

Environmental Public Health Tracking Program

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Program Spotlight

Spotlight



In This Issue:

On the Cover:

Connecticut CO Tracking
Surveillance Efforts in
Response to Public
Health Emergencies

Page 2

Data Submission Training
Webinar

Page 3

Calendar of Events



Connecticut CO Tracking Surveillance Efforts in Response to Public Health Emergencies

Since August 2011, Connecticut has been hit by three major weather events, Tropical Storm Irene (August 2011), Winter Storm Alfred (October 2011), and Super Storm Sandy (October 2012). Each of these weather events were very different but they all caused significant power outages across the state. The CT Tracking Program is responsible for CO surveillance. These storms challenged us and provided the background and information to significantly modify how we respond prior to, during, and after a major weather event.

During Winter Storm Alfred, the CT Tracking Program partnered with the CT DPH Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) Officer, Dr. Timothy Styles, to develop our enhanced surveillance capabilities. A survey was conducted with laboratory confirmed carbon monoxide poisoning cases to determine more about the circumstances of their poisoning. Dr. Styles took the lead on the creation of the survey questionnaire, data collection, and the analysis. CT Tracking staff utilized the outbreak management tools available through our reportable disease surveillance system to implement the survey questionnaire, link cases to the outbreak event, and assist with the data collection. The CT Tracking Program also coordinated efforts to link CT Poison Control Center call data with our surveillance data.

	Tropical Storm Irene	Winter Storm Alfred	Super Storm Sandy
Time Frame	August 2011	Oct/Nov 2011	Oct/Nov 2012
Number of Power Outages	767,000	830,000	625,000
Number of CO Cases	17	134	31*
Number of CO Events	n/a	72	12*
Number of CO Deaths	n/a	5	0
Enhanced Surveillance	No	Yes	Yes
Interventions	Press Releases	Press Releases	Press Releases, Social Media, Door Hang Tags

* Preliminary numbers as of 11/29/2012

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Cont From Page 1

As a result of the enhanced surveillance activities with Winter Storm Alfred, new carbon monoxide education materials were produced. Results of the survey showed that the majority of people were poisoned as a result of improper generator use or the use of charcoal grills inside the home. Because of the widespread lack of power, electronic media was not available as a public warning system, and therefore the need was identified to use different communication strategies. A door hanger was developed to warn residents about the dangers of using generators, charcoal grills, propane heaters, and other combustion devices inside their homes. These door hangers were made available to local health departments and fire departments for distribution during future emergencies.

Results of the survey also showed that many people had not heard warnings about carbon monoxide poisoning prior to Winter Storm Alfred despite DPH issuing several press releases prior to and immediately following the storm. These results showed that additional communication methods were needed to reach people.

The lessons we learned with Winter Storm Alfred were put to the test with Super Storm Sandy. The CT Tracking Program now has a ready to use carbon monoxide outbreak management system that is fully integrated with the carbon monoxide surveillance system. The analyses can be recreated using the standard data extracts from the surveillance system and the SAS code generated for previous analyses. In addition, over 1,000 of the door hangers developed after Winter Storm Alfred were distributed by local fire departments following Hurricane Sandy. Before and during Hurricane Sandy, the CT DPH and the Tracking Program used social media (Facebook and Twitter) as well as more traditional media outlets to warn people about CO poisoning during power outages. For example, during Super Storm Sandy, over 80 tweets regarding CO were sent out in four languages and 15 messages related to CO were posted to the CT DPH Facebook page.

Program Updates



Data Submission Training Webinar

Please sign up for the upcoming Data Submission Webinar. See details below.

Date: March 14th, 2013 Time: 2:00 - 3:30 PM (EST)

Presenters: Shannon DeWitt, Craig Kassinger, Gonza Namulanda

Agenda:

- Specific details in regards to the 2013 Spring data submission (20 minutes)
- Details about new SAMS File Upload ** Important if you currently use Secure File Upload
- Data validation against respective XML files
- Metadata submission and MCT overview
- Discussion about schemas
- Data Validation Portal to review previously submitted data
- Review transport documentation available on SharePoint
- Demonstrate Data Integrity Validation Engine (DIVE)

If you work with data and any of the acronyms above stumped you or you want a more in-depth understanding, then this webinar is for you. Please try to attend this important webinar as we will try to answer any questions you may have regarding the spring data submission and provide an overview of relevant documentation on SharePoint.

To register email trackingsupport@cdc.gov with your name and email address. Logon details will be provided.

Calendar of Events



March

Mar 6: PI/PM Forum Conference Call (1:00 PM)

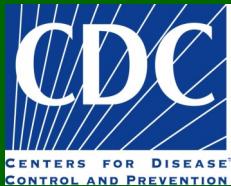
Mar 7: SND Conference Call (1:00 PM)

Mar 14: Data Submission Training Webinar (2:00 PM)

Mar 29: Mid-year Progress Report/Continuation Application Due Date

Weekly Report Distribution

The Weekly Report is distributed to Tracking Program Principal Investigators and Program Managers. Please feel free to distribute the report to other staff as you deem appropriate.



We hope that you find the information in this report to be useful. Any suggestions for improvements or items to highlight should be sent to Mike Smiley at MSmiley@cdc.gov