

Model Job Description for Health Officers

This document was adopted June 2007 by members attending the SACCHO business meeting, and subsequently sent to all health officers for review. Part One refers to statutory responsibilities. Parts two and three are not mandated, but suggested as good practice.

Part One Position: Local Health Officer

This position is established by statute and includes statutory duties governed by the local board of health, state laws, rules, and local ordinances enacted by the local legislative body. The Health Officer by statute is the Executive Head of the department and serves as Secretary to the Board. The secretarial duties are defined in the statutes. The duties and responsibilities are the same for all local health officers (whether City or County).

Statutory Duties of the Health Officer (Chapter I)

IC 16-20-1-10

Section 10. The local health officer shall keep full and permanent records of the public health work of the local health department and minutes of all meetings of the board of the local health department.

IC 16-20-1-11

Section 11. The local health officer shall make a monthly report of the work done by the local health department to the board of the local health department. After the report is approved by the board, the local health officer shall make the report a permanent record.

IC 20-1-13

Section 13. The local health officer or a representative of all county or city boards of health shall attend meetings of the state department, when requested by the state department, for consultation concerning any matter concerning public health.

IC 16-20-1-14

Section 14.

- (a) Local health officers may appoint and employ public health nurses, environmental health specialists, computer programmers, clerks, other personnel, and an administrator of public health, subject to the confirmation of the local board of health, as is necessary and reasonable to carry out and perform the duties of the local health department.
- (b) Except as provided in subsection (d), the employees of local health departments shall perform any of the duties of the health officer delegated by the health officer, with the approval of the local board of health, on the basis of an agent-principal relation.
- (c) The public health personnel of local health departments:
 - (1) must meet the minimum qualification requirements of the local board of health;
 - (2) by local ordinance, become part of the county classification system for the respective public health personnel positions; and
 - (3) shall perform additional duties prescribed by the rule of the state department and local board of health under the general supervision of the local health officer.

(d) If an appointee or employee of a local health officer is not a licensed water well driller under IC 25-30-3, the appointee or employee may not inspect the drilling of a water well.

IC 16-20-1-17

Section 17.

(a) The local health officer shall collect records and report to the state department the vital statistics for the local health officer's area of jurisdiction.

(b) The local health officer shall be the registrar of births and deaths. After making a birth or death record, the local health officer shall, by the fourth day of each month, forward the original record to the state department.

IC 16-20-1-18

Section 18. A health officer may, on behalf of the local board of health, receive financial assistance from an individual, an organization, or the state or federal government. The financial assistance must be approved by the county executive or city fiscal body and the local board of health.

IC 16-20-1-19

Section 19. Local health officers shall enforce the health laws, ordinances, orders, rules, and regulations of the officer's own and superior boards of health.

16-20-1-22

Section 22. Local health officers may make sanitary inspections and surveys of all public buildings and institutions. The health officer's designee may enter upon and inspect private property, at proper times after due notice, in regard to the possible presence, source, and cause of disease. The health officer or designee may order what is reasonable and necessary for prevention and suppression of disease and in all reasonable and necessary ways protect the public health.

(a) However, a local health officer, or a person acting under the local health officer, shall not inspect property in which the health officer, or person acting under the health officer, has any interest, whether real, equitable or otherwise. Any such inspection or any attempt to make such inspection is grounds for removal as provided in this article.

(b) This section does not prevent inspection of premises in which a local health officer has an interest if the premises cannot otherwise be inspected. If the premises cannot be otherwise inspected, the county officer shall inspect the premises.

Section 24.

(a) Local health officers may order schools and churches closed and forbid public gatherings when considered necessary to prevent and stop epidemics.

(b) An individual who takes action under this section shall comply with state laws and rules.

16-20-1-25

Section 25.

(a) A person shall not institute, permit or maintain any condition that may transmit, generate or promote disease

(b) A health officer, upon hearing of the existence of such unlawful conditions within the officer's jurisdiction, shall order the abatement of those conditions. The order must

(1) be in writing if demanded

(2) specify the condition that may transmit disease; and

(3) name the shortest reasonable time for abatement.

(c) If a person refuses or neglects to obey an order under this section, the attorney representing the County (city) of the health jurisdiction where the offense occurs shall, upon receiving notice from the health officer, institute proceedings in the courts for enforcement. An order may be enforced by injunction. If the action concerning public health is a criminal offense, a law enforcement authority having jurisdiction over the place where the offense occurred shall be notified.

IC 16-41-5-2

Section 1. The health officer may make an inspection of each carrier of a dangerous communicable disease to determine whether the environmental conditions surrounding the carrier or the conduct of the carrier requires intervention by the health officer to prevent the spread of disease.

16-41-9-2

Section 3.

(a) the local health officer may exclude from school a student who has a dangerous communicable disease that

(1) is transmissible through normal school contacts; and

(2) poses a substantial threat to the health and safety of the school community.

(b) if the local health officer subsequently determines that a student who has been excluded from school under subsection (a) does not have a dangerous communicable disease that:

(1) is transmissible through normal school contact

(2) poses a substantial threat to the health and safety of the school community: the local health officer shall issue a certificate of health to admit the student to school.

(c) a person who objects to the determination made by the local health officer under this section may appeal to the state department, which is the ultimate authority.

Part Two

Administrative and Community Relations Duties

(1) Oversee the daily operations of the health department.

(2) Hold weekly staff meetings with all personnel to discuss community health problems and advise staff on actions to be taken.

(3) Work with board of health to assess community health needs to determine if health needs of the community are being met.

(4) Work with board of health in developing program services to meet the unmet needs and prepare a justification for approval of the board to submit to the county or city council requesting funds to implement the services.

(5) Carry out public relations within the county or the city with other health providers and work on developing coordinated services.

(6) Develop community support for the health department through making presentations on the services provided by the health department to community organizations, health groups, schools and the business community.

(7) Work with the board of health to develop health policy, personnel policies and policies governing the operation of the health department.

(8) Make decisions under questionable circumstances that might incur litigation.

- (9) The health officer assumes responsibility for liability on his behalf and that of his staff.
- (10) Establish criteria to measure the progress and efficiency of the health department in performing their legal responsibilities and community relations.
- (11) Attend Board of Health meetings and record the minutes of the meeting.
- (12) Make required reports to the state department of health.

Part Three

Personal Requirements

The health officer must be a physician licensed to practice medicine in the State of Indiana. He or she must be able to work harmoniously with health department staff, the community and governmental officials. He or she must be able to drive a car and hold a valid driver's license in the state of Indiana. He or she shall have had experience or some training in public health practices.