

SBAR
Environmental Child Care
Special Circumstance Procedure Change
Bureau of Environmental Health Services
October 7, 2015

Situation: Environmental Child Care (ECC), within the Bureau of Environmental Health Services (BEHS), is responsible for the statewide program which conducts annual sanitation inspections at all regulated child care facilities in the State of Missouri. These inspections are conducted by Bureau staff and by approximately 106 local public health agencies (LPHAs) with whom the Bureau has signed Participation Agreements.

Special Circumstance inspection requests can include urgent requests such as: disease outbreaks, sewer backups, building structural issues, water main breaks, no heat or no electricity, etc. and must be handled in an expeditious manner to safeguard children in care.

Non-urgent special circumstance inspection requests include second and third re-inspections as part of the annual sanitation inspection approval process.

Due to the volume of requests that come through the bureau; a potential exists that a special circumstance request may not be handled in an expeditious manner.

Background: In September of 2014 BEHS centralized all inspection requests received from the Section for Child Care Regulation. In the current fiscal year, BEHS will process approximately 10,000 sanitation inspections performed by bureau staff and LPHAs.

Special circumstance requests have been handled by BEHS regional offices and the Environmental Public Health Specialist (EPHS) IVs as received from each LPHA. Under the current process, the LPHA contacts their regional EPHS and requests the special circumstance approval. EPHS field staff grant special circumstance approvals on the days they are scheduled to be in the office which is at a minimum of one day per work week. Granting approval may also require the EPHS to gain approval from the Section for Child Care Regulation (SCCR) regional office.

Assessment: The Bureau must ensure that special circumstance requests, especially those of an urgent nature, be answered promptly to ensure the protection of children in care. BEHS plans to centralize all special circumstance requests. All requests will be processed by central office located in Jefferson City. Staff in central office will be able to monitor these requests and ensure they are handled in an expeditious manner.

If approval is required from SCCR for an urgent request, central office staff will work with SCCR management to ensure prompt approval to grant special circumstance approval to the LPHA.

Recommendation/Request: In order to expedite special circumstance requests from LPHAs, the Bureau has created a generic email account (eccprogram.lphas@health.mo.gov). This mailbox will be used for LPHAs to submit their special circumstance requests and to submit their monthly ECC billing. Detailed special circumstance (both urgent and non-urgent) and billing procedures have been created (see attached) and will be sent out to all LPHAs via BEHS List Serve prior to the implementation date. BEHS will also add these procedures to the Environmental Health Operational Guidelines (EHOG).