



Kansas Environmental Health Association

State Affiliate of the International Association of Food Protection (IAFP)
and the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA)

03October, 2005

President

Michael S Kopf, CFSP
785-826-0521

1st Vice President

Tom Morey, R.S.
785-368-7154

2nd Vice President

Bronson Farmer, R.S.
785-826-6604

Past President

Karen Purvis, R.S.
785-628-9449

Secretary

Cyndra Kastens
316-383-7951

Treasurer

Greg Willis, CFSP
785-625-5663

Environment

Representative

Scott Schwinn, R.S.
785-457-3397

Food Safety

Representative

Darcy Basye
620-694-2900

At-Large

Representative

Jerry McNamar, R.S.
620-825-4910

To: County Commissioners

Government supports public health at all levels. The health of individuals is of interest to our society as a whole because illness and disease can be spread from one to many. Each person has value as a contributor and participant in the economy. An illness keeps people from work, generates costs for health care and results in lost income. A government's investment in public health protects society in many ways.

The Kansas Environmental Health Association believes that environmental health is an integral part of public health. Environmental Health Specialists provide services related to safe water, proper sewage treatment, food safety, air quality, etc. These Professionals must possess a broad knowledge base. They must understand biological processes, chemical analysis, and physics. As regulators, they must be familiar with local and state laws and regulations, be able to apply them, and (if necessary) provide evidence for legal action. They are called upon to solve problems, provide assistance, and investigate reports of nuisances.

Just as other professionals exhibit proficiency and knowledge through board examinations, sanitarians can be credentialed as Registered Sanitarian/Registered Environmental Health Specialist (RS/REHS), or as a Certified Food Safety Professional (CFSP). Both credentials require a college degree and experience before qualifying to test. The test for the RS/REHS is in two parts, and so rigorous that the passing rate is only about 50%.

Although many states require the RS/REHS credential for those working as sanitarians, in Kansas the credential is voluntary. The Joint Committee for Credentialing of Sanitarians (JCCS) oversees the process and requires continuing education for renewal. Those who have become Registered Sanitarians do so voluntarily, and at extra personal effort and expense.

Until such time as the State of Kansas requires registration for sanitarians, local units of government who employ these professionals are responsible for their selection. The value of employing staff that exhibit the knowledge and self-motivation necessary to complete the requirements for credentialing as a sanitarian, cannot be over-stated.

It is therefore our recommendation, that your agency makes every effort to fill environmental health positions with those already credentialed, or make obtaining the credential a condition of employment. Furthermore, continuing education is a crucial component of any profession, and must be incorporated in staff planning. The members of the Kansas Environmental Health Association are dedicated to the continued promotion of competency and credentialing of Environmental Health Specialists throughout the environmental health specialties.

Roderick L. Bremby, Secretary
Kansas Department of Health and Environment

Michael S. Kopf, President
Kansas Environmental Health Association

Judy Willingham
Joint Committee for Credentialing Sanitarians