

Jefferson County Environmental Health Program

The Jefferson County Environmental Health program has grown considerably over the past 15 years. Before 1998 there was one part-time employee who worked primarily with nuisance complaints such as solid waste, rabies, and lead poisoned children. In 1998 that evolved to one full-time employee, but the area of service then included Walworth County, Green County, Jefferson County and the City of Watertown. The full-time employee continued investigating nuisance complaints, but was then also responsible for radon and asbestos programs in the four jurisdictions.

In 2001 the program expanded and became an agent for the Wisconsin Department of Health, which includes licensing and inspections of food, lodging, pools, campgrounds, and body art facilities throughout the county. With this additional workload the program once again covered only Jefferson County and the City of Watertown. The increased workload also required hiring an additional full-time inspector to ensure an annual inspection of each facility as well as any follow-up inspections or complaints, and all nuisance complaints.

The Wisconsin DNR Transient Well Water Program was taken over in 2005 in Jefferson County. This includes annual sampling for bacteria and nitrates in well water of many public facilities such as rural churches, taverns, or stores.

In 2009 the program expanded once again and became an agent for the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture. This includes licensing and inspections of retail food facilities throughout Jefferson County and the City of Watertown. These facilities may include coffee shops, bakeries, grocery stores and convenience stores. This additional workload required the addition of a full-time technician position to assist with meeting requirements for all programs.

The Jefferson County Environmental Health staff covers a wide variety of programs each day. The main goals for all programs are prevention, education and compliance. A brief description of several of the programs is as follows:

Department of Health

There are currently 413 licensed Department of Health facilities and each is inspected at least once per year. If there are critical violations such as a cooler that is not meeting temperature requirements or a dish machine that is not sanitizing, a re-inspection is required at that facility within a reasonable amount of time. Re-inspections continue until the problem is corrected.

Pre-inspections are required anytime a new facility opens or if an existing facility changes owners. Each facility must be brought up to current code requirements before being permitted to open. In an existing building this may require installing additional sinks for food preparation or hand washing, or replacing residential equipment with commercial equipment.



| Health Facilities* | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------------|------------|---------------|------------|------------|
| | Routines | Pre-inspections | Re-inspections | School Inspections | Follow-ups | Onsite Visits | Complaints | Total |
| Jan | 67 | 3 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 26 | 4 | 109 |
| Feb | 29 | 8 | 7 | 30 | 2 | 21 | 1 | 92 |
| Mar | 38 | 7 | 7 | 16 | 1 | 29 | 1 | 99 |
| Apr | 36 | 9 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 54 |
| May | 59 | 11 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 0 | 92 |
| Jun | 36 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 7 | 2 | 59 |
| Jul | 46 | 7 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 1 | 68 |
| Aug | 48 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 13 | 4 | 75 |
| Sep | 31 | 6 | 3 | 0 | 6 | 12 | 1 | 59 |
| Total | 390 | 67 | 50 | 40 | 15 | 131 | 14 | 707 |

*2010 Data

Licensed pools are inspected on a monthly basis for pool water chemistry compliance. If the chlorine or pH levels in the pool are outside code limits, the pool is closed for at least 24 hours and re-inspected when the pool is back within compliance. Last year at least five pools were closed once, and five or more were closed multiple times.

Department of Agriculture



There are 137 licensed Department of Agriculture facilities inspected at least once per year. These facilities include convenience stores, grocery stores, bakeries, coffee shops, etc. A facility is licensed under the Department of Agriculture if it serves more of a snack rather than a full meal.

Inspection and re-inspection policies follow the same format as the Department of Health facilities.

| Retail Facilities* | | | | | |
|--------------------|------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|------------|
| | Routines | Pre-inspections | Re-inspections | Enforcements | Total |
| Jan | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Feb | 6 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 14 |
| Mar | 16 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 19 |
| Apr | 23 | 1 | 8 | 2 | 34 |
| May | 52 | 4 | 8 | 0 | 64 |
| Jun | 22 | 4 | 6 | 2 | 34 |
| Jul | 11 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 17 |
| Aug | 23 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 28 |
| Sept | 24 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 30 |
| Total | 177 | 17 | 37 | 9 | 240 |

*2010 Data

Transient Water Program

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----|
| Number of Well Inspections | 36 |
| Initial Bacteria Samples | 153 |
| Initial Nitrate Samples | 153 |
| Follow up Bacteria Samples | 75 |
| Follow up Nitrate Samples | 4 |
| Nitrite Samples for new wells | 4 |

153 facilities throughout Jefferson County are included in the Transient Well Water Program. This includes rural churches, stores and taverns with private wells that meet certain population requirements of public use. These facilities are sampled annually for bacteria and nitrate levels in the drinking water.



Any unsafe bacteria samples require a number of follow-up samples to either rule out any problem, or to make sure a problem has been corrected.

A well inspection is required on each system every five years to evaluate eight elements and assure safe drinking water. The cap and casing are evaluated outside and the pressure tank and treatment systems are evaluated inside.

Nuisance complaints:

Complaints are filed in writing and are listed in the following categories:

- Housing
- Landlord/Tenant Complaints
- Radon
- Mold
- Indoor Air Quality
- Rodents
- Insects
- Animal Problems
- Lead
- Garbage/Trash
- Restaurant
- Asbestos
- Other

From January 2010 through September 2010, there have been over 90 complaints filed. All complaints are followed up with phone calls, visits and letters each of which are charted into the computer until closure.

Radon

Radon is a naturally occurring gas found in soil and is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the U.S., killing over 24,000 people a year.

Radon Gas is:

- Colorless
- Tasteless
- Odorless
- Radioactive
- Harmful at elevated levels



All Jefferson County citizens may pick up their radon test kits at the Jefferson County Health Department!