

Local Health Report - Questions and Answers (Q&A)

Question

Answer

1	<p>Since the Childhood Lead Poisoning program has LeadTrax, and the Communicable Disease program has CDRSS:</p> <p>(1) will we need to copy any data from these systems into the Local Health Report?</p> <p>(2) will there be any sort of automatic data import from CDRSS and LeadTrax into the Local Health Report system, to let us have all the data in one report?</p>	<p>(1) No, you won't have to duplicate existing electronic reporting. Since you report this data through LeadTrax and CDRSS, you will NOT need to report this same data in the Local Health Report system.</p> <p>(2) OLPH wants to make sure that as much of your data as possible is available in the automatically generated, customizable reports. Therefore, we are actively exploring data sharing between CDRSS, LeadTrax, and the Local Health Report system, but this isn't likely to be completed for 2013 reporting year.</p>
2	<p>How will the Board of Health (BOH) registration be handled? It isn't listed on the Excel file that we received, and it's no longer available at the online location where it used to be.</p>	<p>An updated BOH Registration form will be available in the new Local Health Report online system in January 2014. Since that isn't any tracking that you need to do for this section in advance of January 2014, it wasn't included in the Excel file.</p>
3	<p>Is the Onsite Wastewater Disposal System Compliance section (tab #11) designed to replace the existing Annual Report that we submit to NJDEP Onsite Wastewater Management Program?</p>	<p>Yes. The onsite wastewater system compliance questions and definitions in the 2013 Local Health Report Excel file are intended to replace all prior versions of the Annual Report that you submit to the NJDEP Onsite Wastewater Management Program. So please do update your internal tracking systems to reflect the revised questions and definitions.</p> <p>Starting with the 2013 reporting year, NJDEP Onsite Wastewater Management Program will accept local health departments' Annual Reports that are submitted through the Local Health Report online system. This will provide you and the NJDEP with better access to your data, and will eliminate the need for you to provide your department's contact and jurisdiction information on multiple copies of the same form.</p>
4	<p>In the Potable Wells & Drinking Water section (tab #12b), should questions #6 and # 7 include test results from the Private Well testing Act?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form12b-#6 "Number of potable well investigations conducted by the LHD in this service area in this reporting year." Form12b-#7 "Number of potable well investigations where the LHD determined the well water to be hazardous to human health." 	<p>Yes. For these two questions, count any investigations triggered by Private Well Test Act test results (as well as any other investigations that are covered by the data definitions for these questions).</p> <p>For question #7, if any state, county, and/or local law or regulation in force in that service area defines the water as hazardous, count it. If the well water meets Private Well Testing Act criteria for hazardous, count it. If you have a more stringent local ordinance, and the well water is hazardous according to the local ordinance even though it's "safe" under the Private Well Testing Act, count it.</p>

5	<p>For the Inquiries, Issues, and Complaint Investigations section (tab #9):</p> <p>(1) should we report ALL inquiries, issues, and complaint investigations for the whole department; only those not reported in another section; or only those that are related to public health nuisances?</p> <p>(2) if we receive a complaint or conduct a complaint investigation that could be reported in more than one place, how should we count this? For example, if we receive a complaint about dogs in the basement of a restaurant, and this results in an investigation and enforcement action, does this get counted in the retail food section (tab #16) or the inquiries section (tab #9) or both?</p>	<p>(1) The inquiries section (tab #9) is intended to capture all inquiry, issue, and complaint investigation activity that is NOT already being reported elsewhere in the Local Health Report. This includes, but is NOT limited to, public health nuisance complaints.</p> <p>(2) If you receive a complaint, conduct an investigation, and/or take enforcement action(s), count this activity in the most relevant category. If there is nowhere else in the Local Health Report that is appropriate to record the inquiry, issue, or complaint activity, record it in the inquiries section (tab #9).</p> <p>So for the complaint about dogs being held at a retail food establishment, that falls under the purview of the retail food section of the Local Health Report (tab #16), and should be reported ONLY on the retail food section. Count each activity in the section that makes most sense and is most specific (e.g., <i>Retail Food Complaint is more specific than Complaint</i>) - use common sense, but only count each activity in one place.</p>
6	<p>For the Inquiries, Issues, and Complaint Investigations section (tab #9), are we supposed to track ALL phone call inquiries?</p>	<p>You are NOT required to track all inquiries - question #1 on tab #9 is optional.</p> <p>Phone, email, and in-person inquiries, requests for assistance, provision of education, and referrals are an important and time-consuming part of many local health departments' activities, but since this work is largely undocumented, it is invisible to funders (and thus, staff who provides these services may be at risk during funding cuts).</p> <p>OLPH strongly recommends that all local health departments track contacts with the public. At minimum, we recommend that you track all calls that do NOT fall into the following three categories:</p> <p>(1) routine internal staff communications (e.g., one staff member at the department calling another staff member at the same department);</p> <p>(2) routine communications where the caller only asks to speak with a specific staff member; and</p> <p>(3) routine communications where the caller only requests contact information or directions to the department.</p>
7	<p>To what extent are we allowed to customize the Excel file (e.g., add columns and rows, change tab names, etc.)?</p>	<p>You can go wild with the EXCEL file - it's for you to review, customize, and play with this year. And if you "break" your Excel file, you can just download a fresh copy from the NJLMN Forum.</p> <p>Your official data will be entered into the Local Health Report online system in January 2014.</p>

<p>8 In the Excel file, how can we keep track of town-by-town data? Is there a way to fill in the answers on more than one page for multiple towns?</p> <p>For example, if I have two towns, how can I track the Onsite Wastewater data for Town 1 and Town 2 separately?</p>	<p>The Local Health Report online system will let you select how you want to submit data (LHD-level vs. Municipal-level), and then will automatically give you the appropriate number of forms for each section (e.g., an Onsite Wastewater form for Town 1, and an Onsite Wastewater form for Town 2).</p> <p>In the Excel file, there are 2 ways to track your towns:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Make a copy of the Excel file for each town you want to track (remember to rename each file so you don't mix up your towns' data). This way, you will have one Excel file for Town 1, and a separate file for Town 2. (2) Make a duplicate copy of the individual tab (sheet) that you want to track at the Municipal-level (remember to rename the sheet). This way, you will have a single Excel file, with separate tabs for Onsite Wastewater - Town 1 and Onsite Wastewater - Town 2. <p>To make a duplicate copy of a tab, right-click on the tab at the bottom of your Excel file, select "Move or Copy," select the number of the tab that you are copying (in the "Before Sheet" scroll box), click the "Create a Copy" checkbox, and click "OK." This creates a copy of that tab. Remember to rename the tab with the town name (right-click on the tab, select "Rename," and type the new name for the tab).</p> <p>Note: making duplicate copies of tabs and/or renaming tabs will break the links in the Excel file's table of contents. Don't worry, though - you can still navigate using the tabs at the bottom of the Excel file.</p>
<p>9 For some of the Animal Control sections (specifically, tabs #4b, #4c, #4d, and #4e), the wording of the questions is asking for data on each municipality served. How should a larger department or county department, which serves many municipalities, answer these questions?</p>	<p>Since the way in which animal control services are provided often varies substantially from town to town, even when a single health department is overseeing animal control writ large, you will be providing a little bit of municipal-level data on tabs #4b, #4c, #4d, and #4e for each town to which your department provides animal control services.</p> <p>For each of these 4 tabs, there is a single "yes/no" question that needs to be answered separately for each of your towns. All the other questions in these sections are OPTIONAL.</p> <p>For example, if you serve two towns, you would answer question #1 on tab #4b first for Town 1, and then for Town 2.</p> <p>Refer to the data instructions for each section, just under the orange Section Name. For these 4 tabs, the instructions read "The LHD will complete question 1 on this form for each individual town to which the LHD provided this service (Municipal-level data). Remaining questions are optional."</p> <p>Note, you won't need to reenter your responses in future years - the Local Health Report online system will save your previous year's responses, and you'll just verify that they are still accurate.</p>

10	<p>Are we required to submit individual reports for each of the many towns for which we are the Full Time Health Officer? What is the minimum amount of detail required?</p>	<p>You are not required to submit info for each town separately (<i>except for tabs 4b, 4c, 4d, 4e, 11, 12a, and 18a - animal control, onsite wastewater, and local ordinances</i>). For most of the Local Health Report, you are able to submit a single summary report that includes data for all the towns to which you provide that service.</p> <p>OLPH strongly recommends that you track and report municipal-level data to the greatest extent practical. This will help foster a public health system that is both visible and accountable to the entities that fund our work. Tracking and reporting your services at the municipal-level makes it easier for you to produce reports customized to each town you serve, and gives you a better handle on how your resources are distributed.</p> <p>For most sections of the Local Health Report, you decide whether to answer all, some, or none of the questions at the detailed municipal-level rather than summary Department-level. Refer to the data instructions for each section, just under the orange Section Name - if it says "The LHD has the option of completing this form once (providing LHD-level data) or completing this form for each individual town to which the LHD provided this service (Municipal-level data)," then it's up to you.</p>
11	<p>If my department operates on a fiscal year that doesn't run January to December, can I use the Excel file to report my data for my community?</p>	<p>Yes, you are welcome to use the Excel file to track your data on a monthly basis, and add up your data for fiscal year reporting. However, please be aware that if your fiscal year is not aligned with the calendar-year Local Health Report, generating a report will require combining two partial years' worth of data, so your data will be a little "squishier."</p> <p>The Local Health Report's data definitions are designed for full-year reporting and may not directly lend themselves to stand-alone monthly calculations.</p> <p>For example, question #6 on the Onsite Wastewater form, reads "Number of unduplicated noncompliant systems identified by the LHD in this municipality in this reporting year." Since the question asks about the number of unduplicated non-compliant systems in this YEAR, there may be a slight over-counting if you track unduplicated non-compliant systems in each MONTH (because a single system might be counted both in April and in May data as non-compliant).</p> <p>We recommend you use the Excel spreadsheet to help you keep track of monthly subtotals if you plan on non-calendar year summaries. Please review the questions and data definitions carefully if you plan to track on a non-calendar year basis, and contact OLPH for guidance on any specific questions.</p>

12	For the automatically-generated report that the system will create for us, how customizable will this report be? Will we be able to add or remove sections (e.g., add a Vital Statistics section, or delete the Tanning Compliance section)?	The Local Health Report online system will allow you to automatically generate summary reports of your department's data. This report format will be in Microsoft Word, so it will be fully editable. You can add or remove whatever sections you want to meet your community's specific needs.
13	Is there any way to create a compiled report based on the Excel file?	Once your data is in the Local Health Report online system, you will be able to generate a variety of individual and compiled reports. In the Excel file, there is no built-in reporting / data compilation support. However, you are welcome to add a "summarize my data" sheet to your Excel file if you are so inclined. If you need guidance on how to do this, please contact Rutgers at carey@aesop.rutgers.edu .
14	If our department provides services to a town as a contractor for another town or health department, should we report that data in the Local Health Report?	This depends on whether your department is hired by the town itself, or by the local health department that provides Full-Time Health Officer coverage to that town. (1) If your department is hired directly with the town to deliver a service to that town, you SHOULD include this work in your Local Health Report. So if your department has been hired by Town 1 to provide cancer screening services to Town 1 residents for all or part of 2013, you WILL report on that activity in your department's 2013 Local Health Report. (2) If your department is hired by the town's local health department (rather than the town government), then you should be providing data to the local health department for which you are conducting the work (and you should NOT be reporting this data in the 2013 Local Health Report). In this instance, your department is a sub-contractor. Similarly, if a local health department hires a third-party organization (e.g., the Visiting Nurse Association) to provide a specific set of services (e.g., well-baby clinics), the health department that hired the third-party organization is responsible for submitting data on that service or services via the Local Health Report. The departments and/or organizations that you sub-contract some of your work to should provide you with the data you need for your Local Health Report. Going forward, this data requirement should be written into contracts for services.
15	In the Excel file, much of the requested data is by month and year total. Will it be necessary to enter data for each month, or can we just enter totals for the year?	You are only required to provide ANNUAL data. The month-by-month spaces in the Excel file are there to help you with internal tracking, and using these monthly fields is completely optional.

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| 16 | <p>Once the Local Health Report is completed for 2013, will the repetitive identification and basic information fields have to be re-entered each year, or will we be able to update the previous year's filing?</p> | <p>No, you won't need to re-enter your department's basic contact information and jurisdiction information each year. The system will save your information and ask you to review, verify, and update as needed.</p> |
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