

CAMDEN COUNTY

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT

AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN

2009

10/27/08
By:RGL

Assessment

The environmental assessment has been developed by the Camden County Department of Health and Human Services Environmental Division to address environmental issues in Camden County. The Camden County Department of Health and Human Services is a county health department and is the certified local health agency for Camden County pursuant to NJSA 26:3-85 et seq., for the provision of environmental health services under the County Environmental Health Act, (CEHA).

County Community

Camden County has a population of 508,000 and is comprised of 37 municipalities and covers 222 square miles. Camden County is largely urban in the Camden City, Gloucester City and Pennsauken municipalities which border the Delaware River, suburban in the middle as you move southeast and rural in the southeastern most townships of Winslow, Gloucester, and Waterford. The geographic breakdown is roughly 20% urban, 45% suburban, and 35% rural. The population breakdown is roughly 25% urban, 55% suburban and 20% rural. The citizenry is ethnically and racially diverse (White 68.1%, African American 19.6%, Hispanic 11.4%, Asian 4.8%). (exceeds 100% due to citizen selecting multiple race choices.)

The housing stock is primarily single family dwellings with the majority of the suburban and urban construction being completed prior to 1960. There is currently a residential single family dwelling building boom in the rural municipalities of Gloucester, Winslow and Waterford. The median income in Camden County is \$53,511.

Camden County is southeast of the City of Philadelphia and is bordered by Burlington County to the northeast, Atlantic County to the southeast, Gloucester County to the southwest and Philadelphia and the Delaware River to the northwest.

Environmental Issues

Clean Air

Air pollution is a major environmental issue in Camden County. The health risks associated with the inhalation of contaminated air is of major concern to all Camden County residents. We spend a significant amount of time, county wide, in addressing this very important issue. Our urban areas have the bulk of the industry which contributes to our total air pollution load.

Camden County's urban community activists continue to demand clean air for their community. This is quite evident with the law suit to block the construction and opening of St. Lawrence Cement. New permits and permit modifications continue to be a major issue for Camden City residents. They also are concerned and fighting against perceived or real environmental racism.

Camden County will continue to make clean air a top priority in its environmental protection programs. We will aggressively pursue violators and penalize where appropriate. We have completed the air toxics program in Waterfront South and look for other air toxics projects where needed and where manpower and funding is available.

Camden County will be looking toward developing green program initiatives that will reduce our fossil fuel consumption and reduce air pollution in our schools. We will request **grant funding for our green program initiatives**. We will continue our school program by teaching middle and high school level science classes and teaching pollution prevention, environmental friendly lifestyles and fossil fuel reduction. Our intention is to teach 20 classes per year.

Another air pollution program initiative will incorporate 20 indoor air quality inspections of schools. We will test the air in classrooms, offices, shops, art rooms and general areas such as lunchrooms and libraries for CO, CO₂, the presence of dust particles and size, formaldehyde, mercury, radiation and volatile organic compounds. Laboratory chemical testing will be available if the need is detected with field testing instruments.

Camden county will also conduct an education and outreach program to fire and police departments, DPWs, and parks departments on the regulations governing idling, emergency generators, boilers and any other applicable equipment. Identify the entities to which outreach will be provided and provide this list to the MSCI Program by March 1, 2009. Develop and conduct education and outreach programs to the entities identified and provide a list of the programs conducted and the principals in attendance to MSCI by December 31, 2009.

Clean Water

Camden County's water needs are varied as the urban and suburban communities utilize public water supplies and our rural community is more dependant on private well water. Clean water and the health risks associated with the consumption of contaminated water are a major environmental concern in Camden County.

The Camden County Department of Health and Human Services is aware of lead contamination associated with schools public water supply. Other school systems have had similar problems and have successfully addressed the issue with similar remedies. We have communicated with our school systems county wide to make them aware of the problem and remedies.

Camden City's public water in their schools due to lead continues to be a public health concern. Unable to address the water quality issue, Camden has resorted to providing bottled water for staff and students. We continue to have difficulty with food preparation and water quality issues where food preparation takes place. We hope to have this issue completely resolved in 2009.

The Private Well Testing Act has exposed the need for regular private well testing by the owner. Required testing at the time of realty transaction has revealed significant private well contamination. Gross alpha, nitrate, volatile organic compounds and mercury violations of the potable water standards is occurring in roughly 35% of our realty transactions. As part of our normal office protocol, we notify the owner or real estate agency of the infraction, provide treatment options and provide a spill fund application if the contaminant is mercury, nitrate, pesticide or a volatile organic compound. Public awareness and education are extremely important in getting private well owners to test annually for contaminants. We have been aggressive in this area but unsuccessful in convincing well owners to spend \$400 to \$500 per year on annual water testing.

Recreational use of our water ways continues to be an important issue in Camden County. We mobilize each year to conduct surface water testing to help determine the water bodies overall health. In 2002, we posted all of Camden County's property that bordered waterways with fish

advisory signs. Included on the signage was a telephone number and web site address to get the individual fish consumption restrictions. We will attempt to repost the Camden County properties in 2009.

Camden County will continue to educate the public regarding the need for private well testing. We will educate our school superintendents on the need to test their water supply for lead contamination, and if contaminated, assist with remediation techniques. Healthy surface water will continue to be a priority and we will continue to support the surface water testing program in 2009.

Homeland Security/Hazardous Materials Team Preparedness/CBRNE.

The post 911 era in the Emergency Response Community has completely altered the direction of the haz mat community. We are currently preparing for chemical emergencies, dirty bombs, bioterrorism incidents, nuclear events, terrorism events and nerve agent exposures. Federal funding has become available to purchase equipment and training. A significant amount of time is being expended researching equipment, training, drilling, and planning with other Camden County and State agencies. Camden County is also meeting with other contiguous counties to plan and drill together just in case a major CBRNE event occurs. We are also attempting to write contracts between counties to provide haz mat services. One important feature of the contract is to address liability issues between counties.

Camden County has developed a haz mat task force to address hazardous materials, WMD, Weapons of Mass Destruction and CBRNE, Chemical, Biological, Radiological Nuclear and Explosive threats. We currently have 6 haz mat teams participating in the task force which include Camden County Health Department Haz Mat, Camden County Sheriffs Department Bomb Squad, Cherry Hill Township, Gloucester City, Camden City and Waterford Township, Bellmawr Borough and Winslow Township will be acting as support agencies by providing foam tankers to major haz mat emergencies that require the need for foam. Gloucester Township will act as a support unit and will assist as a decontamination unit for the task force. Associate members of the task force are the Camden County Prosecutors Office, Camden County Communications and the Camden County Office of Emergency Management. The task force meets every 2 months and discusses equipment purchasing, drilling, training and other issues facing the response community. We drill together on a regular basis and purchase like equipment which allows familiarity with other unit's equipment should one agencies equipment break down. This partnership has become an invaluable asset to Camden County and is quickly becoming a model to be duplicated throughout the State and Country.

The Camden County Department of Health and Human Services will continue to pursue WMD/CBRNE grant opportunities. Training, drilling and planning for this type of incident will be a top priority. Obtaining formalized agreements to provide haz mat, WMD, CBRNE services between counties in Southern New Jersey is also a high priority.

The Camden County Haz Mat Task Force runs the New Jersey State Police Technician course twice a year. This training program is invaluable as it brings together our partners and gives us the opportunity to network and train with our partners in other counties. Our staff provides much of the technical training to participants.

Camden County also approved a cost recovery ordinance in 2008 for haz mat responses. We will also support the approval of the agreement, "Interstate Mutual Aid Agreement County Emergency Response Program for CBRNE/Hazardous Materials Incidents".

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Noise

Camden County approved a noise control ordinance in 1993. We have a very aggressive noise enforcement program in place. Camden County's biggest noise issue comes from combination industrial residential zoning practices that have occurred in the past. Truck traffic and backup beepers are a continuing problem in Camden County that will present a quality of life and enforcement issue in 2009.

The Camden County Department of Health and Human Services will continue to provide noise control and enforcement throughout the County. Residential construction adjacent or near industrial and agricultural zoning and the increased motor vehicle traffic and the associated noise will be our noise control issues for 2009 and beyond.

Underground Storage Tanks

The Camden County Department of Health and Human Services currently participates in a pilot project that assists in the removal of home heating oil tanks. This project enables residential property owners the opportunity to remove an oil tank and receive a document from the NJDEP that the tank was removed in accordance with current NJDEP regulations. This project is very helpful to residents in that it may help them from getting scammed from unscrupulous contractors. Camden County oversight enables us to advise the resident that there are being taken advantage of. This project is also very helpful with property resale. Having a letter in your possession from the NJDEP that the tank was removed in accordance with NJDEP regulations is helpful when the buyer discovers that an oil tank has been removed.

Camden County will be participating in the regulated tank inspection arena with the funded position to handle regulated tanks in 2009. This position will inspect regulated tanks, gas station regulated tanks and permits. The inspections will focus on leak detection equipment and the operation of the equipment. This program has been very successful in catching violators whose tank leak detection programs are not working or shut off. In several cases, we have determined that tanks were leaking from the inspection when the operator was not aware of the leak. This program is also successful in protecting the ground waters of the County and State. The Camden County Department of Health and Human Services will continue with the underground storage tank program if funding from the state is maintained at its current level.

Solid Waste Inspections/Enforcement

The Camden County Department of Health and Human Services spends a significant amount of its resources to inspect solid waste facilities and complaints. In addition, we have an interlocal agreement with the Pollution Control Finance Authority to enforce solid waste registration violations and the Department of Solid Waste to conduct recycling inspections. We will continue with the current efforts in this program in 2009. Camden County will continue to support the solid waste program with the inspection of solid waste facilities and complaints. We will also participate in the new program "Enforcement of the Solid Waste Utility Regulations Pilot" for 2009 if funding is sufficient.

Other Environmental Issues

Many other environmental issues face Camden County residents that are not illustrated but are no less important. They are Pesticide Control, Indoor Air Quality, Asbestos Exposure, Occupational Exposure to Toxic Substances, Electromagnetic Fields, Hazardous Waste Sites, Radon and a host of other unidentified issues. We will continue to act as the County lead in environmental services and act as a resource for all Camden County stakeholders.

Compliance Assistance for School Laboratory Chemical Management

Camden County will work on this project in 2009 with reinspections of high school laboratories and problem college laboratories and middle schools. This project has reduced the number of hazardous materials emergencies within our schools and reduced the potential chemical exposure to all students and staff.

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Staffing and Resources

The Camden County Department of Health and Human Services currently maintains an environmental field staff of 8 and 3 supervisors who conduct administrative duties with some limited field work. We are committed to continue with the previous illustrated environmental activities as long as funding continues at its current levels. Expansion of current programs or adding new programs without increased funding from the County, State or Federal Government is out of the question.