

EHS Guide for Human Health & Safety in Your Yukon Camp Facility



Embarking on a project in the territory?
Planning to temporarily use or occupy Yukon land?

This guide explains the steps you need to take when planning a camp facility in the Yukon.

Who is EHS?

Environmental Health Services (EHS), part of Yukon Health and Social Services, promotes care for the environment in the interest of human health.

Environmental Health Officers provide services to individuals, businesses and governments, provide consultation and educational services and engage in inspection, surveillance and enforcement activities in support of regulatory programs.

Environmental Health Officers will work with you for the prevention and suppression of disease in the areas of drinking water, sewage disposal, food services, accommodation and camp sanitation.

Human Health & Safety

Whether you're planning a mining, wilderness tourism or exploration camp/lodge, Environmental Health Services will work with you to protect the human health and safety of your camp facility.

Each activity and situation is unique. Environmental Health Officers are your best resource to help you navigate the *Public Health and Safety Act* for the permitting guidelines and regulations surrounding:

- ▶ **Drinking Water**
- ▶ **Sewage Disposal Systems**
- ▶ **Food Services**
- ▶ **Accommodation**
- ▶ **Camp Sanitation**

To help you get started here is some information on each of these subjects that you should know.

► **Drinking Water**

Drinking water in a camp can come from a variety of sources such as water delivery, bottled water, lakes, streams and wells.

The most significant risks to human health from drinking water come from microscopic organisms such as disease-causing bacteria, protozoa and viruses. The associated health effects can be quite severe and have long-term health impacts.

Generally, sources such as deep-drilled wells, bottled water or municipal water are microbiologically safe whereas water drawn from shallow wells or surface water bodies such as lakes and streams is generally considered microbiologically unsafe.

In Yukon, all water that is used for consumption, food preparation and hygiene must meet the quality outlined in the *Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality*. Water from shallow wells and surface sources requires treatment to make it safe.

The *Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality* are developed by the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Committee on Drinking Water and published by Health Canada. Understanding them is vital to the health and safety of your camp.

► **Sewage Disposal**

Under the Yukon *Public Health and Safety Act*, the *Sewage Disposal Systems Regulation* applies to:

“the disposal of sewage from all buildings and like structures, temporary or permanent, vehicles which have toilet facilities and sewage produced from public gatherings and campgrounds, except where disposed of by way of a municipal sewage system...”

The sewage disposal system for your camp may include a pit privy, septic system, sewage holding tank, lagoons or package treatment plants. Improper sewage disposal systems can affect human health through exposure to disease-causing organisms and the attraction of insects and wildlife. No matter what sewage disposal system you put in place, it must be designed, installed and operated in accordance with the *Sewage Disposal Systems Regulation*. **Alternate designs must be approved by an Environmental Health Officer prior to installation.**

As it is highly unlikely that your camp facility will tie into a municipal sewage disposal system, this regulation outlines that your camp facility system must:

- Be located so as not to contaminate land, ground water or surface water.
- Be set-back from buildings, roads and property lines so as not to pose a risk to human health.

A safely constructed and operated sewage disposal system is crucial to a healthy camp. Depending on your camp's circumstances and especially if your camp is remote, it is highly recommended that you contact an Environmental Health Officer to help you determine your approval requirements.

► **Food Services**

Correct food transportation, storage, preparation and service — especially to and in remote sites — is key to the preservation of human health and safety. The lack of these elements, insanitary conditions both inside and outside your food preparation and storage areas and unsafe water can impact your camp food and result in illness or disease. To ensure food does not affect human health, your camp facility must provide:

- Adequate space for food storage and preparation.
- Adequate refrigerated and freezer storage space.

When planning your camp, it is recommended that you refer to the *Camp Sanitation Regulations* and *Food Safety Code of Practice* and detail your kitchen and food services so that an Environmental Health Officer is best able to assist you and determine if it is adequate. Also, details of the meals you will be providing is required by an Environmental Health Officer to best guide you in the process.

► **Accommodations**

In the course of your planning, EHS will also require that you describe your camp facility's living accommodations.

You will be asked to outline details such as:

- The maximum number of people who will be living in the camp at any one time.
- The shower and laundry facilities (if applicable) and sleeping quarters.
- The number of people and cubic feet per room in the sleeping quarters.

► **Camp Sanitation**

Environmental Health Services requires that the condition of your camp be sanitary and maintained in accordance with the *Camp Sanitation Regulations* and *Public Health Regulations*.

Regarding solid waste disposal (garbage), an Environmental Health Officer will refer you to the Department of Environment.

Quick Links

- ▶ **Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality — Health Canada**
www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/water-eau/drink-potab/guide/index-eng.php
- ▶ **Yukon *Public Health & Safety Act* and Regulations**
www.hss.gov.yk.ca/environmental_regs.php
- ▶ **Yukon Health & Social Services**
www.hss.gov.yk.ca
- ▶ **Environment Yukon**
www.environmentyukon.gov.yk.ca
- ▶ **Yukon Energy, Mines and Resources
Land Management Branch**
www.emr.gov.yk.ca/lands

For more information and guidance, please contact:

- ▶ **Environmental Health Services**
Health and Social Services
Government of Yukon
2 Hospital Road Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 3H8
867-667-8391 or 1-800-661-0408, ext. 8391 (in Yukon communities)
www.hss.gov.yk.ca/environmental.php

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