Short Course

Introduction to Environmental Health and Disasters (6 and 7 February 2014)

Facilitated by:
Dr Peter Davey, President, IFEH
Ben Ryan, Director, Disaster Risk Reduction, Asia-Pacific, IFEH
Tim Hatch, Alabama Department of Health; Director, Disaster Risk Reduction, Americas, IFEH

Short Course Objectives

• Introduce 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 decades1. 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 lives2. 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 infestations3.

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 infrastructure4.

This short course will introduce 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 is guided by a partnership between the International Federation of Environmental Health (IFEH), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Environmental Health Association (USA), Environmental Health Australia and Redland City Council.

Please note: This course provides an introduction to the Environmental Health and Disaster Management course held annually in Townsville.

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

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

Location: Redland IndigiScapes Centre, 17 Runnymede Rd, Capalaba QLD 4157

Thursday 6 February 2014

08.30-09.30 Welcome and introductions
   Dr Peter Davey, President, International Federation of Environmental Health
   Ben Ryan, Director, Disaster Risk Reduction, International Federation of Environmental Health
   Tim Hatch, Alabama Department of Health (CDC nominee); Director, Disaster Risk Reduction, Americas, IFEH

9.30-10.30 Environmental health aspects of disasters
10.30-11.00 Break
11.00-11.30 Bushfires and environmental health
11.30-12.00 Queensland disaster management arrangements
12.00-12.30 Responder safety
12.30-13.15 Lunch
13.15-14.00 Waste water
14.00-14.45 Food safety
14.45-15.00 Break
15.00-17.00 Solid waste and debris

Friday 7 February 2014

8.30-9.15 Situational awareness
9.15-10.00 Local city/community planning and links with disaster management
10.30-11.00 Break
11.00-11.45 Vectors and pests
11.45-12.45 Evacuation centres and shelters
12.45-13.30 Lunch
13.30-14.15 Drinking water
14.15-16.00 Disaster response strategies and exercise

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
EHA Member $550 including GST
Non-member $770 including GST

Registration
See www.eh.org.au

Further Information
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