



**USAPHC**  
**U.S. ARMY PUBLIC HEALTH COMMAND**

Public Affairs Office  
5158 Blackhawk Rd. Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD 21010-5403  
410-417-2937  
usarmy.apg.medcom-phc.mbx.pao@mail.mil

## Health Risk Management Portfolio

### Mission

Health risk management is the science and art of identifying, evaluating, selecting, documenting and implementing measures to reduce or prevent risk to human health. The Health Risk Management Portfolio provides comprehensive health risk management support and expertise to worldwide military commanders, decision-makers and military preventive medicine personnel to ensure and enhance their readiness.

### Background

The Health Risk Management Portfolio is one of the newer portfolios in the U.S. Army Public Health Command. Although elements of the portfolio existed in the early 1990s, the portfolio was formally developed in 2001, as a response to the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks and subsequent anthrax attacks in the United States.

### Clients

The portfolio's clients are Department of Defense leaders, commanders and organizations, including medical leaders, medical treatment facilities and deployed units. The portfolio focuses on population-based assessments in order to determine the potential effects of hazards and threats from military operations in both garrison and deployed settings.

### Structure and Organization

The Health Risk Management Portfolio is one of nine technical portfolios that comprise the Army Institute of Public Health, a subordinate unit of the U.S. Army Public Health Command. The portfolio is comprised of four programs and one office:

- **Environmental Health Risk Assessment Program**— This program focuses on providing reliable and understandable environmental health risk information to Army stakeholders to help them define the health consequences of decisions. Experts in this program are primarily concerned with exposures and health outcomes associated with chemical and biological hazards found or introduced into the environment. If a site is found to contain these hazards, the program's experts determine the health risk to personnel and the environment. The program supports forward-deployed operations, installations and garrisons, force health protection initiatives, chemical and material management decision-makers, emergency management, and defensive chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear programs.
- **Environmental Surveillance Integration Program**— This program focuses on developing information management/information technology solutions for the DOD preventive medicine community's use in maintaining and integrating preventive medicine data. Experts in this program are responsible for the DOD's Military Exposure Surveillance Library, the MESL, and are the Army's functional lead for environmental health surveillance aspects of the Defense Occupational and Environmental Health Readiness System—Industrial Hygiene, or DOEHRS-IH. One example of this program's work is its creation of a registry of DOD personnel who were in Japan during the military-led U.S. effort to respond to the March 2011 earthquake, tsunami and radiation exposure.
- **Deployment Environmental Surveillance Program**— This program focuses on providing multi-service preventive medicine assets with information needed to detect, assess and counter deployment occupational and environmental health threats and hazards for worldwide deployment locations. Experts in this program identify potential health risks and threats from the occupational and environmental health hazards at various locations prior to the deployment of U.S. forces. This information is incorporated into the Phase I pre-deployment occupational and environmental health assessments product. These assessments are tools to be used for planning purposes to protect deployed DOD military and civilian forces against potential occupational and environmental hazards. In addition, the program coordinates with the Army and DOD preventive medicine communities to facilitate deployment occupational and environmental health surveillance activities including the collection



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and laboratory analysis of air, water and soil samples from worldwide deployment locations. This program provides technical reach-back assistance, surveillance planning, equipment and media, laboratory results, and deployment occupational and environmental health surveillance assessments. The program has provided support for deployment locations in every unified Combatant Command.

- **Health Risk Communication Program**— This program focuses on assisting Army and DOD personnel with effectively and clearly communicating scientific and technical information to a non-expert audience. Experts in this program provide a variety of training and consultation services to help anticipate, plan for, prepare and effectively address stakeholder concerns regarding health, environmental, deployment and similar issues that could affect mission success. Program experts offer risk communication courses that teach scientists and technical experts to communicate their findings and knowledge in an understandable manner. The program's experts are also capable of deploying rapidly to assist various DOD agencies with communicating during a crisis.
- **DOD Lead Agent for the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry Office**— This office focuses on assisting Army and DOD personnel with effectively and clearly communicating scientific and technical information to a non-expert audience. Experts in this program provide a variety of training and consultation services to help anticipate, plan for, prepare and effectively address stakeholder concerns regarding health, environmental, deployment and similar issues that could affect mission success. Program experts offer risk communication courses that teach scientists and technical experts to communicate their findings and knowledge in an understandable manner. The program's experts are also capable of deploying rapidly to assist various DOD agencies with communicating during a crisis.

### **Health Risk Management's People**

Approximately 70 people work in the Health Risk Management Portfolio. They include military, civilian and contract personnel in a broad range of scientific disciplines. Environmental scientists, environmental engineers, biologists, meteorologists, health risk communications specialists and administrative personnel are just some of the occupations within the portfolio. In addition to their professional experience, most staff members hold advanced academic degrees. The portfolio supplements its expertise from multidisciplinary public health experts within the USAPHC and establishes working partnerships with other U.S. government and military organizations, various colleges and universities. The portfolio also collaborates with other federal organizations, including the Department of Commerce, the Department of State, the U.S. intelligence community, and the Environmental Protection Agency.

### **Portfolio Contributions**

In addition to providing health risk management measures in both garrison and deployed settings, the Health Risk Management Portfolio has developed and published chemical and biological military exposure guidelines to help decision-makers in identifying, evaluating and managing these types of occupational and environmental exposures. These exposure guides are used DOD-wide to identify acceptable exposure limits for industrial chemicals and biological agents for DOD personnel.

The Health Risk Management portfolio "goes anywhere troops go" to help examine, assess and report the environment and associated health risks from potential/known exposures. Portfolio staff members also assist researchers and health professionals in assessing and evaluating veterans' health problems as a result of these exposures.