



## **Guidance on Use of NPS Public Health Program in Emergencies / Incidents**

### **Background:**

Located within the Visitor and Resource Protection Directorate is the Office of Public Health. Staffed by U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Officers, the mission of this NPS group is to provide internal expertise on issues and hazards that affect the health of visitors to our park units.

Officers are assigned to NPS in two ways.

- One group staffs the public health program and reports directly to the Office of Public Health. These officers are always available for incidents and can be tapped into by contacting the Office of Public Health.
- Approximately 20 additional Public Health Service officers are assigned to and supervised by other NPS programs, regions or parks. The Office of Public Health serves as a personnel office for these assignments and can assist Incident Commanders in obtaining access to this group and their expertise.

### **Use in Incidents and Emergency Situations**

**Park Superintendents and Incident Commanders are requested to tap into this expertise during any situation where infectious disease or other hazards may pose an immediate or potential public health threat.** Such situations include intentional acts, accidents, or natural disasters that might affect drinking water, food, or waste water disposal. Incidents may also create an increased potential for vector borne (mosquitoes, ticks, etc.), environmentally transmittable diseases, and person to person transmission.

### **Procedure**

Contact the Office of Public Health to request assistance and officers will be assigned and deployed according to expertise, background and location.

CAPT Chuck Higgins  
Director, Office of Public Health  
Office Phone (202) 513-7217  
Cell Phone & Home (202) 253-2289

*Backup Contact*  
CAPT Robert Reiss, Public Health Consultant  
MW Region  
Office Phone (402) 661-1718  
Cell (402) 650-2650  
Home (402) 330-0813

### **Subject Area Expertise – Primary (officers supervised directly by the Public Health Program)**

Drinking Water Safety and Emergency Supplies  
Public Health and Sanitary Engineering  
Food Safety  
Waste Water Disposal

Infectious Disease Transmission and Intervention  
Vectorborne Disease Transmission  
Outbreak Investigation and Intervention

### **Subject Area Expertise – Secondary (officers assigned to and supervised by other NPS programs)**

Industrial Hygiene  
Environmental Compliance  
Hazardous Waste  
Various Engineering Backgrounds