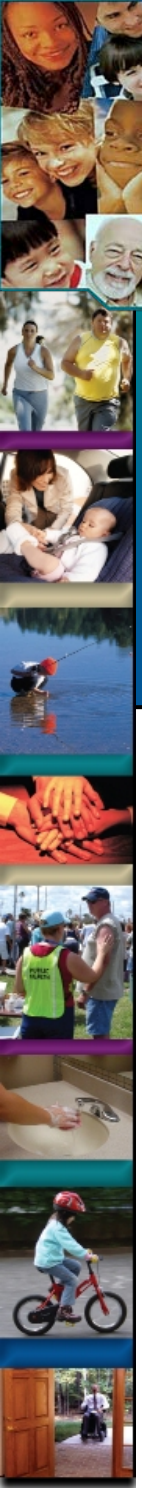


Environmental Health Engineering

Division of Environmental Health
Phone: 515-281-0921
www.idph.state.ia.us/eh/default.asp

Promoting & Protecting the Health of Iowans

IDPH Iowa Department of Public Health

Every summer in Iowa, hundreds of thousands of Iowans cool off with a dip in a pool. IDPH works to make sure people are the only thing swimming in that pool; not tiny critters that can make people sick. Cryptosporidiosis ("Crypto") is a disease caused by a parasite that results in diarrhea. People get sick when they swallow the parasite. The not-so-appetizing explanation: People get sick when they swallow swimming pool water someone else swam in when they had diarrhea.

That's just what happened in 2005, when a group of Crypto cases was traced to an Iowa wading pool. Pool operators worked fast, closing the pool for special cleaning, and reopening as fast as possible. The Swimming Pools and Spas program helps keep Iowans healthy by helping keep the waters they swim in healthy, too!

Did you know?

The IDPH Swimming Pools and Spas program inspects about 1,300 pools, more than 420 spas, 260 wading pools, and 260 water slides at about 1,260 locations in Iowa.

Why are Environmental Health Engineering programs important to promoting and protecting the health of Iowans?

- Environmental health engineering principles are fundamental to ensuring public health measures are in place to keep Iowans safe.
- Iowans use public swimming pools and spas at a variety of locations: municipal pools, YMCA/YWCA, hotels and motels, health clubs, and water parks.
- There are many health concerns related to swimming pools and spas, including transmission of disease, injuries, and the potential for drowning.
- Plentiful safe drinking water is important to public health.
- Improperly installed plumbing poses a risk to drinking water systems by potentially allowing drinking water and wastewater to mix.
- Proper fluoridation of water is extremely important to good oral health.

Which Iowa Public Health Goals are we working to achieve?

Protect against environmental hazards

Prevent epidemics & the spread of disease

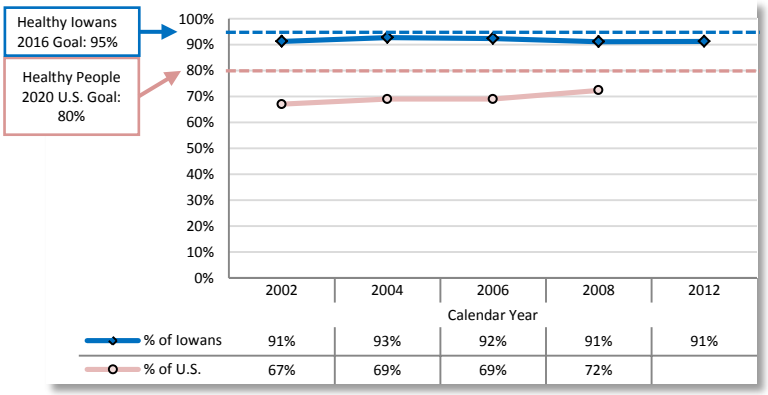
Prevent injuries

What do we do?

- Contract with local health departments to do inspections at public swimming pools and spas.
- Register about 2,200 pools and spas in Iowa.
- Issue construction permits and approve plans for new facilities or renovations to old ones.
- Iowa law requires that a water treatment system that claims to reduce health-related contaminants from drinking water be tested to show that the system achieves the reduction. IDPH maintains a registry of systems that comply.
- The Fluoridation program monitors the fluoridation of public water supplies, assists and trains water system operators, and helps communities with fluoridation projects.
- The Backflow Prevention Assembly Tester Registration program sets training standards for technicians who test backflow prevention devices and maintains a registry of qualified technicians.
- IDPH maintains the Iowa State Plumbing Code and Iowa State Mechanical Code, the minimum standards for plumbing and mechanical work in Iowa cities.

How do we measure our progress?

❶ **Percent of Iowans served by community water systems who are receiving optimally fluoridated water*.**



Data Source: IDPH Fluoride Database and Iowa DNR Safe Drinking Water Information System. Data are available annually. 2012 U.S. data are not yet available.

* Optimally fluoridated water is water with natural fluoride levels or adjusted fluoride levels of at least 0.7 milligrams of fluoride per liter of water (0.7 mg/L).

How are we doing? The proposed national standard for optimally fluoridated water is 0.7 mg/L. Currently, 91% of Iowans who get their water from a community water system receive water with fluoride concentrations that meet this standard. This is much higher than the national rate of 72% getting fluoridated water that meets this standard.

❷ **Number of plumbing and mechanical professional licenses issued by the Plumbing and Mechanical Systems Board.**

Data Source: IDPH Licensing Database. Data are available annually.

How are we doing? As of May, 2013, 17,665 plumbing and mechanical professionals were licensed in the state.

What can Iowans do to help?

1. Stay away from swimming pools, wading pools, and spas/hot tubs if you have or recently had diarrhea. Keep sick children away from these facilities.
2. Practice good pool hygiene. Take a shower and wash your child thoroughly before swimming.
3. You can find out about the status of your community's public water fluoridation by visiting www.idph.state.ia.us/hpcdp/fluoride_search.asp.
4. Make sure only registered professionals test or repair your backflow prevention assemblies.
5. Use "Licensed in Iowa" to find a licensed professional to perform plumbing and mechanical systems work www.licensediniowa.gov.

Expenditures

General fund & retained fees*: K19-1903/1905/2041

	State Fiscal Year 2011 Actual	State Fiscal Year 2012 Actual	State Fiscal Year 2013 Estimate
State funds	$18,264	$0	$17,548
Other funds*	$1,114,845	$1,202,567	$1,413,297
Total funds	**$1,133,109**	**$1,202,567**	**$1,430,845**
FTEs	7.27	9.03	10.85

Note: Funding information is intended to provide an overview of funding related to the program area. It does not include all federal and state requirements and/or restrictions for the use of funds. Contact the program area for more detailed budget information.

Iowa Department of Public Health ◆ Division of Environmental Health ◆ Environmental Health Engineering

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