

Health Wise Quarterly

Brought to you by the friendly staff at your

Environmental Health Services Division

On Wednesday, March 10, 2021, the statewide mask mandate was lifted and all businesses are allowed to open 100%. Businesses are permitted to require employees and/or customers to follow extra hygiene measures, including the wearing of facial coverings. EHSD strongly encourages all businesses to continue following social distancing and masking protocols to help slow the spread of COVID-19 in our community. While Austin Public Health and other providers continue to provide immunizations it is important for everyone to stay vigilant in the fight against the virus. Together we can help end the pandemic sooner.

My mask protects you. Your mask protects me.



Austin-Travis County is emphasizing that the health authority rules initially adopted in July 2020 remain in place through May 18, 2021, unless modified or extended.

 [AustinTexas.gov/COVID19](https://austintexas.gov/COVID19)



Under the existing health authority emergency rules, businesses and other sites must require individuals to wear a face covering, with noted exceptions. Businesses should also clean and disinfect high touch items, require at least six feet between groups of ten or fewer, and post face covering and hygiene signage.

In the City of Austin, an individual must also wear a face covering when outside of their residence.

Read the full Health Authority Emergency Rules for [Austin](#) and [Travis County \(renewed 3/9\)](#).

We are Hiring!!

City of Austin is Recruiting Consumer & Environmental Health Professionals

Upcoming Postings in Environmental Health Services Division:

- ♦ Environmental Health Supervisor
- ♦ Environmental Health Officer III
- ♦ Environmental Health Officer I or II

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



National Public Health Week

April 5-11, 2021

Building Bridges to Better Health

We may be physically distant from each other, but now it's more important than ever to come together. That's why our 2021 theme is "Building Bridges to Better Health."



Making communities safe and healthy is public health's top priority. COVID-19 has made that even more important. Even though we won't gather in person, social media and virtual platforms make it easier than ever for us to connect, create and take action.

National Public Health Week 2021 will take place completely virtually April 5-11, 2021.

Help us keep the conversation going

In the midst of the most challenging public health crisis of our lifetimes, it's more important than ever to celebrate public health.

Help us continue to [thank public health](#) for all the hard work everyone's doing to keep our communities safe.

American Public Health Association is hosting NPHW events entirely online this year, to protect our partners and neighbors during the COVID-19 pandemic. Learn more about [what APHA is doing](#), and what you can do to [prepare without panic](#).

Our NPHW [fact sheets](#) are available year-round on the NPHW website so we can keep the momentum and learning going. Learn more about [this year's daily themes](#) and how you can be part of the movement for science, action and health, year-round.

How else can you stay involved?

- Check out our [NPHW series on Public Health Newswire](#). Our guest posts from APHA leaders include one from APHA Past-President Lisa Carlson on tending to our mental wellness during the COVID-19 pandemic, and more.
- In the workplace: partner across public and private sectors to make sure decisions are made with the public's health in mind.
- Within our communities: let's start new conversations with our neighbors and become advocates for positive change.

Working together, we can build healthier communities and eventually, the healthiest nation. We need your help to get there.



April 2021—June 2021



Congratulations to New and Promoted EHSD Staff!

BE SO GOOD THEY CAN'T IGNORE YOU. ~Steve Martin~



Ann Cline: Environmental Health Officer I

Ann was born and raised in Houston then moved to the big city of New Braunfels in 2001 where she finished up school at Texas State University. After changing her major 4 times she finally fell in love with a degree in Nutrition and Foods. Ann has worked an array of jobs in the restaurant industry for 19 years with a passion for people, service, and sanitation. Being a part of Austin Public Health is a dream that she never thought would come true.

Charlie Huang: Environmental Health Officer I

Charlie was born and raised in Guangzhou, China, until the end of 2007, when he immigrated to the US and stayed in Houston for most of his teenage years. After graduating from Baylor University with a degree in Environmental Science, he moved to Austin towards the end of 2020, where he started a career with Austin Public Health, working as an Environmental Health Officer. Charlie enjoys traveling and experiencing new things, since traveling has become difficult, he has found joy with staying at home, playing games and watching movies during his down time.



Shauntrell Randolph: Environmental Health Officer I (Temporary Position)

Shauntrell is a wife of 18 years and a mother of three teenagers. Shauntrell is from the big ol' town of Chip and Joanna Gains, Texas...oops I mean Waco, Texas. Shauntrell moved to Austin five years ago to attend college and has resided in Round Rock since. She graduated in April of 2020 from Concordia University of Texas with a degree in Environmental Science and Conservation. Shauntrell is passionate about living sustainably, paying it forward and preserving the world in which we live. Shauntrell loves to cook, watch documentaries and anything outdoorsy. She looks forward to what the future holds for herself and her family and is very excited to be a part of the Austin Public Health department.

WANT TO BE INFORMED DURING EMERGENCIES?

STAY INFORMED! Sign up for notifications on WarnCentralTexas.org

STAY INFORMED

Sign up to get official emergency alerts in your neighborhood by text, email or phone.

Visit WarnCentralTexas.org or call (866) 939-0911 and sign up today.



A service of the Capital Area Council of Governments in Bastrop, Blanco, Burnet, Caldwell, Fayette, Hays, Lee, Llano, Travis, and Williamson Counties.

MANTÉNGASE INFORMADO

Inscríbase para avisos oficiales de emergencia en su vecindario por texto, correo electrónico o teléfono.

Visite WarnCentralTexas.org o llame al (866) 939-0911 y inscríbase hoy.



Un servicio del Consejo de Gobiernos del Área de la Capital en los condados de Bastrop, Blanco, Burnet, Caldwell, Fayette, Hays, Lee, Llano, Travis y Williamson.

If you want to receive notifications specifically from Environmental Health Services Division (EHSD), and you are not already, please email Sherry.Lyles@austintexas.gov. EHSD sends out announcements, newsletters, and public health emergency response guidance specific to the establishments that we permit and/or environmental health via Constant Contact.

LEGAL COMPLIANCE INFORMATION

For City of Austin Food Operators

Food Compliance Requirement Chapter 10-3-2

Unsafe Food and Failing Scores



UNSAFE FOOD, per [Austin City Code 10-3-1\(21\)](#) is defined as:

- food that contains any chemical, poisonous or injurious substance which may be harmful to the health of a consumer;
- food that is not packaged in conformity with this chapter;
- food that contains a contaminated or putrid substance;
- food that has been prepared, packed or held under unsanitary conditions whereby it may have become contaminated, or may have been rendered diseased, unwholesome, or harmful to health.

A person may not manufacture for supply, possess with intent to supply, display, sell, or supply, with or without charge, any food that is unsafe or misbranded.

If a Food Enterprise operator in the City of Austin fails a health inspection due to unsafe food or contaminated food, the below compliance actions will be taken:

Any score below 50

- Re-inspection fee must be paid and re-inspection by EHSD after 48 hours.
- Permit suspended and immediate closure for 48 hours.
- Filing of a criminal charge in the appropriate court.



1st score below 70

- Re-inspection fee must be paid and re-inspection by EHSD after 10 days.

3rd score below 70 within 36 months of first failing score

- Re-inspection fee must be paid and re-inspection by EHSD after 48 hours.
- Permit suspended and immediate closure for 48 hours.
- Filing of a criminal charge in the appropriate court.

2nd score below 70 within 36 months of first failing score

- Re-inspection fee must be paid and re-inspection by EHSD after 10 days.
- Filing of a criminal charge in the appropriate court.

4th score below 70 within 36 months of first failing score

- Permit suspended and immediate, indefinite closure.
- Permit revocation process is started.

To avoid legal charges and court fines, the person(s) in charge of a food establishment must maintain all food, at all times, under sanitary conditions whereby it will not become contaminated or become rendered diseased, unwholesome and injurious to anyone's health. This offense is punishable by a fine not to exceed \$2,000.

For more information on the Food Compliance Requirement, click [HERE](#).



OFFICES CLOSED! Plan Accordingly. EHSD will be CLOSED on:

- ◆ Monday, May 31 for Memorial Day
- ◆ Friday, June 18 for Juneteenth
- ◆ Monday, July 5 for Independence Day

KNOW YOUR PATHOGEN



What is Rabies?

Rabies is a preventable viral disease often transmitted through the bite of a rabid animal. The virus infects the central nervous system of mammals causing a viral encephalomyelitis that is nearly always fatal. Although all mammals are susceptible, reservoirs and important vectors include dogs, bats, raccoons, skunks, and foxes.

Clinical Features

The onset of rabies may be very similar to the flu including general weakness, apprehension, fever, headache, and sensory changes at the site of an animal bite. Within days, acute symptoms of cerebral dysfunction, anxiety, confusion, and agitation may appear. As the disease continues to progress, the person may also experience delirium, hallucinations, insomnia, and hydrophobia.

Causative Agent

Rabies virus belongs to the order *Mononegaviruses* which include negative-strand RNA viruses with nonsegmented genomes. Within this grouping, viruses like rabies virus with a distinct “bullet” shape are classified under the *Rhabdoviridae* family. Within this family, rabies virus belongs to the genus *Lyssavirus*. The genus *Lyssavirus* includes rabies virus, Lagos bat, Mokola virus, Duvenhage virus, European bat virus 1 & 2, and Australian bat virus.

Occurrence

Worldwide—more than ten million human exposures and approximately 55,000 rabies deaths are estimated to occur each year. Almost all of these cases occur in developing countries, especially in Asia and Africa. However, the disease is thought to be underreported worldwide, partially due to misdiagnosis.

NEW CODE FOR PUBLIC AND SEMI-PUBLIC POOLS

As of January 1, 2021, the State of Texas has adopted a new code for public and semi-public pools. The Environmental Vector Control unit of Austin Public Health Environmental Health Services Division is primarily responsible for public and semi-public pool inspections and compliance. The following is the most prevalent changes to the new pool code.

1. Pool or spa with single drain must install an Automatic Pump Shut-off System (APSS) – Pool constructed prior to 10/1/1999.
2. Suction Valve Release System (SVRS)/ Automatic Pump Shut-off System (APSS) require testing and maintenance logs to be maintained and made available upon request. Logs MUST be maintained on site for a minimum of 2 years.
3. Sign must be posted providing the PRECISE LOCATION/ADDRESS of the pool on or with the Emergency Phone (1" Lettering).
4. Sign providing the Hours of Operation must be posted (1" lettering).
5. Sign that states the SPA Maximum User Load Limit must be posted (2" lettering).
6. Sign that states the POOL Maximum User Load Limit must be posted (2" lettering).
7. Sign that states: DO NOT SWIM IF YOU HAVE BEEN ILL WITH DIARRHEA WITHIN THE PAST 2 WEEKS must be posted (2" lettering).
8. Sign that states: CHANGING DIAPERS WITHIN 6 FEET OF THE POOL IS PROHIBITED (2" lettering).
9. Sign designating "EMERGENCY SPA SHUTOFF" switch must be posted (2" lettering).
10. Sign that states: PETS IN THE POOL ARE PROHIBITED (2" lettering).
11. Sign that states: PETS IN THE SPA ARE PROHIBITED (2" lettering).
12. Sign that states: GLASS ITEMS NOT ALLOWED IN THE POOL YARD must be posted (2" lettering).
13. Sign that states: EXTENDED BREATH HOLDING ACTIVITIES ARE DANGEROUS AND PROHIBITED must be posted (2" lettering).
14. Cell phone used as an Emergency Phone must be activated by a service provider and registered to the pool location.
15. Cell phone used as an Emergency Phone must be connected to a permanent power supply.

For any additional information required regarding the new pool/spa code, please contact Austin Public Health at [\(512\) 978-0300](tel:5129780300).

[https://dshs.texas.gov/poolspa/pdf/DSHS-20-0011 - Public Swimming Pools and Spas \(EC Approved Preamble and Rules - Adoption\).pdf](https://dshs.texas.gov/poolspa/pdf/DSHS-20-0011_-_Public_Swimming_Pools_and_Spas_(EC_Approved_Preamble_and_Rules_-_Adoption).pdf)



Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point, (HACCP) Plans: When do I need one? What are specialized procedures?



Specialized processes are ways of cooking, storing, and/or modifying foods by using age old techniques, new technology, or food additives to extend shelf life and maintain freshness. By reducing the ability of spoilage bacteria to grow and proliferate, foods can be prepared in advance of service and still maintain their fresh look and taste. These processes are seen in many facilities and they require a system of checks and balances to ensure that the foods produced are free of physical, chemical, and biological hazards.

Examples of specialized processes requiring an approved HACCP plan are reduced oxygen packaging, which includes sous vide cooking and cook-chill, fermentation, curing or drying meats, smoking meats for preservation, custom processing of meat, live molluscan shellfish tanks, packaging juice, sprouting seeds or beans, using food additives or adding components such as vinegar to preserve food or to render a food so it is not a time temperature control for safety food.

An approved HACCP plan (approved through Austin/Travis County) is required to perform these specialized processes. This applies to permitted food establishments in Travis County, the City of Austin and cities we have interlocal agreements with. City Application fees are \$290.00 per HACCP application, Travis County is fee exempt, but still requires an application to be submitted and the HACCP Plan to be approved. The fee includes two plan reviews for approval, if it is not approved after two reviews an additional \$290 fee will be required.

The three person HACCP team is led by Environmental Health Officer Supervisor, Grisel Saenz R.S., Environmental Health Officer III, Theresa Giudice, R.S. and Environmental Health Officer III, Khanh Le, R.S.. A facility wanting to conduct specialized processes should contact the HACCP review team at their email address HACCP@austintexas.gov for any questions or for guidance documents.

The HACCP team reviews the HACCP applications for food safety, flow charts, hazard analysis chart, training plan, operating procedures, sanitization procedures, lab results (if required), logs, verification and other critical processes in the HACCP plan. A reviewer will check the HACCP plan for completeness and compliance with applicable Texas Food Establishment Rules (TFER). After a HACCP plan is reviewed it is sent back to the responsible party listed on the HACCP plan for editing if needed. The responsible party may set up a meeting to discuss any questions they may have with a HACCP review member before submittal/resubmittal.

After the HACCP plan is approved an approval letter that indicates the HACCP plan has been approved is provided. The approval letter, approved plan and all required logs need to be maintained on site. Failure to follow the approved HACCP plan and required documentation may cause the HACCP approval to be revoked.

Environmental Health Services Division's Facebook Group



Be a member of our group!

Look for us on Facebook - ATX Environmental Health.

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

Healthy and Safe Swimming Week

Last week of May 2021

Swimming is a fun, healthy way to stay physically active and spend quality time with family and friends. *Healthy and Safe Swimming Week* highlights the roles that swimmers, parents, aquatics and beach staff, residential pool owners, and public health officials play in preventing disease outbreaks, drowning, and pool chemical injuries.

For more information visit CDC:

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/safe-swimming-week/index.html>



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES DIVISION CUSTOMER WALK IN HOURS
Lobby Hours Rutherford Lane Campus 1520 Rutherford Lane by Appointment ONLY
Planning Development Center 6310 Wilhelmina Delco Drive Electronic Submissions ONLY
Mobile Vending Physical Permitting Inspections Rutherford Lane Campus
1520 Rutherford Lane 7:45 AM - 11:00AM Tuesday and Thursday by Appointment ONLY



EHSD is partnering 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/environmental-health-services>

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



April 2021—June 2021

