategies and exercise

12.15-13.00  Award ceremony, lunch and close

Target Audience
Environmental health specialists, professionals and students who plan to broaden their understanding of the role environmental health has during the preparedness and response phases of disaster management. Participants can be from the local, provisional, state, federal, international and private sectors.

Course Cost
AUD$150 – Full Registration
AUD$100 – Members of the Malaysian Environmental Health Association
Public Health College Kuching staff and students – complimentary (fee is being subsidised by the college)
*Includes course materials, lunch and certificate of completion

Registration
See www.ifeh.org

Further Information
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In partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), USA