

Environmental Public Health Technical Assistance to Local Public Health Agencies

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Missouri, the Diversified State

- ▶ Unique—Wide Variability
 - Geography
 - Culture
 - History
 - Climate
 - Population Rural (semi-wilderness) and Urban
 - Local Health Governance
 - Local Health Board
 - County Commission
 - Charter cities and counties

History of Technical Assistance

- ▶ Laws
 - ▶ Regulations
 - ▶ Policies and Procedures
 - ▶ Training
 - District or Statewide Programs
 - On the job
 - ▶ Guidance, interpretation, clarification
 - In the field
 - By phone or email
 - ▶ Office and field visits
 - ▶ ...and once upon a time, Contract Monitoring
 - Paperwork review
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Purpose (Why Technical Assistance?)

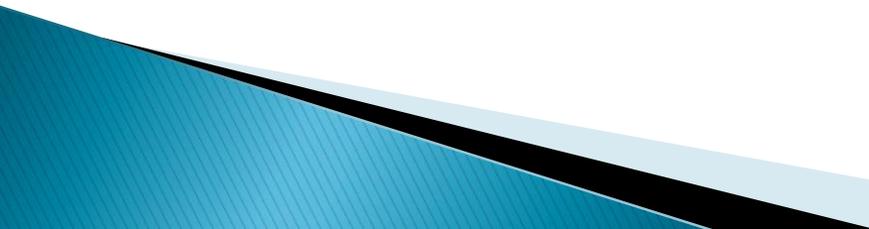
Should be to achieve:

Uniformity and Consistency with Scientifically Valid Best Practices / Laws and Regulations.

- ▶ Uniformity: Always the same, unvarying.
- ▶ Consistency: Compatibility among successive acts, ideas, or events.

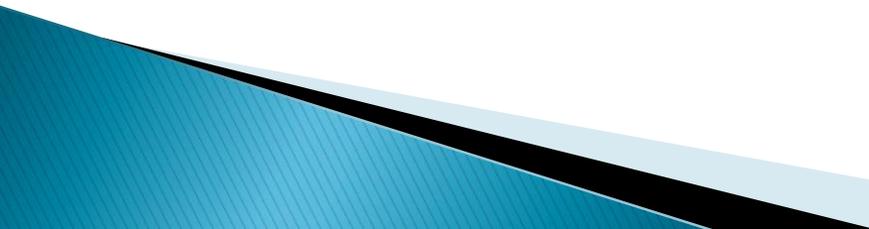
Does it really matter?

Absolutely.

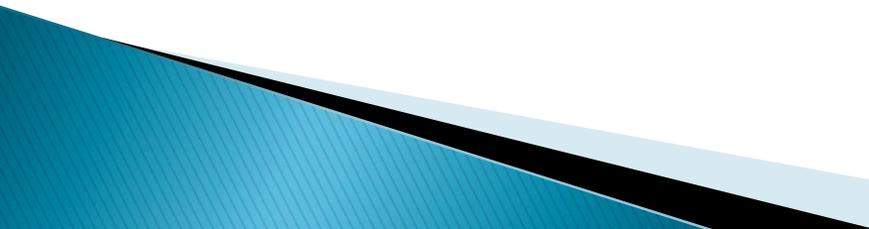




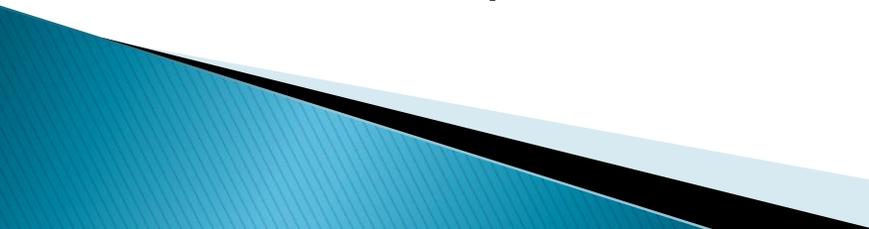
Consistency and Uniformity

- ▶ Strength in Numbers.
 - ▶ Maintains validity of Scientific Foundation.
 - All doing the same thing the same way.
 - ▶ Builds Credibility.
 - ▶ Promotes good customer service.
 - People don't feel picked on, or singled out for special treatment (for what cause?).
 - ▶ Strengthens environmental public health systems.
 - ▶ Decreases illnesses and deaths resulting from environmental causes.
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Example: FDA Food Code

- ▶ “science based guidance...for mitigating known risks of foodborne illness”.
 - ▶ Uniform standards for retail food safety that reduce complexity and better ensure compliance.
 - ▶ The elimination of redundant processes for establishing food safety criteria.
 - ▶ The establishment of a more standardized approach to inspections and audits of food establishments.
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Damage of The Galapagos Effect to Environmental Public Health

- ▶ A brief review: Galapagos Islands and Natural Selection.
 - Take away: Isolation and harsh environment gives rise to unique variability.
 - ▶ The Environmental Public Health Specialist(s) often occupies a fragile and hostile niche.
 - Usually not appreciated (“inspectors”).
 - Encounter angry and unpleasant people.
 - Anti-government forces emerge against them.
 - Face coercion from those with power and influence.
 - ▶ Huge forces of Natural Selection at work:
Unfortunately, these forces can select for variability, either individually, or within the agency.
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Damages from the Variability arising from The Galapagos Effect

Variability from jurisdiction to jurisdiction each county (or city) is **evident** (what is done in one is known in the other).

- ▶ Multi-county (or state businesses) ask; why can I do this activity/sell this product in county X but not county Y?
- ▶ Why did the last inspector never mark this violation?
- ▶ Result:
 - **Scientific Foundation Destroyed.**
 - **Credibility of Public Health Harmed.**

Damages of the Galapagos Effect (cont.)

- ▶ **The Public Asks: If decisions are not being made based on a scientific foundation then on what basis are they being made?**
 - ▶ **Concerns about fairness, equity, discrimination.**
 - ▶ **Eroded confidence breeds public anger and distrust; backlash results (ordinances are revoked, laws and policies changed).**
 - ▶ **Further erodes the ability of environmental public health to protect the public.**
 - ▶ **Results in lives unduly subjected to illness and death from environmental causes.**
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The Counterbalance: Technical Support

- ▶ **Support** (to provide encouragement and financial assistance to, or, to bear the weight of to hold in position).
 - We can be there to meet with coercive, angry and unpleasant people.
 - We can be there to provide education and feedback to constituent groups that rules and policies are being followed for a reason.
 - We can be there in challenging situations that require complex solutions.
 - Ordinance development and review:
 - Meetings with citizens groups and local authorities.
 - Jurisdictions partnered through state authority:
 - Regulation and enforcement.
 - Work orders, facility closures.

Technical Support

Technical (Policy Enactment and Training).

- ▶ Laws, Regulations, Policies and Procedures.
- ▶ Expanded and Improved Training.
 - Targeted and Specific:
 - On-line.
 - Classroom.
 - On the job/in the field.
 - Feedback (what is needed?).

Technical Support

Resources

- Tools, Expertise, Bench Depth
 - (*if not DHSS, then see list below)
 - Laboratory Services
 - Multi-State Relationships
 - Partnered State Agencies (DNR, MDA, DPS, etc.)
 - Partnered Federal Agencies (HHS (FDA, CDC) EPA, USDA, etc.)
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Assisting through Understanding

- ▶ Faulty Assumptions based on Anecdotal Evidence can be Counterproductive (all around).
 - Reflects current system of occasional encounters.
- ▶ Standardized Review Process is Needed.
- ▶ Perhaps PREP for EH?
 - Multi-day in-depth review once every few years of programs and practices for uniformity and consistency:
 - Best investment of time and resources.
 - Allow for targeted modifications to programs to improve uniformity and consistency.

Questions or Comments?

- ▶ Contact Information:

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