



Environmental Health Shelter Assessment Tool

For the general community and at-risk populations impacted by an emergency or a disaster, shelters frequently provide refuge. Environmental health practitioners can play a key role in protecting the health and safety of these populations by conducting assessments in shelter facilities. Officials must, early in the disaster cycle, establish and maintain a healthy environment and address factors that can adversely impact the health and safety of shelter occupants.



Photo: Win Henderson/FEMA

To assist with this challenge, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has developed an Environmental Health Shelter Assessment Tool. The purpose of this tool is to assist environmental health practitioners in conducting a rapid assessment of shelter conditions during emergencies and disasters. The tool is an assessment form that covers 14 general areas of environmental health, ranging from basic food safety and water quality to pet (companion animal) wellness, and allows for the documentation of immediate needs in shelters. It can be easily modified to meet local needs.

The Environmental Health Shelter Assessment Tool is intended to

- Serve as a standardized instrument for rapidly assessing environmental health conditions in shelter facilities;
- Assist in identifying and prioritizing health and safety issues in shelters;
- Provide shelter management officials with data and an assessment of environmental health conditions and recommendations for improvement;
- Capture data and create documentation for use in future planning and improvement of shelters.

The tool provides supplemental guidance and information that should be used in conjunction with existing plans, procedures, guidelines, resources, assets, authorities, and incident management systems. It is not a substitute for shelter preparedness and planning activities.

To develop the tool, CDC convened a working group of experts from local, state, federal, academic, and non-governmental institutions including the American Red Cross.

For more information on CDC's Environmental Health Shelter Assessment Tool, please contact CAPT Mark Miller (770-488-7652 or zdq8@cdc.gov) or Miguel Cruz (770-488-3637 or mgc8@cdc.gov). Users of this tool are encouraged to submit feedback via e-mail at CDCshelterform@cdc.gov