

Health Wise Quarterly

Brought to you by the friendly staff at your
Environmental Health Services Division



Environmental Health Services Division (EHSD) offers monthly Food Safety Presentations from 3:00PM - 4:30PM. Trainings are held at Rutherford Lane Campus [1520 Rutherford Lane, Building 1, Suite 200](#). Interested in attending? Register by phone 512-978-0300 or via email: EHSD.service@austintexas.gov

April 19, 2016	Requirements for Starting a Food Enterprise and the Inspection Process
May 16, 2016	Requirements and Processes for Submitting a Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP)
June 15, 2016	Temporary Events and Mobile Vendor Inspections

National Public Health Week is April 4th—10th, 2016

[Public health is the science of protecting](#) and improving the health of families and communities through promotion of healthy lifestyles, research for disease and injury prevention and detection and control of infectious diseases. Overall, public health is concerned with protecting the health of entire populations. Public health professionals try to prevent problems from happening or recurring through implementing educational programs, recommending policies, administering services and conducting research.

Healthiest Nation 2030
Let's make America the healthiest nation in one generation.



NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH WEEK 2016

EHSD coordinates public health efforts through several programs in Austin and Travis County. EHSD conducts plan reviews, permitting, inspections, complaint investigations, compliance action, surveillance/monitoring and public health education activities relating to all establishments that offer or store any type of food or beverage. EHSD also conducts investigations into foodborne illness, custodial care facilities, public swimming pools, animal enclosures, public health nuisances, Austin's smoking ordinance, water contact recreation sampling, and rodent and vector control.

The National Public Health Week's theme in 2016 is: [Healthiest Nation 2030 Let's make America the healthiest nation in one generation](#).



Pool and Pool Enclosure Maintenance

As the weather gets warmer many have thoughts of jumping into a nice cool pool popping into their heads. EHSD would like to remind pool operators that pool and pool enclosure maintenance is a process that should occur year round. Proper pool maintenance allows everyone to have a safe and enjoyable swimming experience. On a regular basis a pool operator should walk the pool yard enclosure to ensure functionality and safety and make any repairs as needed.

1. All gates are in proper working order
2. Make sure there no gaps in the enclosure that would allow a sphere of four inches in diameter to pass through
3. All equipment is in proper working order and has Safety Vacuum Release Systems (SVRS) as required
4. Water is clear and main drains are visible
5. Any underwater lighting is properly mounted and secured

Temporary Events



Temporary events are just that, temporary. The nature of a temporary event may invite more opportunities for a foodborne illness because of the lack of permanent structures such as hand sinks. The Austin/Travis County Health Department (A/TCHSD) requires hand washing stations be set up at all temporary events to ensure operators have the proper facilities to wash their hands before handling food. If you're thinking about holding a temporary event, please check out our [set up guidelines](#).



∴ Friendly Reminder: Effective 04/01/2016: All commercial kitchens (central preparation facilities) acting as a base of operations for mobile food vendors *must* be registered with EHSD prior to April 1st, 2016. Mobile food vending permits will not be approved without an accompanying registered central preparation facility (CPF). [Please click here for additional information](#).



Veronica Saldate Photo Credit



Austin's Single-Use Bag Ordinance

The Single Use Bag Ordinance has been in effect since March 2013 and **applies to all businesses that provide carryout bags to their customers—including food service providers.**

Single-use plastic bags are only allowed at restaurants if necessary to prevent leakage from soups, sauces, and other liquids. Food service businesses are allowed to provide paper, plastic or cloth bags that meet reusability standards.

To learn more, visit AustinTexas.Gov/Bags or call Austin Resource Recovery at (512) 974-9201.

Healthy and Safe Swimming Week May 23 – 29, 2016

Formerly known as Recreational Water Illness and Injury (RWII) Prevention Week, the week before Memorial Day has been designated National Healthy and Safe Swimming Week. It focuses on the role of swimmers, aquatics and beach staff, residential pool owners, and public health officials in preventing drowning, pool chemical injuries, and outbreaks of illnesses. It highlights swimmer hygiene and the need for swimmers to take an active role in helping to protect themselves and prevent the spread of germs. These messages are reinforced by [health promotion materials](#) to educate the public on how to prevent recreational water illnesses (RWIs).

What are RWIs? Recreational water illnesses (RWIs) are caused by germs spread by swallowing, breathing in mists or aerosols of, or having contact with contaminated water in swimming pools, hot tubs, water parks, water play areas, interactive fountains, lakes, rivers, or oceans. RWIs can also be caused by chemicals in the water or chemicals that evaporate from the water and cause indoor air quality problems. Diarrhea is the most common RWI, and it is often caused by germs like Crypto (short for *Cryptosporidium*), *Giardia*, norovirus, *Shigella*, and *E. coli* O157:H7. Other common RWIs include skin, ear, respiratory, eye, neurologic, and wound infections. Children, pregnant women, and people with weakened immune systems are most at risk for RWIs. More information about RWIs can be found on the [Basics of RWIs](#) page.



Zika Virus, Mosquitos, and EHSD's Rodent and Vector Control Program

Zika virus is transmitted to persons primarily through the bite of an infected mosquito (Aedes species). Dallas County received confirmation of a patient who developed Zika virus after sexual contact with an infected traveler. The CDC has issued [interim guidelines for the prevention of sexual transmission of Zika](#).



A/TCHHSD continues to encourage people to follow travel precautions and avoid mosquito bites. The most common symptoms of Zika virus disease are fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis (red eyes). The illness is typically mild and resolves within one week. However Zika virus infection in pregnant women may be associated with congenital microcephaly and fetal loss. Guillain-Barre syndrome has also been reported in patients after suspected Zika infection.

Preventative measures residents can take to avoid mosquito bites include draining any water around their property, wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants and using EPA-registered insect repellents.

Mosquito activity is low during our coldest months. Beginning May 1st, the A/TCHHSD EHSD Rodent and Vector Control Program begins mosquito management activities which include collecting, testing, and treating breeding areas throughout Austin and Travis County. Mosquitoes can only develop in water and water standing just a few days can produce a large number of mosquitoes! All mosquitoes need water in which to develop through their early life stages. Adult mosquitoes frequently rest in tall grass, shrubbery, or other foliage, but never develop there. Some mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water while others lay their eggs in old tires, tin cans, flower pots, or other water-holding containers where they can remain dormant for weeks or months until they are covered with water. In either case, the eggs quickly hatch and develop into adult mosquitoes in just a few days. EHSD offers site assessments of property to identify possible mosquito breeding sites. To request a site assessment **CALL 512-978-0370**. Additional information about Zika can be found at: <http://www.austintexas.gov/article/zika-virus> and at <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/>

Plan Reviews: Remodeling or Building A New Location?

Due to increased development in the City of Austin and Travis County, the services provided by EHSD plan review staff are in high demand. If you are planning to remodel or build a new establishment, be aware that the average turnaround time for a plan review has increased. To meet your scheduled construction timelines, please take into consideration the amount of time needed for EHSD to complete its plan review, inspection, and permitting processes. Please be assured EHSD staff strive to achieve high quality plan reviews as quickly as possible.



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES DIVISION CUSTOMER WALK IN HOURS
Lobby Hours Rutherford Lane Campus 1520 Rutherford Lane 7:45AM - 3:30PM Monday - Friday
One-Stop Shop 505 Barton Springs Road 8:00AM - 12:00PM Monday - Friday
Mobile Vending Physical Permitting Inspections Rutherford Lane Campus
1520 Rutherford Lane 7:45 AM - 11:00AM Tuesday and Thursday



EHSD is partnering with Austin 3-1-1 to handle all citizen complaints and environmental investigations. To request services, get general assistance or submit a citizen complaint, dial 3-1-1 or 512-974-2000 if you are calling from outside the Austin service area.

If you feel an inspection issue or complaint investigation has not been satisfactorily addressed, or to speak with a manager regarding administrative issues, please call us directly at 512-978-0300 between the hours of 7:45AM - 4:45PM Monday - Friday.

Mailing Address: EHSD Post Office Box 142529, Austin, TX 78714

Physical Address: Rutherford Lane Campus 1520 Rutherford Lane Building 1 Suite 200 Austin, TX 78754

Email Address: EHSD.service@austintexas.gov

Web Address: <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/environmental-health-services>

Feedback: Please complete our online survey to help us better serve our customers: www.surveymonkey.com/s/EHSDSurvey

