

511-6-1-.09 CERTIFICATION AND STANDARDIZATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PERSONNEL

Responsibilities and Requirements

Environmental Health Specialists (EHS) who have been assigned food service program responsibilities will complete food safety certification and standardization as well as obtain 20 continuing education hours prior to undergoing re-standardization.

Food Safety Certification

Completion of a Certified Food Safety Manager (CFSM) training program that has a professionally validated exam (accredited by the Conference of Food Protection) (CFP) is required prior to EHS conducting independent food service program activities. The CFP website has the accredited programs listed. There is a link from the state's website at www.georgiaeh.us to access the accredited course providers. This certification requirement in Rule .09 ensures each EHS at least meets the same requirements as the managers in food service establishments who are required to obtain this same ce

rtification. A copy of the certificate should be in each EHS' file that is assigned food service program responsibilities. As a minimum requirement, EHS will not conduct routine food service program activities without this CFSM certification.

Standardization

Standardization is a procedure to verify that EHS have the capacity to carry-out their assigned duties and responsibilities within the role of a Standardized Food Service Establishment Inspection Officer. This verification is demonstrated through the process of testing their knowledge, skills and abilities to properly apply the food service rules and regulations, use essential equipment, and exhibit necessary communication skills in conducting a risk-based food service establishment inspection. Each EHS must complete this process within two years of acquiring food service program responsibilities. After the two years expires, EHS will not conduct food service establishment inspections without first obtaining the Standardized Food Service Establishment Inspection Officer certification. During the two years prior to standardization, all assigned work conducted within the food service program must be reviewed and signed-off by a Standardized Food Service Establishment Inspection Officer holding a valid certificate. Also, a copy of the current certificate will be maintained within the EHS' personnel file at their place of employment. District Standard-Trainers will notify the State Environmental Health Office of certificate issuance so as to maintain a state database backup of EHS standardization certification. Standardization requirements, procedures and timeframes for completion are outlined in the Georgia Standardization Procedure Manual. Failure to complete the Standardization process within the allotted timeframe, once the process begins, will result in recycling the Candidate to start the process from the beginning.

Re-standardization of EHS by District Standard-Trainers will be scheduled by each District's Environmental Health Director. This scheduling should be staggered so as to complete the re-

standardization process within a three to five year time period. In this way, all of the county EHS staff will not need to be re-standardized at the same time and the District Standard-Trainers will have sufficient time to carry-out this important function. Certificates expire 5 years from date of issuance. Re-standardization requirements, procedures and timeframes for completion are outlined in the Georgia Standardization Procedure Manual. Failure to complete the Re-standardization process within the allotted timeframe, once the process begins, will result in recycling of the Candidate to start the process from the beginning.

Standardization of District Standard-Trainers

EHS who will be executing the role of a District Standard-Trainer will be standardized by a State Environmental Health Office Standard-Trainer and will earn a Standardized Food Service Establishment Inspection and Training Officer Certificate. District Standard-Trainers must be designated by their applicable District Environmental Health Director. District Environmental Health Directors must keep the State Environmental Health Office's Food Service Program Director up-to-date of District Standard-Trainer designations.

Re-Standardization of District Standard-Trainers

Re-Standardization of District Standard-Trainers will be conducted by the State Environmental Health Office Standard-Trainers. Failure to be re-standardized by the State Environmental Health Office will disqualify the District Standard-Trainer from standardizing EHS and from performing food service program duties and responsibilities.

District Standardization Self-Assessment

Each Health District will conduct self-assessments of its standardized risk based food service establishment inspection program annually. Using methodologies established by the State Environmental Health Office, District Standard-Trainers will examine food service inspection reports and send data to the State Environmental Health Office for processing. A report will be generated for each Health District for District Standard-Trainers to evaluate. Occurrences of standardization trends noted may be addressed by District Standard-Trainers through at a minimum of mentoring and instruction of county EHS staff.

District Standard-Trainer Support and Training

State Standard-Trainers will mentor District Standard-Trainers by reviewing district standardization of county EHS staff. The standardization documents of the first EHS standardized by each newly standardized District Standard-Trainer will be reviewed by a State Standard-Trainer. This review of documents is a continuation of training and feedback support for newly standardized District Standard-Trainers. In addition, the State Environmental Health State Office will continue to provide support and training to all District Standard-Trainers through its provision of statewide, educational-seminars given at least once each year. These seminars will focus on the self-assessment process of district standardized EHS food service establishment inspection activities, feedback on self-assessments by districts, the provision of up-to-date training on the EHS standardization process, and any other pertinent material deemed relevant by the Food

Service Program Director. These steps to support District Standard-Trainers will help to provide uniformity throughout the state of Georgia in maintaining uniform food service establishment risk-based inspections. By doing so, the state food service program should be enabled to fulfill its mission of reducing the occurrence of foodborne illness through reduction in the occurrence of foodborne illness risk factors.

State Environmental Health Office District Assessment Processing and Reporting; Verification Assessment; and Reporting and Corrective Action Protocols

The State Environmental Health Office will examine district EHS standardization activities, the frequency of risk factor violations, and surveys of county assessment reports. Through such verification activities, the State Environmental Health Office will assess the weakness and strengths of its food service program. This verification activity will allow the State Environmental Health Office to provide needed training and support. These support functions are aimed at improving the food service program's effectiveness in reducing the occurrence of risk factors for foodborne illness thereby, resulting in the reduction of the occurrence of foodborne illness itself.

Food Safety Related Continuing Education Unit (CEU) Credit:

An EHS with a Standardized Food Service Establishment Inspection Officer Certificate or Standardized Food Service Inspection and Training Officer Certificate may continue inspections of food service establishments after their first two years of employment provided that they maintain Food Safety Related Credit (CEU). Specific courses taken cannot be repeated in the cycle for CEU credit. This requirement for the course work not to be repeated is so that EHS will have the opportunity to be exposed to new information on a periodic basis. At least 20 CEUs will be required for EHS prior to re-standardization. Therefore the 20 CEUs must be obtained any time within the 5 year period or prior to re-standardization whichever comes first. All CEUs must be approved by the State Office prior to being applied to the EHS records. We will move to a system in which 1 hour training will equal 1 Continuing Education Unit or CEU.

Guidelines For Continuing Education Unit (CEU) Credit

Organization Submittal For Food Service Program CEU Credit: One credit hour is assigned for each one hour segment of continuing education lecture or exhibit attendance directly related to the food service program such as but not limited to food service plan review training, foodborne illness investigations (FBI), or inspection training courses. In addition, soft skills course training that enhances an EHS ability to work in the food service program such as communications skills, conflict resolution, active listening, etc. will receive credit. Any intended CEU training must receive prior approval from the State EH office prior to the EHS attending to ensure that he or she will receive continuing education units for the course (i.e. to ensure credit can be awarded for the course, please submit approval request prior to participation). Only training or lecturing time provided by course instructors will be counted toward CEU credit hours. Breaks, meal times, registration times, etc., do not count toward continuing education credit totals.

If a Health Authority is sponsoring the training, it will be responsible for submitting a completed application (Form K-19) for continuing education to the Department of Public Health,

Environmental Health Section for continuing education approval prior to the training event. At the conclusion of the training event, the sponsoring organization is responsible for submitting a list of participants on forms provided by the Department for record keeping (Form K-20).

FDA/ORAU Training: FDA ORAU training transcripts such as but not limited to food service plan review training, foodborne illness investigations (FBI), or inspection training courses will automatically be accepted as CEU credit to EHS standardization certification. The CEU's will be issued based upon that equivalent to contact hours issued by the training agency. Attendance certificates or other training agency documentation indicating contact hours awarded will be evaluated by the State Environmental Health Office.

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See the following list of FDA/ORAU Training Courses.

TITLE OF COURSE	COURSE #	METHOD	CEUs Awarded
Prevailing Statutes, Regulations, Ordinances			
Basic Food Law for State Regulators	FDA35	online	1
Basics of Inspection: Beginning an Inspection	FDA38	online	2
Basics of Inspection: Issues & Observations	FDA39	online	2
Food Code*		online	
PUBLIC HEALTH PRINCIPLES			
Public Health Principles	FDA36	online	2
COMMUNICATION SKILLS			
Active Listening Skills ^G	EHS02	online	
Communication Skills for Regulators*		online	
MICROBIOLOGY			
Food Microbiological Control 1:			
Overview of Microbiology	MIC01	online	1
Food Microbiological Control 2A:			
Gram-Negative Rods	MIC02	online	1
Food Microbiological Control 2B:			
Gram-Positive Rods & Cocci	MIC03	online	2
Food Microbiological Control 3:			
Foodborne Viruses	MIC04	online	1
Food Microbiological Control 4:			
Foodborne Parasites	MIC05	online	2
Food Microbiological Control: Mid-Series Exam	MIC16	online	
Food Microbiological Control 5:			
Controlling Growth Factors	MIC06	online	2
Food Microbiological Control 6:			
Control by Refrigeration & Freezing	MIC07	online	1
Food Microbiological Control 7A:			
Control by Thermal Processing	MIC08	online	2
Food Microbiological Control 7B:			
Control by Pasteurization	MIC09	online	2
Food Microbiological Control 7C:			
Control by Retorting	MIC10	online	2
Food Microbiological Control 8:			
Technology-Based Food Processes	MIC11	online	2
Food Microbiological Control 9: Natural Toxins	MIC12	online	2
Food Microbiological Control 10: Aseptic Sampling	MIC13	online	2
Food Microbiological Control 11:			
Good Manufacturing Practices	MIC14	online	2
Food Microbiological Control 12:			
Cleaning & Sanitizing	MIC15	online	2

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TITLE OF COURSE	COURSE #	METHOD	CEUs Awarded
EPIDEMIOLOGY			
Food-borne illness Investigations 1: Collecting Surveillance Data	FI01	online	2
Food-borne illness Investigations 2: Beginning the Investigation	FI02	online	2
Food-borne illness Investigations 3: Expanding the Investigation	FI03	online	2
Food-borne illness Investigations 4: Conducting a Food Hazard Review	FI04	online	2
Food-borne illness Investigations 5: Epidemiological Statistics	FI05	online	2
Food-borne illness Investigations 6: Final Report	FI06	online	2
HACCP			
Basics of HACCP: Overview of HACCP	FDA16	online	1
Basics of HACCP: Prerequisite Programs & Preliminary Steps	FDA17	online	1
Basics of HACCP: The Principles	FDA18	online	1

Institutional Training: Educational institutions may provide professional development training for Environmental Health Specialists (EHS). EHS must complete a K-19 form entitled, “Application for Certification of Continuing Education Units for Environmental Health Specialists Working in the Food Service Program” and submit it with supporting documentation to the Department of Public Health, Environmental Health Section for review prior to taking the course. The Department of Public Health, Environmental Health Section will respond as to whether the course will be awarded CEU units as well as the amount of CEUs that may be awarded upon successful completion.

Records of EHS Credentials: Records of Training, Standardization, and CEU Credit shall be maintained in the office where each EHS works. Copies of such records will be maintained at the discretion of the Department of Public Health/ Environmental Health Office.