

Environmental Health Division

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH FACT SHEET

Health begins long before illness; it begins where we live, learn, work, and play. We all live with conditions that we cannot individually control but that can affect our health—the air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat. MDH works behind the scenes with families, neighborhoods, schools, and workplaces to create conditions that support the health of all Minnesotans, no matter where they live.



We strive for cleaner air inside our homes, restaurants, and workplaces. We are responsible for the Minnesota Clean Indoor Air Act that restricts smoking in public places and work places. We educate people about the potential health effects of mold, carbon monoxide, radon, and other indoor air contaminants.



We inspect and monitor public drinking water systems for more than 100 contaminants. We establish and enforce standards for constructing and sealing private and public wells. We investigate and communicate the health risk and exposure potential of contaminants of emerging concern in drinking water. We educate and assist professionals, communities, private well users, and households across the state about water quality and stewardship.



We establish and enforce health standards to ensure clean and healthy conditions at restaurants and school kitchens. We educate the public about food safety. We also provide statewide and site-specific guidelines for eating fish from lakes and rivers.



We establish and enforce health standards to ensure clean and healthy conditions at home, hotels, motels, resorts, manufactured home parks, and recreational camping areas. Our inspectors visit homes with asbestos, lead-based paint, or radon and help reduce the health risk.



We establish and enforce health standards to ensure clean and healthy conditions at beaches, pools, resorts, children's camps, recreation camping areas, and sports arenas.



We establish and enforce health standards to ensure clean and healthy conditions at schools and businesses. Our inspectors visit schools and other buildings with asbestos or lead-based paint around the state.



We ensure the following types of contractors and workers have the right training and skills:

- Food inspectors
- Food managers
- Home and lodging inspectors
- Medical equipment inspectors
- Water operators
- Well contractors



Chemicals and Hazards

We evaluate potential health risks from chemical and physical agents in the environment. We work with federal and state agencies to assess and prevent possible human health risks from accidental spills, waste disposal, and agricultural and industrial activities. We develop health education programs and materials for communities.



Radiation

We help doctors, dentists and veterinarians protect themselves, their staff and their patients from radiation by inspecting x-ray equipment, mammogram facilities, and other radioactive materials they use. We monitor for radiation around the two nuclear power plants and will provide technical advice in the event of a nuclear power plant emergency.



Weather and Climate

We are part of a nation-wide effort to help local public health and the public anticipate, prepare for and respond to health impacts from climate change.

MDH Mission

Protecting, maintaining, and improving the health of all Minnesotans.

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Rev. 10/2017

Division Offices

Main Office

625 Robert St. N
PO Box 64975
St. Paul, MN 55164-0975
Main: 651-201-4571
www.health.state.mn.us/eh

Central District Office

Midtown Square
3333 West Division Street, Suite 212
St. Cloud, MN 56301-4557
Main: 320-223-7300
Fax: 320-223-7350

Northeastern District Office

Duluth Technology Village
11 East Superior Street, Suite 290
Duluth, MN 55802-2007
Main: 218-302-6166
Fax: 218-723-2359

Northwestern District Office

705 Fifth Street Northwest, Suite A
Bemidji, MN 56601-2933
Main: 218-308-2100
Fax: 218-308-2122

South Central District Office

Mankato Place
12 Civic Center Plaza, Suite 2105
Mankato, MN 56001-7789
Main: 507-344-2700
Fax: 507-344-2723

Southeastern District Office

18 Wood Lake Drive SE
Rochester, MN 55904-5506
Main: 507-206-2700
Fax: 507-206-2711

Southwestern District Office

1400 E. Lyon Street, Suite 102
Marshall, MN 56258-2529
Main: 507-476-4220
Fax: 507-537-7194

West Central District Office

1505 Pebble Lake Road, Suite 300
Fergus Falls, MN 56537-3858
Main: 218-332-5150
Fax: 218-332-5196