

Health Wise Quarterly

Brought to you by the dedicated staff at

Environmental Health Services Division

New Walk-In Hours:

Effective July 1st, 2022, the Environmental Health Services Division (EHSD) of Austin Public Health, fully reopened its lobby to walk-in customers. The lobby business hours are Monday-Friday 7:45 am to 3:30 pm.

Note: There are no changes to the Mobile Food Vendor permit application and inspections process.

Mobile Food Vendor applications are reviewed on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:00 AM to 11:00 AM and will continue to be by appointment only. To schedule an appointment, go to our website: <https://www.austintexas.gov/department/mobile-food-vendors> where our scheduling calendars are available in both English and Spanish. Mobile Food Vendor, in-person inspections will continue to occur in the parking lot of Rutherford Lane Campus building by appointment only.



UPCOMING OFFICE CLOSURES

Please plan accordingly

EHSD will be CLOSED on:

- ❖ Monday September 5 for Labor Day
- ❖ Friday, November 11 for Veterans Day
- ❖ Thursday and Friday, November 24-25 for Thanksgiving Holiday
- ❖ Friday and Monday, December 23-26 for Christmas Holiday



Food Manager Certification

Rule Update:



In August 2021, the State of Texas adopted the 2017 FDA Food Code to be used in food safety regulation. The previous code, the Texas Food Establishment Rules (TFER), was generally comprised of the 2013 FDA Food Code plus some rules specific to Texas. The FDA Food Code is now the primary reference code, supplemented by a highly condensed TFER. The adoption of the FDA Food Code also comes with some rule changes, most notably the Certified Food Manager (CFM) requirements. Per the FDA Food Code, all retail food establishments must have an identified Person-In-Charge on duty during all hours of operation and that person must be a CFM. Therefore, by definition, there must be a CFM on duty during all hours of operation. This new rule now requires establishments to provide Food Manager training to more employees to ensure all shifts include a CFM.

Historically, APH has issued a 2-point violation, a compliance fee, and performed a follow-up visit when a Food Manager violation was observed. In order to reduce the financial strain on our facilities while meeting the intent of the FDA's Food Manager requirements, we have opted to adjust our compliance actions.

The Environmental Health Services Division regulates most retail food establishments in Travis County which includes the City of Austin, 9 Inter-local agreements and the unincorporated areas of the County. Within the city limits of Austin, facilities are subject to City Ordinance 10-3-31 which states at least one employee per facility must register their Food Manager Certificate with our office. We will continue with the previous compliance actions (a 2-point violation, compliance fee, and a follow-up visit) to be assessed when the registered certificate is not available for inspection. Only one Food Manager Certificate (FMC) must be registered and presented during inspection. All other FMCs for the facility may present a certificate issued by a third-party vendor.

Moving forward our inspectors will be only issuing a 2-point violation (without a fee or follow-up visit) if the observed violation is due to the PIC on-site not being a CFM. This policy change will also account for facilities where more than one permit exists but allow the establishment to have a single registered FMC for the site and then requiring a third-party vendor's certificate for each subsequent permit. This provision will only apply to establishments with multiple permits under the same ownership at a single location, such as grocery stores. We plan to continue this policy in 2023.

For example:

- ❖ A facility within the City of Austin is unable to present a registered FMC upon request.
Result: 2-point violation, compliance fee and follow-up visit in 10 days.
- ❖ A City of Austin facility has a registered FMC available at the time of inspection. The on-duty PIC does not have a certificate from a third-party vendor.
Result: 2-point violation.
- ❖ The PIC of a facility outside of Austin city limits presents a third-party vendor FMC, but is not registered.
Result: No violation (Only City of Austin facilities must present a registered FMC).
- ❖ The PIC of a facility outside of Austin city limits is unable to present any FMC at the time of inspection.
Result: 2-point violation and follow-up visit; but no compliance fee. (No compliance fees issued in unincorporated areas of the County)

Mobile Food Vendors: Updated International Fire Code

On September 1st, 2021, the City of Austin adopted the 2021 version of the International Fire Code (IFC). Due to significant additions regarding Mobile Food Units (MFU), the implementation was delayed until May 1st, 2022, for MFUs.

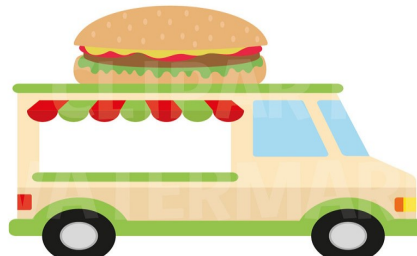
The 2021 IFC added Section 319, Mobile Food Preparation Vehicles. This new section requires any MFUs that are equipped with appliances that produce grease laden vapors to comply with the IFC. This includes ALL appliances whether propane, wood, charcoal or electric powered. This is a change for Austin as previously MFUs that cooked using only electrically powered appliances did not require a fire inspection.

Effective immediately NEW MFUs permitted after May 1st, 2022, using electric appliances will need to comply with the 2021 IFC. The requirements include:

- An automatic hood fire extinguishing system (commonly called an Ansul system) with a current semi-annual inspection tag.
- An electrical inspection with a completed AFD inspection form.
- A Class K fire extinguisher with a current annual inspection tag, in addition to the required 2A10BC fire extinguisher.

The new requirements for MFUs that use electric appliances may also incur an additional cost of a fire inspection fee which is \$265.00.

Any questions regarding these requirements should be directed to Austin Fire Department at AFDMobileVending@austintexas.gov or (512) 974-0160.



FAQ'S REGARDING RECREATIONAL WATER SAFETY AND COVID-19

Can the coronavirus survive in a swimming pool?

The CDC states that it's unlikely that the new coronavirus can survive in a pool that's properly maintained — which includes regularly checking and adjusting the pool's chlorine levels and pH levels. In addition, the CDC also reports that there's currently no evidence that COVID-19 is spread through water in a pool or hot tub.

Is the hotel's pool safe to use amidst the COVID-19 pandemic?

Being in a swimming pool or open water is unlikely to increase your risk of contracting COVID-19 if you maintain appropriate personal protective habits: frequent and appropriate handwashing after touching high-contact surfaces, face covering outside the water, and social distancing both in and out of the water..

Are rivers, lakes and beaches safe during the COVID-19 pandemic?

The potential for COVID-19 to spread at natural recreational water areas such as rivers, lakes and beaches is related to the crowds at these places, which is why it is crucial to practice social distancing, even while swimming.

Should I wear a mask while at the pool or at the beach during the COVID-19 pandemic?

The CDC says you should never wear a cloth mask while in the water. A cloth mask becomes heavy when wet, and that makes breathing difficult. Do wear a mask when on the pool deck, entering restrooms and other public buildings, or interacting with others when you're not in the water.

CDC Issues New Guidelines For Swimming Pools

While there is [ongoing community spread](#) of COVID-19 of the virus that causes COVID-19, it is important for individuals as well as owners and operators of these facilities to take steps to ensure health and safety: Everyone should follow local and state guidance that may determine when and how recreational water facilities may operate.

Individuals should continue to [protect themselves and others](#) at recreational water venues both in and out of the water – for example, by practicing social distancing and good hand hygiene. In addition to ensuring water safety and quality, owners and operators of community pools, hot tubs, spas, and water play areas should follow the [interim guidance for businesses and employers](#) for cleaning and disinfecting their community facilities.

Visit www.cdc.gov for more information

Austin Public Health now offering: Mobile Vaccination Program (MVP)

The Mobile Vaccination Program (MVP) offers COVID-19 vaccinations for specific groups in community-identified locations.

❖ For Individuals

If you are homebound, call [3-1-1](tel:311) or [512-974-2000](tel:512-974-2000) and leave your name and phone number. APH will schedule a visit for you, your caregivers, and your household.



❖ For Business and Organizations -

Austin Public Health Mobile Vaccination Request

If you are interested in scheduling a pop-up clinic [at your facility, please complete this Austin Public Health Mobile Vaccination Request form.](#)

Have a question about the Mobile Vaccination Program?

Check out our [Frequently Asked Questions.](#)

Travis County continues to host [vaccine clinics](#) throughout the community. You can also get up to date with COVID-19 vaccines at physicians' offices, pharmacies and other health care facilities. Find vaccine providers using [Vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) ([Vacunas.gov](https://www.vacunass.gov) in Spanish) or by texting your zip code to 438829 (822862 in Spanish) to find a nearby clinic. As always, the APH Shots for Tots/Big Shots clinics are open by appointment and COVID-19 vaccines are available to all regardless of insurance status. Call 512-972-5520 to schedule.

Free COVID-19 tests

APH encourages testing before and after gatherings, especially if you plan to be in close contact with individuals who are at risk. APH's Metz Elementary testing site (84 Robert T. Martinez Jr. St., Austin, TX 78702) is still open providing free PCR tests and rapid antigen tests. A third round of free mail-order COVID-19 test kits is available [through the federal government.](#)

Free masks (N-95 respirators)

Use the CDC's [mask-locator tool](#) to find pharmacies near you that provide free masks (N95 respirators). It does not show current inventories, so check with the location for availability.

You can also call: Call 1-800-232-0233 (TTY 1-888-720-7489) for help in getting free masks.

City of Austin, Travis County Declare Monkeypox a Public Health Emergency

Monkeypox is a disease caused by infection with the monkeypox virus. It is not commonly seen in the U.S. Typical symptoms include fever, malaise and a rash that may appear as pimples or blisters. Monkeypox is spread by close contact with an infected person, or by touching clothing or linens that were in contact with the infected person's rash or body fluids.

On August 9, 2022 the City of Austin and Travis County declared monkeypox a public health emergency as the number of cases in Austin-Travis County continues to rise. Immediate action must be taken to curb the spread of the disease in our community.

The declarations will be found here:

[Austin](#)
[Travis County](#)

As of August 9, 2022 there are nine confirmed cases and 59 presumptive cases of monkeypox in Austin-Travis County. These numbers are updated weekly [online](#).

You can protect yourself from monkeypox by:

- Being fully clothed and avoiding skin-to-skin contact with strangers.
- Limiting close and or/intimate contact to people you know.
- Close contact includes sharing items like drinks and blankets.
- Wearing well-fitting masks in close quarters when social distancing isn't possible to reduce sharing mouth/nasal fluids for prolonged periods.
- Being aware of monkeypox symptoms. Along with rash, symptoms include fever, headache and muscle aches, chills, and swollen lymph nodes.
- Washing your hands and using hand sanitation often. Staying home if you feel sick or [experience any symptoms](#).

Available Resources on Monkeypox:

Materials include handouts, posters, social media graphics, and other materials to be shared.

APH: <https://www.austintexas.gov/department/monkeypox>

TX DSHS: <https://dshs.texas.gov/news/updates.shtm#monkeypox>

CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/index.html>

WHO: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/situations/monkeypox-oubreak-2022>



Welcome our new EHSD Staff!

Do the best you can until you know better. When you know better, do better. ~Maya Angelou~

Isac Martinez: Environmental Health Officer I

Isac is originally from Eagle Pass, TX a small town on the Texas, Mexico border. He moved to Austin in his early teens and now lives Hutto, TX. He is a graduate of St. Edward's University with a degree in Physical Science. Prior to joining the EHSD team he was working with APH's Equity line, the call center for Covid-19 information. His previous experiences also include inspection of roadway construction as quality assurance. To relax Isac enjoys gardening, hiking, and photography. For fun he enjoys road trips and traveling abroad. He is excited about his new endeavor with EHSD.



Rasheed Mumin: Environmental Health Officer I

Rasheed was born in Lagos, Nigeria where he lived most of his childhood. He migrated to Houston, Texas where he began his education at the age of 16. His highest level of education is an MS in Occupational Safety and Health, which he received from Columbia Southern University. Rasheed has great passion for public service. He has worked in the law enforcement field as a Correctional Officer, in the Military as a Water Treatment Specialist and now works for Austin Public Health as an Environmental Health Officer. Rasheed is married with three children and one the way. He loves to play ping pong and soccer.



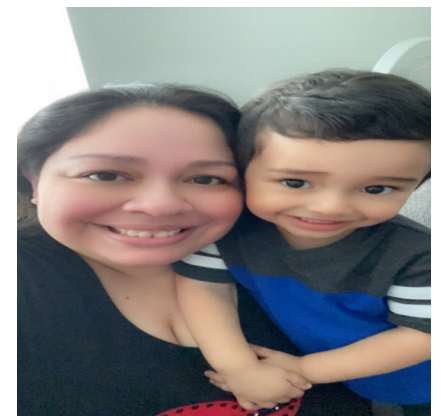
Clara Ramirez: Environmental Health Officer I

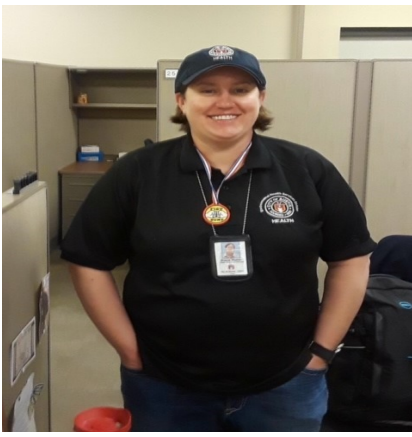
Clara was born in San Marcos and raised in Kyle TX. She attended Texas A&M University-College Station, where she was able to obtain her bachelors in nutrition, with a concentration in dietetics, and minor in neuroscience. She previously worked for the WIC department for a little over 2 years, before transferring to EHSD. In her spare time, she enjoys cross-fit, running, hiking, travelling of any sort, especially national parks. Fun fact about her, she completed her first ever marathon in Austin back in February 2022. She is excited to be a part of the EHSD team and is looking forward to what all it has to offer.



Amanda Trevino: Customer Service Representative

Amanda is a recent new hire that came on board with EHSD in March of 2022, as a Customer Service Representative. She came from the banking industry and has over 15 years of customer service experience. She is a local Austinite who graduated from Austin High School. She plans to continue her education in the future when her son is a little older. Amanda enjoys going to the park and Chuck E. Cheese with her favorite person, her son. One of her favorite hobbies is going to live music events and concerts.





Brandi Walker: Environmental Health Officer II

Brandi has worked for Austin Public Health over 7 years. She attended college at Texas Woman’s University. Where she received a bachelor’s degree in foods and Nutrition with a minor in science. Brandi loves spending time outdoors. Some of her hobbies include camping, disc golf, paddle boarding, and attending concerts. Her favorite sports teams are the Dallas Cowboys and Austin FC. Verde Listos! She is happy to be working with Austin Public Health.



Alicia Wilcox: Environmental Health Officer I

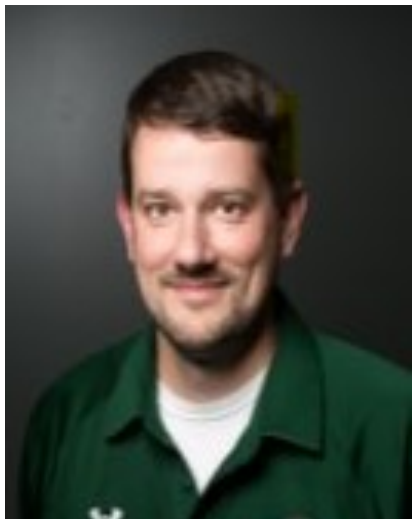
Alicia is a graduate of Texas State University with a degree in Exercise Sports Science/Community Health and Wellness for Clinical Populations. Alicia loves to spend time with family, friends and fur babies too! Alicia loves to travel when she gets the chance and looks forward to going back to Europe one day. She loves the Texas sunshine and cooling off at the beach or lake. Alicia is excited to be a part of Austin Public Health and she looks forward to learning and growing with EHSD.

Congratulations to promoted EHSD staff!



Dawn Sandoval: Customer Service Representative Senior

Dawn was promoted to CSR Senior in October of 2021 after working three years as a CSR with EHSD. She previously worked in customer service, then accounting and human resources for 10+ years with a local printing company. She enjoys baking and spending time with her family in her spare time. Dawn is looking forward to continuing her career here at EHSD.



Aaron Urbanek: Environmental Health Officer III

Aaron has been with the City of Austin for 15 years. He started with Austin Animal Center in 2007 as a veterinary technician and then was promoted to a veterinary technician lead. In 2018, he moved to Austin Public Health as an Environmental Health Officer I in Environmental Vector Control. He quickly advanced to EHO II and recently has advanced to a EHO III. When he isn’t at work, he spends his time coaching volleyball, kayak fishing and doing projects around the house. He has coached volleyball for over 10 years and his most recent volleyball team finished 3rd at USAV Nationals in the USA Division. He is a graduate of Texas A&M University and has a degree in Biomedical Science and Entomology. He is a native Austinite and is thankful to be a part of the city’s workforce.

We are Hiring!! City of Austin is Recruiting Consumer & Environmental Health Professionals

Current and upcoming postings in Environmental Health Services Division:

- ◆ Assistant Director
- ◆ Business Process Specialist - Temp Position
- ◆ Customer Service Representative
- ◆ Customer Service Representative Senior- Mobile Specialist
- ◆ Environmental Health Supervisor
- ◆ Planner II
- ◆ Program Manager II
- ◆ Research Analyst Senior

The City of Austin offers great benefits for regular employees, including paid holidays, medical and dental insurance, 5 year vesting period, retirement plans and pension with COA matching pension funds, public service student loan forgiveness, tuition reimbursement, and more!

For more information:

[City of Austin Job Search](#)

[EHSD's main Webpage](#)

[City of Austin Job Descriptions](#)

[Regular Employee Benefits](#)

Or call 512-978-0339



Environmental Health Services Division's Facebook Group

Be a member of our group and stay up to date! Look for us on Facebook -
ATX Environmental Health.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/atxenvironmentalhealth>

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES DIVISION CUSTOMER WALK IN HOURS



Lobby Hours Rutherford Lane Campus 1520 Rutherford Lane 7:45 am to 3:30 pm.
Planning Development Center 6310 Wilhelmina Delco Drive Electronic Submissions ONLY
Mobile Vending Physical Permitting Inspections Rutherford Lane Campus
1520 Rutherford Lane 8:00 AM - 11:00AM Tuesday and Thursday by Appointment ONLY



EHSD partners with Austin 3-1-1 to handle all citizen complaints and environmental investigations. To request services, get general assistance or submit a citizen complaint, dial 3-1-1 or 512-974-2000 if you are calling from outside the Austin service area.

If you feel an inspection issue or complaint investigation has not been satisfactorily addressed, or to speak with a manager regarding administrative issues, please call us directly at 512-978-0300 between the hours of 7:45AM - 4:45PM Monday - Friday.

Mailing Address: EHSD Post Office Box 142529, Austin, TX 78714

Physical Address: Rutherford Lane Campus 1520 Rutherford Lane Building 1 Suite 205 Austin, TX 78754

Email Address: EHSD.service@austintexas.gov

Web Address: <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/ehsd>



Feedback: Please complete our online survey to help us better serve our customers: www.surveymonkey.com/s/EHSDSurvey



Summer 2022

