Environmental Surveillance Frequently Asked Questions

Informatics Systems

Q: What is the difference between DOEHRS and the MESL?

A: DOEHRS is a relational database with a graphical interface to make data entry simple. It includes very specific data for samples and surveys. It is the primary tool for site reconnaissance and data archival. The MESL is a document library that houses much of the data generated before DOEHRS was established. It is home to inspections and reports that were scanned and uploaded and is not a relational data base.

Q: What data should I enter in DOEHRS?

A: Any data (samples or surveys) collected on DOEHRS forms should be entered in DOEHRS.

Q: Do I submit data to DOEHRS or the MESL?

A: DOEHRS is the primary system for OEH data. If the survey or sample type is available in DOEHRS it should be entered in DOEHRS. Data that cannot be entered in DOEHRS should be uploaded to the MESL.

Q: Do I need to submit data to both DOEHRS and the MESL?

A: No, if you enter the data (survey or sample) in DOEHRS you do NOT need to submit it the MESL.

Q: What do I do with classified data?

A: Since DOEHRS is an unclassified system, all classified data should be uploaded to the MESL SIPR. The documents maintained in the SIPRNet version of the MESL are stored locally at the Army Public Health Center (PHC) and can be requested by sending an email to the Deployment Environmental Surveillance Program (DESP) at usarmy.apg.medcom-phc.mbx.desp-request@mail.smil.mil

Additional instructions for submitting and accessing Classified OEHS data are available on the MESL link from the SIPRNet PHC webpage https://phc.army.smil.mil

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Q: Where do I get training on DOEHRS?

A: Training material and how to request individual training is available at the DOEHRS Resources Page (https://mesl.apgea.army.mil/mesl/doehrsResources/initialize.do)

Q: What is the difference between DOEHRS Demonstration and Production?

A: DOEHRS Demonstration (aka DOEHRS Demo) is used for training and only contains notional training data. DOEHRS Production is the live system which should only be used when entering actual data.

Q: What if my location is not in DOEHRS?

A: Most users go through a DOEHRS training class in the form of a Technical Assistance Visit (TAV) from Public Health Command (PHC). Predeployment locations are discussed at that time. If the user has not been through a TAV prior to deployment, they should contact their DESP POC to ensure the location is added correctly.

OEHSA and Exposure Pathways

Q: How often do I need to conduct an OEHSA?

A: Initial OEHSAs are to be completed prior to deployment for all OCONUS deployments of more than 30 days if the location does not have a fixed Medical Treatment Facility.   Upon deployment, the pre-deployment OEHSA should be validated and updated. OEHSAs are to be initiated within 30 days of establishment of a base camp and completed within 3 months of base camp establishment. The OEHSA should be updated annually or sooner if the exposure scenario changes. (Reference DODI 6490.03, DODI 6055.05, MCM 0028-07).

Q: Do I need to complete a "close out" OEHSA?

A: No. A "close out" OEHSA is not necessary because the closure of a base camp eliminates the potential for personnel to be exposed to site hazards. Base camp closure is an environmental compliance-based process assigned to the Engineers.

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Q: How are Exposure Pathways (EPs) different than Conceptual Site Models (CSM)?

A: The EP is defined as the complete mechanism of exposure and information regarding a real or potential health hazard. The CSM is the summation of the all the EPs at a given location. Documented Environmental Surveillance Plan (ESPs) evaluates the EP, and multiple ESPs are used to characterize the CSM.

Q: Who is responsible for completing the Exposure Pathway forms in DOEHRS?

A: The primary responsibility is with the Preventive Medicine personnel on the ground. However, DESP can provide historical perspective and additional guidance on completing Exposure Pathways.

Q: Where can I access the most current OEHSA form?

A: The DOEHRS Resources Site (https://mesl.apgea.army.mil/mesl/doehrsResources/initialize.do)

Q: Where should units send completed OEHSAs?

A: Completed OEHSAs should be entered in DOEHRS, with the exceptions of the classified section, which should be emailed to the MESL-SIPR at oehs.data.army@mail.smil.mil

Q: How do units find out the most current OEHSA at a given location?
A: Look in DOEHRS for the particular location or contact DESP for assistance.

Sample Collection

Q: What should I do before I collect a sample?

A: Ensure the Exposure Pathway has been defined, that samples are necessary to identify or quantify a potential hazard, and you are sampling to characterize that Exposure Pathway. For reach-back sampling and laboratory support, also coordinate the sampling event with your DESP POC.

Q: Can I collect water from an untreated source with the 40 ml kit?

A: Typically no. The 40 ml kit was designed specifically for treated water samples and requires the water to have low turbidity (ideally < 1.0 NTU) and low total dissolved solids (< 1000 mg/L) in order for the laboratory to achieve acceptable detection limits. It is unlikely that surface water would be acceptable in the 40 ml

kit, but high-quality well water might. Please consult with your DESP POC if you have an emergency situation where you may want to potentially use the 40 ml kit for untreated well water.

Q: I found old sampling kits at my location, what should I do?

A: Try to determine the date of the kits and contact DESP.

Q: How can I get my sample results back sooner?

A: You can enter you sampling data in DOEHRS and notify you DESP POC of the DOEHRS ID and sampling shipment information.   This will reduce the sample process time. When the laboratory produces the final validated data package, the data is uploaded to DOEHRS and can then be immediately accessed.