



*Environmental Health Officer
Professional Advisory Committee*



The EHO Assessment

May 2020 News and Updates

A place to learn about current events and updates from the EHOPAC

EHOPAC Leadership Updates

Welcome to another edition of the new all-digital format for sharing EHO News and Updates! This web-enabled format is intended to provide timely updates and direct links to useful information for officers. The newsletter is a tool made by officers for officers, so the EHOPAC welcomes your feedback regarding the format.

Message from EHOPAC Leadership:

We want to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of our officers during the **COVID-19 response**. The category remains at the forefront of the response efforts and your skills and perseverance have been recognized. Stay resilient and be well, the PAC stands by to support you.

The following links provide EHO-specific resources for COVID-19 response guidance:

Personal Protective Equipment

- [PPE Donning and Doffing with Gown](#) (using Example #2 going from dirty to clean)
- [Respirator Donning and Doffing](#)
- [Gloves Doffing Procedure](#)
- World Health Organization [Donning](#) and [Doffing](#) Tyvek suits (open with Internet Explorer if Chrome does not work)

- [OSHA Respiratory Training Videos](#)
- [Optimizing Healthcare Supply of Personal Protective Equipment](#)

Considerations for Healthcare Personnel & Infection Control

- [Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients with Suspected or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019 in Healthcare Settings](#)
- [What Healthcare Personnel Should Know about Caring for Patients with Confirmed or Possible COVID-19 Infection](#)
- [Healthcare Infection Prevention and Control FAQs for COVID-19](#)
- [Return-to-work Guidance and Risk Assessment Matrix for Healthcare Personnel](#)

Considerations for Food Supply and Drug Safety

- [Food and Drug Administration COVID-19 Guidance Resources](#)

More Information

- [OSHA COVID-19 Guidance](#)
- [CDC COVID-19 Guidance](#)
- [Public Health Recommendations for Community Exposure](#)

Commissioned Corps Headquarters (CCHQ) Updates

PHS, our nation, and the entire globe are facing an unprecedented challenge to combat the **COVID-19 illness** caused by the novel coronavirus strain. We extend a sincere appreciation for your support to your own families, communities, and the mission of the PHS. This will be a long and arduous response, and we want to echo the words of ADM Giroir in his CCLMS address to PHS Officers: “Thank you for what you do, and I’ll be with you at every step.”

In anticipation of future deployments, Public Health Service officers must remain ready. In an effort to deploy officers more efficiently for this response, CCHQ has placed all officers on an **involuntary deploy or “alert” status** effective March 25, 2020, irrespective of the “on-call month” status. Consult the [Deployments Readiness Updates](#) on CCMIS for more information.

It is more important than ever that we look out for our fellow EHOs. The **Corps Care Program** has put together several resources for stressors related to COVID-19 response. Released last year, Corps Care assists officers with improving readiness and preparedness, building resiliency, and cultivating healthier lives. View the resources on the [CCMIS Corps Care Page](#).

Reminder on uniforms: CCHQ is mandating that **officers in uniform wear cloth facemasks** in public settings. This includes any situation, outside officers’ own residences, where there is a risk of being unable to maintain six feet of social distance from other people.

These facemasks may be manufactured or handmade, however all facemasks must cover the mouth and nose, be a single solid color (blue, black, gray or white) with no designs, attached pins, printed wording, logos or decorations. They must be tied behind the head or fastened by ear loops. Officers must wash facemasks after each use.

CCHQ has also **relaxed grooming standards** in the area of the scalp due to state stay-at-home orders. This may also allow for additional hair length and bulk on the sides, top and back of the head, but at no time will relaxed grooming interfere with the proper wearing of PPE. Provisions regarding sideburns, hair styles and shaving requirements remain in effect. The relaxed scalp grooming standards will remain in effect until 30 days after the end of the Public Health Emergency or sooner, as so ordered by the Surgeon General

A **reminder for EHOs to check and update** their Self-Service deployment information. The [EHOPAC Readiness Subcommittee page](#) has readiness and deployment guidance information.

The Commissioned Corps is **accepting applications for all professional categories** for applicants who must be willing to serve where the needs of the service dictate or within specific organizations. For more information, visit the [USPHS applications website](#). For EHO category-specific questions, please contact EHOPAC Marketing & Recruitment Subcommittee Co-Chairs CDR David Bales (David.Bales@ihs.gov) or CDR Elizabeth Valenti (Elizabeth.valenti@fda.hhs.gov).

Important EHOPAC Updates

Career Development:

The **Career Progression Milestones** were reviewed for 2020 and there were no significant changes. The latest version should be posted to the EHOPAC website in the near future.

Training and Events:

On Tuesday, December 10, 2019, we hosted the **2019 D.C. Area Winter Social** at Chuy's Tex Mex in Rockville, MD. Over 25 Commissioned Corps officers, family members, and friends from the DC area and across the nation attended this event. The event kicked off with a welcome speech from our Chief Professional Officer (CPO), RADM Kelly Taylor. The evening culminated with a "Rockstar" group photo of those who were in attendance.

A huge thanks goes out to the planning team: leaders LCDR Merideth Rose, LCDR Molly Madson and LT Kathryn McNamara and members LCDR Aaron Niman, LCDR James Speckhart, LT Charissa Cooper, and LT Christine Lloyd. The group photo was posted to the [USPHS Environmental Health Officers Facebook Group](#). If you haven't already joined, this platform is a great way to stay in touch with fellow EHOs in a more informal setting.

Readiness:

Per the message from CCHQ on March 20, the following **three readiness requirements are suspended** until the 30th day after the date the public health emergency is terminated:

- (1) Periodic Health Updates
- (2) Basic Life Support training
- (3) Annual Physical Fitness Test

Up-to-date immunizations are still required for medical readiness and officers are encouraged to ensure they do not let their professional licensure(s) expire.

Marketing and Recruitment:

The EHO **JRCOSTEP application window** will be open from June 1, 2020 until September 30, 2020 for JRCOSTEP opportunities during the summer of 2021! Interested students should [submit an application](#).

Please reach out to interested students and accredited programs to share this opportunity. Students must have completed at least two years of study in an accredited baccalaureate program and be returning to school in the fall of 2021.

For more information visit our [JRCOSTEP student website](#) and the [EHOPAC's Resources website](#). Specific questions should be directed to costep@hhs.gov.

If you are interested in becoming a JRCOSTEP Preceptor in 2021, please reach out to the JRCOSTEP Workgroup. For more information, please see the [Benefits of Hiring a JRCOSTEP brochure](#) and the [JRCOSTEP Preceptor Guide](#)

Mentoring and Orientation:

The Mentoring and Orientation Subcommittee is excited to announce **the January Officer Basic Course (OBC) graduation** of 4 new EHOs! See next section for names. Special thanks to volunteers and senior officers who participated in OBC Open House and Graduation. The March OBC was cancelled.

Welcome Aboard!

Please welcome the following **new Environmental Health Officers** who attended the following Officer Basic Courses (OBC):

January 2020:

LT Jeremy Garcia (IHS)

LT Richard Dillahunt (USCG)

LT Sarah Hughes (BOP)

LT Anita Wade (USCG)

Welcome aboard!!

EHOPAC Calendar Events

EHOPAC Quarterly Meeting

All EHOs are encouraged to [join our Quarterly Meetings](#)! Listen for EHOPAC and Commissioned Corps updates and hear leadership discuss pertinent EHOPAC issues.

Upcoming 2020 EHOPAC Meeting: **June 9th** 1300 to 1500 EDT

Webinar link: <https://ihs.adobeconnect.com/ehopac/>

Conference Line: 1-800-832-0736; Conference Room #: 6084616

Upcoming Events

The **American Industrial Hygiene conference and exposition** (AIHce) will be virtual and held June 1-3. This is an opportunity to join occupational health and safety professionals from around the world to discuss emerging issues, trends, the latest technology, and the best practices in industrial hygiene. Registration and more information can be found at <https://www.aihceexp.org/>.

Organization of the Month

The **National Environmental Health Association** (NEHA) serves “To advance the environmental health professional for the purpose of providing a healthful environment for all.” The Registered Environmental Health Specialist/Registered Sanitarian (REHS/RS) is the most widely held NEHA credential. Professionals credentialed by NEHA meet an established standard of excellence, with sufficient environmental health experience and knowledge as verified by examination.

NEHA is updating the REHS/RS exam and recently asked several Environmental Health Officers to serve as subject matter experts in a Job-Task Analysis Workshop. CDR Craig Ungerecht, CAPT Timothy Jiggins, CDR Justin Gerding, LCDR Steven Galvez, and LCDR Kazuhiro Okumura were invited to the workshop held 24 – 26 FEB 2020 in Denver, CO. Their team reviewed and rewrote the credential examination blueprint. They formed focus groups with industry, local, and state government representatives in a facilitated storyboarding process to capture the major duties and related tasks of environmental health practice. They identified knowledge and skills required to carry out these duties and drafted demographic queries for the validation survey sent to NEHA membership. If you receive one of these surveys, please complete it and return it to NEHA to ensure the revised REHS/RS credential accurately reflects the scope of environmental health practice within the Commissioned Corps.

To learn more about NEHA, visit: <https://www.neha.org/>

About EHOPAC News

Do you have a news story to share? Submit your *EHOPAC News* stories or questions for inclusion in a future edition to LT Matthew Kozler at matthew_kozler@nps.gov and LCDR Tyler White at tyler.j.white@uscg.mil!

For More EHOPAC Information:

Visit the [EHOPAC Website](#)

Check out our FACEBOOK pages:

[EHO Closed Facebook Group](#)

To join, please log in, and click the green “Join Group” button.

[EHOPAC Open Facebook page](#)

To subscribe or unsubscribe, please visit the [EHOPAC Listserv page](#).