

Risk Assessment and Inspection of Facilities Protocol

Preamble

The Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS) are published by the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care under the authority of the Health Protection and Promotion Act (HPPA)¹ to specify the mandatory health programs and services provided by boards of health. Protocols are program and topic specific documents which provide direction on how boards of health must operationalize specific requirement(s) identified within the OPHS. They are an important mechanism by which greater standardization is achieved in the province-wide implementation of public health programs.

Protocols identify the minimum expectations for public health programs and services. Boards of health have the authority to develop programs and services in excess of minimum requirements where required to address local needs. Boards of health are accountable for implementing the standards including those protocols that are incorporated into the standards.

Purpose

The purpose of this protocol is to provide direction in the prevention and reduction of adverse health outcomes arising from health hazards in the environment associated with facilities by providing direction to boards of health including the surveillance, assessment, inspection and management of such hazards.

It should be noted that where a health hazard in the environment does not pertain to a facility, but rather to a potential health hazard in the community, the board of health shall refer to the *Identification, Investigation and Management of Health Hazards Protocol, 2008* (or as current). Where the investigation pertains to an infectious disease or infection control issue, the board of health shall refer to the *Infectious Diseases Protocol, 2008* (or as current), the *Institutional/Facility Outbreak Prevention and Control Protocol, 2008* (or as current), and/or the *Infection Prevention and Control in Licensed Day Nurseries Protocol, 2008* (or as current).

Health hazards may exist or occur in a variety of facilities. This protocol describes these facilities in the following two categories:

- Facilities that are under the authority of the HPPA¹ and/or its regulations, including:
 - O. Reg. 568/90 (Recreational Camps)²;
 - O. Reg. 554/90 (Camps in Unorganized Territories)³; and
 - HPPA, Section 10.(2)2 (Premises used or intended for use as a boarding house or lodging house)¹!
- Other facilities that are not regulated under the HPPA¹ as follows:
 - Ice arenas;
 - Seasonal farm workers' housing;
 - Schools;
 - Day nurseries and other childcare facilities;
 - Long-term care homes;
 - Group homes; and
 - Other facilities as instructed by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (the “ministry”).
- Legislation and regulations that are relevant to this protocol include:
 - O. Reg. 568/90 (Recreational Camps)² under the HPPA¹; and
 - O. Reg. 554/90 (Camps in Unorganized Territories)³ under the HPPA¹

Reference to the Standards

The table below identifies the OPHS standards and requirements to which this protocol relates.

Standard	Requirement
Foundational	Requirement #7: The board of health shall interpret and use surveillance data to communicate information on risks to relevant audiences in accordance with the <i>Identification, Investigation and Management of Health Hazards Protocol, 2008</i> (or as current); the <i>Infectious Diseases Protocol, 2008</i> (or as current); the <i>Population Health Assessment and Surveillance Protocol, 2008</i> (or as current); the <i>Public Health Emergency Preparedness Protocol, 2008</i> (or as current); and the <i>Risk Assessment and Inspection of Facilities Protocol, 2008</i> (or as current).
Infectious Diseases Prevention and Control	Requirement #14: The board of health shall inspect settings associated with risk of infectious diseases of public health importance in accordance with the <i>Infection Prevention and Control in Licensed Day Nurseries Protocol, 2008</i> (or as current); the <i>Infection Prevention and Control in Personal Services Settings Protocol, 2008</i> (or as current); and the <i>Risk Assessment and Inspection of Facilities Protocol, 2008</i> (or as current).
Health Hazard Prevention and Management	Requirement #1: The board of health shall conduct surveillance of the environmental health status of the community in accordance with the <i>Identification, Investigation and Management of Health Hazards Protocol, 2008</i> (or as current); the <i>Infectious Diseases Protocol, 2008</i> (or as current); the <i>Population Health Assessment and Surveillance Protocol, 2008</i> (or as current); the <i>Public Health Emergency Preparedness Protocol 2008</i> (or as current); and the <i>Risk Assessment and Inspection of Facilities Protocol, 2008</i> (or as current).
	Requirement #5: The board of health shall ensure that the medical officer of health or designate is available on a 24/7 basis to respond to and manage health hazards in accordance with the Health Protection and Promotion Act; the <i>Identification, Investigation and Management of Health Hazards Protocol, 2008</i> (or as current); the <i>Public Health Emergency Preparedness Protocol, 2008</i> (or as current); and the <i>Risk Assessment and Inspection of Facilities Protocol, 2008</i> (or as current).
	Requirement #6: The board of health shall inspect and assess facilities where there is an elevated risk of illness associated with exposures that are known or suspected to be associated with health hazards in accordance with the <i>Risk Assessment and Inspection of Facilities Protocol, 2008</i> (or as current).
	Requirement #7: The board of health shall implement control measures to prevent or reduce exposure to health hazards in accordance with the <i>Identification, Investigation and Management of Health Hazards Protocol, 2008</i> (or as current) and the <i>Risk Assessment and Inspection of Facilities Protocol, 2008</i> (or as current).

Operational Roles and Responsibilities

1) Surveillance and inspection

Inventory of facilities

- a) The board of health shall maintain an inventory or inventories of all facilities in the health unit under the authority of the HPPA¹ and/or its regulations, as well as other facilities not regulated under the HPPA¹ but where an investigation has occurred to assess potential health hazards.

Assessment and inspection of facilities

Facilities under the HPPA

- b) For facilities that are under the authority of the HPPA¹ and/or its regulations, including recreational camps that fall under the requirements of O. Reg. 568/90 (Recreational Camps),² camps in unorganized territory that fall under the requirements of O. Reg. 554/90 (Camps in Unorganized Territories),³ and premises used or intended for use as a boarding house or lodging house to which paragraph 10.(2) (2) of the HPPA¹ applies, the board of health shall:

- i) Conduct a minimum of one inspection per year to determine compliance with the regulation, where applicable. Refer to the most current version of the *Operational Standards for Risk Assessment and Inspection of Facilities* for information; and
- ii) Conduct additional inspections as necessary to address non-compliance with the HPPA and related regulations observed during previous inspection(s), to investigate complaints and/or reports of health hazards.

Other facilities (not regulated under the HPPA¹)

- c) For licensed day nurseries, the board of health shall conduct a minimum of one inspection per year. Refer to the most current version of the *Operational Standards for Risk Assessment and Inspection of Facilities* for information.
- d) For seasonal farm workers' housing, the board of health shall conduct a minimum of one inspection per year upon request. Refer to the most current version of the *Operational Standards for Risk Assessment and Inspection of Facilities* document for information.
- e) For other facilities not regulated under the HPPA¹, the board of health shall conduct risk assessments and/or inspections upon notification that a health hazard may exist in the facility. Refer to the most current version of the *Operational Standards for Risk Assessment and Inspection of Facilities* document for information.
- f) The board of health shall conduct additional inspections of facilities not regulated under the HPPA¹ as necessary to follow up on observations from previous inspection(s), investigate complaints and/or reports of health hazards.

2) Management and response

24/7 on-call and response policy

- a) The board of health shall have an on-call system for receiving and responding to reports of potential health hazards in the environment associated with facilities in the health unit on a 24 hours per day, 7 days per week (24/7) basis and provide an initial response within 24 hours.
- b) Where a report of a health hazard in the environment (see above) is received and another Government of Ontario ministry has primary responsibility in the matter, the board of health shall refer to Section 11 of the HPPA¹.
- c) For all complaints and reports received by the board of health related to potential health hazards in the environment associated with facilities, the board of health shall undertake a preliminary assessment to determine the level of potential impact. Refer to the most current version of the *Operational Standards for Risk Assessment and Inspection of Facilities* document for information.
- d) Where a report of a health hazard in the environment is received that is not associated with a facility but pertains to a community exposure, the board of health shall address the request in accordance with the *Identification, Investigation, and Management of Health Hazards Protocol, 2008* (or as current).

Enforcement actions and procedures

- e) The board of health shall address non-compliance with the HPPA¹ and related regulations and take action where a health hazard is identified and may pose a risk to human health.
- f) Where a facility is governed by relevant legislation in addition to the HPPA¹, the board of health shall make every effort to investigate the potential health hazard in collaboration with the applicable agencies responsible for oversight of those other pieces of legislation.
- g) For situations that may pose a risk to human health, the board of health shall work with community partners such as media and local community agencies to communicate and provide information to the appropriate audiences.

3) Reporting

- a) The board of health shall record inspection data pertaining to facilities under its jurisdiction and provide information as required by the ministry.

Glossary

Environment: The physical environment, which includes the natural and built environment.

Health hazard: (a) A condition of a premises, (b) a substance, thing, plant or animal other than man, or (c) a solid, liquid, gas or combination of any of them, that is likely to have an adverse effect on the health of any person.¹

Health hazards in the environment: Health hazards in the physical environment that are not addressed in other programs under the Ontario Public Health Standards.

Risk: The probability of an adverse health outcome resulting from exposure to a hazard.

Risk assessment: The scientific process that characterizes the potential risk of hazards to human health, consisting of four main steps: hazard identification, dose-response assessment, exposure assessment, and risk characterization.

References

1. *Health Protection and Promotion Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.7.
Available from http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90h07_e.htm.
2. O. Reg. 568/90. Available from http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/english/elaws_regs_900568_e.htm.
3. O. Reg. 554/90. Available from http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/english/elaws_regs_900554_e.htm