

# ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

## SAFE DRINKING WATER RESULTS FACTSHEET

In early 2019, ASTHO’s Environmental Health team fielded the Environmental Health Programs and Services Survey among members of ASTHO’s state environmental health directors (SEHD) peer group. The survey asked about a variety of environmental health program or service areas, primarily tasking SEHD peer group members with categorizing where these programs or services are conducted in their states or territories. This factsheet describes results primarily from the Safe Drinking Water section of the survey.

### RESULTS

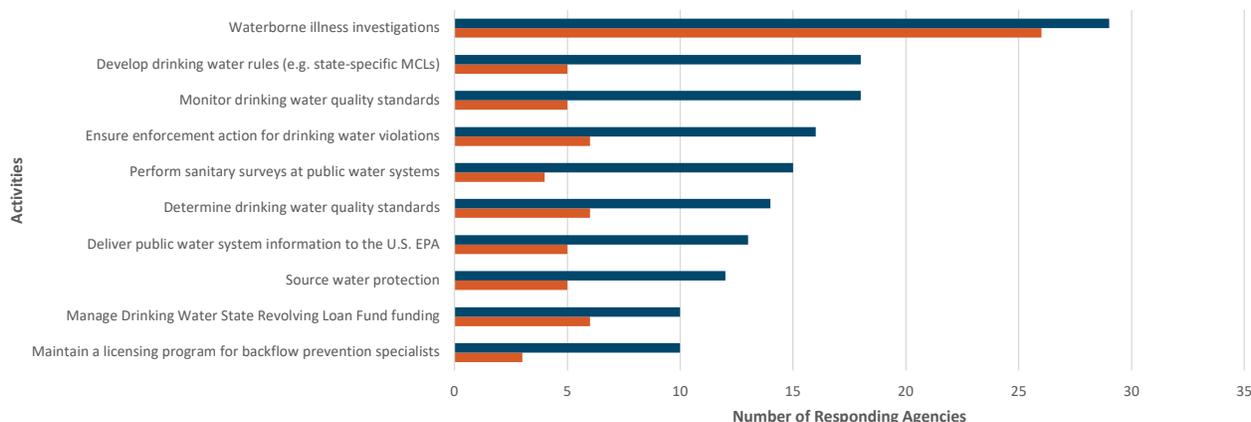
Figure 1 shows select safe drinking water activities performed at state and territorial health agencies. The blue bar represents activities performed by environmental health divisions, and the orange bar represents activities performed by different sections or divisions within agencies.<sup>1,2,3</sup>

- ✔ Respondents were asked to classify where various activities were performed from the following options:
  - “Your section/division.”
  - “A different section/division within your agency.”
  - “Another state/territorial agency.”
  - “County and/or local health agency (state/territory funded/supported or locally-led).”
  - “Contracted out by your state/territorial health agency to [a] third party.”
  - “None of the above.”
  - “Unknown.”

Respondents could choose multiple options for a single activity.

- ✔ The classification choice “your section/division” corresponded to the SEHD’s section or division, while “a different section/division within your agency” corresponded to other sections or divisions within the state or territorial health agency (except for Alaska).
- ✔ Most SEHD peer group members (n=49) responded to the survey. Maine’s partial response was included in this count. In some cases, respondents did not answer all questions in a particular section.
- ✔ These data are a snapshot in time and do not make any distinctions between lead sections, divisions, or agencies for each activity.

**Figure 1: Select Safe Drinking Water Activities Performed at State and Territorial Health Agencies**



- Activity performed by your section/division.
- Activity performed by a different section/division within your agency.

<sup>1</sup> Responding agencies were state/territorial health departments, except for Alaska, which was represented by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation.

<sup>2</sup> “Source water protection” and “waterborne illness investigations” were not originally included in the Safe Drinking Water Programs and Services section of the survey. They were included in this factsheet from the Public Water Supply Programs and Services section.

<sup>3</sup> Figure 1 is a small selection of the total activities included in the Safe Drinking Water Programs and Services section of the survey.

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## KEY TAKEAWAYS<sup>4</sup>

- ☀ More than half of survey respondents (57%) indicated that their section or division performs at least one of the safe drinking water activities listed in the survey. Because “source water protection” and “waterborne illness investigations” were not originally in the Safe Drinking Water Programs and Services section of the survey, they were not included in this calculation. (However, they are included in the summary bullets below.)
- ☀ The top three activities performed in the SEHD’s section or division are “waterborne illness investigations” (59%), “develop drinking water rules” (37%), and “monitor drinking water quality standards” (37%).
- ☀ The top three activities performed in a different section or division are “waterborne illness investigations” (53%), “oversee a laboratory certification program for drinking water analysis” (33%), and “oversee compliance with and provide technical assistance for homeland security requirements” (16%).<sup>5</sup>
- ☀ The top two activities performed in another state or territorial agency are “underground injection control” (71%) and “source water protection” (67%).<sup>6</sup> For clarification, results for “another state/territorial agency” are not shown in Figure 1.

## IN SUMMARY

As shown above, ASTHO’s SEHD peer group members play an important role in conducting safe drinking water programs and services. Among the top three activities performed by “your section/division” and “a different section/division within your agency,” “waterborne illness investigations” was a shared top activity, with nine respondents indicating that their section or division and a different section or division within their agency both work on said activity. However, there was no overlap between the top three activities performed by “your section/division” and the top two activities performed by “another state/territorial agency.” To access the full survey results, please visit the 2019 Environmental Health Programs and Services Survey [online portal](#).

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<sup>4</sup> 49 peer group members (n=49) responded to each of the survey prompts below.

<sup>5</sup> “Oversee a laboratory certification program for drinking water analysis” and “oversee compliance with and provide technical assistance for homeland security requirements” were not included in Figure 1.

<sup>6</sup> There was a three-way tie for third place; thus, only the top two activities were reported. Also, “underground injection control” was not included in Figure 1.