

# GRANT COUNTY

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# HEALTH DISTRICT

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## GRANT COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH REPORT Fourth Quarter 2009

### **FTE's in Environmental Health**

5 FTE are employed as Environmental Health Specialists

These 5 staff members administer all the Environmental Health Programs described in this report. Included in this number are 1 Spanish speaker and the Director

Each environmental health staff member has multiple responsibilities. Assigned inspections may sometimes be delayed when more urgent unplanned activities require attention such as disease investigation. Each staff member strives to set priorities of service to the public based on the potential risk to human health and the needs of individual clients.

At the beginning of each year, a report of environmental health goals for coming year is prepared. The intent of this report is to show in qualitative and quantitative terms what progress is being made to realize those objectives.

### **WATER PROGRAM**

The GCHD is responsible to verify that each new home or business requiring a building permit from the Grant County Building Department has an adequate supply of potable water and to evaluate the quality of the water source. The other major activity is the survey of Group A water systems which is funded by contract with DOH.

The Health District has also received money for conducting surveys and other work with Group B water systems. The contract for work with Group B water systems will end June 30, 2009 and will not be renewed. .

**Goal:** To assure that water consumed for domestic use is not a source of disease by providing education to the public to assure that minimum water quality standards established by the Washington State DOH are followed.

### **Objectives for 2009:**

- A. Group B program activities to be completed by June 30
  1. Conduct a workshop for operators of Group B water systems.  
This was held June 3.
  2. Send notification of monitoring requirements to Group B water system operators
  3. Complete the survey of 3 water systems. This was completed.

B. Group A water system activities

1. Complete a sanitary survey for 16 assigned Group A water systems during 2009  
All surveys were completed by November.
2. Complete special purpose investigations and well site inspections as requested by DOH.  
21 well site inspections for public water system applications were completed in 2009.

C. Other water program responsibilities.

1. Allow staff members to attend training required to maintain certification to conduct water system surveys. 5 staff members are certified by the Washington Department of Health as qualified to conduct public water system sanitary surveys. Certification training is required every 3 years
2. Review applications and approve creation of new Group B water systems having less than 5000 gal/day withdrawal.  
15 new Group B water systems were approved in Grant County in 2009, 13 by GCHD and 2 by DOH, Office of Drinking Water.

**FOOD PROGRAM**

The GCHD is required by WAC 246-215 to license and inspect all food establishments within Grant County. Permit fees support this and related work such as illness investigation.

**Goal:** Provide education to the public and to food establishments regarding safe methods to prepare, store, and serve food. Prevent the occurrence of illness resulting from consumption of food from public food establishments.

**Objectives:**

- A. Establish a monthly food inspection goal for each staff member and complete that number throughout the year.  
For complex food service establishments requiring two annual inspections, 282 of 294 were completed Jan-June. 294 of 300 food establishments requiring 2 inspections per year were inspected July-December.  
Jan-Dec, 2009, 261 of 280 food establishments requiring one inspection/year were visited.
- .B. Inspect the operation of all temporary food establishments requiring a permit.
  - 920 temporary food permits were issued from Jan-Dec, 2009.
  - 722 temporary food permits were issued in 2008.
- C. Review plans, conduct pre-opening inspections, and issue permits for new businesses.  
64 food service businesses either changed ownership or opened for the first time during 2009. 9 of these occurred during the fourth quarter.

Food worker cards

- 4279 people were issued a food service worker permit Jan-Dec, 2009.
- This is proportional to the number of cards given in 2007 and 2008, 4539 and 4297 respectively.

- For most employees, the food worker card class is the only instruction they receive. This requirement receives emphasis during all food inspections.

Re-inspections

- Of the 275 food inspections completed Oct-Dec 2009. 10% required a re-inspection and 4% a second re-inspection.
- Throughout 2009, the average rate for first and second re-inspections was 14% and 4% respectively.

**SEWAGE PROGRAM**

Septic system permit work and land development evaluations are generally fee supported. This activity is the largest source of revenue for Environmental Health and requires the greatest amount of time.

**Goal:** There will be no illness resulting from exposure to effluent from on-site sewage disposal system

**Objectives:**

- A. Septic systems are designed according to requirements of WAC 246-272.
  - The designers' report of soil conditions is reviewed on site for each application.
  - All submitted designs are reviewed for accuracy before a permit is issued.
- B. Septic systems will not fail within 10 years of installation
  - An operation and maintenance manual is required for all new alternative septic systems.
  - The installer of the septic system is required to have a copy of the permit and the design at the site available to him during all phases of construction.
  - An as-built drawing is required from the installer at the time of final inspection.
  - An inspection of the completed installation is done by staff member before any portion of it is covered
- C. Applications for plats and other land development will not be recommended for approval until suitability for water and sewage treatment facilities are established.

	New Permits	Repairs	Site Evaluations Only	Existing System
Total Jan-Dec/09	167	33*	46	80
Total 2008	268	31	224	102
Total 2007	363	43		138`

\*None of these repairs were for systems less than 10 years old

Revenue from OSS program fees: _____	<u>Total Sewage</u>	<u>Total Food</u>
2009	\$124,853	\$293,370
2008	\$227,338	\$282,812
2007	\$274,527	\$236,600
2006	\$288,500	\$221,827

**SOLID WASTE PROGRAM**

There are two primary activities

1. Permitting of landfills, land application sites, composting facilities, transfer stations, and land application sites. These require a review of new applications and inspections before and during operation.
2. Enforcement of Grant County and Washington regulations regarding illegal dumping and other solid waste complaints.

The GCHD receives 75% grant funding from DOE for both of these activities

**Goal:** To avoid contamination of ground and surface water resulting from improper disposal practices, and protect the public from the nuisances of insects, rodents, and odors and other environmental hazards associated with illegal solid waste activities.

**Objectives:**

- A. For the contract period 2008-2009, all permitted facilities will require one annual inspection. This is a change from previous years during which quarterly landfill inspections were required.
- B. During this contract period, the Health District will be responsible to respond to 20 solid waste complaints each quarter. Some of the complaints require additional time because of the difficulty of correction or unwillingness of the landowner cannot to correct the problem. Jan-Dec, 2009, 52 complaints were received. During 2009, 10-15 complaints were typically received each quarter.  
During 2009 15 permits were issued, 10 inspections were conducted, and 46 other actions carried out.

**VECTOR PROGRAM**

Vector refers to animals including insects, arthropods, which is capable of transmitting a disease to people. West Nile virus, Hantavirus, Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, and Rabies are examples.

**Goal:** Zero cases of vector-born diseases.

**Objectives:**

- A. GCHD protocol for “Human Rabies Exposure” will be followed for all reported animal bites.
  - Animal bite reporting form was sent to health care providers.
  - 142 animal bites were investigated in 2009.
  - 5 animals were tested for rabies.

(This is similar to 2008 during which 148 animal bites were investigated and 4 animals were tested.)

- B. Provide information to the public regarding disease prevention. An example is the information given regarding reports of dead birds and the procedure for evaluating the ones to be tested for West Nile Virus.

During 2009 the following positive tests for West Nile Virus were found in Grant County:

1 Human 10 mosquito samples  
11 Horses 0 birds.

### **CHEMICAL AND PHYSICAL HAZARDS**

This program involves 2 types of work:

1. One is to evaluate the severity and relative risk to the environment and human health from spills of toxic chemicals.
2. The other is to evaluate sites used for manufacture of illegal drugs and assist the property owner in determining when the level of risk is acceptably low.

**Goal:** Zero disease or injury from chemicals in the environment.

#### **Objectives:**

- A. Post all sites identified by law authorities as illicit drug labs when notified by law enforcement with a warning, evaluate the property, and post with a second notice if determined unfit. Three drug labs were posted during 2007. No new drug labs were reported in 2008 or during 2009.
- B. Contact the owners of posted property to verify that dwellings are not reoccupied until the level of chemical residue within the dwelling is at an acceptable level.
- C. Evaluate and characterize sites reported to be affected by chemicals harmful to health and to the environment. Five sites were visited and evaluated during 2009.

### **LIVING ENVIRONMENT**

This program exists to prevent disease or injury in areas where people congregate or reside. In the GCHD, this involves work with public swimming pools and with schools. Schools plan reviews and siting must be approved.

Public swimming pools are permitted and evaluated annually. Regulation of smoking in places of employment is also included in this program.

- Goal:**
1. Zero injuries or illness resulting from the use of water recreation facilities.
  2. Restrict smoking from all indoor places of employment.
  3. Assure that environmental conditions of classrooms in public schools meet the standards of "Primary and Secondary School Regulations" for Washington State.

**Objectives:**

Perform 2 regular inspections of annual swimming pools or spas and 1 regular inspection of seasonal water recreation facilities. Of licensed water recreation facilities, 19 are indoor and 39 outdoor. 53 pools were inspected one time. 26 were visited more than once.

- A. During the summer of 2009, write a news release for local media regarding water safety.
- B. Review and authorize all plans for construction in schools that require a building permit.
- C. Use education and enforcement policy to restrict smoking where people work indoors.

**EPIDEMIOLOGY**

This program involves the investigation of any disease which may have food, water, sewage, solid waste, vectors, or toxic substances involved as a possible cause. The Health District is responsible to learn the cause of illnesses, and to track the number and occurrences of reportable diseases.

**Goal:** Zero secondary cases of any communicable cases.

**Objectives:** Assist the personal health staff person assigned to investigate cases of reportable diseases. In addition, Environmental Health assists in investigation of illness related to food or vector sources. Illness linked to licensed food establishments are of special concern.

**WELL DELEGATION**

This is the third year of this contracted program with the Department of Ecology. Our responsibilities are to verify that wells are properly sealed, a DOE identification tag is put on the well casing, and that wells are properly sited.

**Goal:** Inspect half of the wells drilled in Grant County. Of those visited, a minimum of one-fourth will be visited when the well driller is present.

**Objectives:**

- A. All wells are sealed to a minimum depth of 18 feet with the result that the well casing will not serve as a conduit for surface water to reach the aquifer.
- B. If the well location is designated on a plat, the well driller is aware of the location and places the well accordingly.
- C. Wells are adequately separated from sources of contamination.

The Health District has agreed to visit half of the wells drilled in Grant County of which we are notified. Jan-Dec 110 wells were reported. 71 were visited.

During 2008, 124 new wells were reported of which 77 were visited.