

Health Agent

Department Head level position responsible for providing professional, administrative, and technical and inspection work in planning, managing and promotion of the Municipal Public Health Program. Enforce applicable federal, state and local Public Health and Environmental Health and Protection laws and regulations for the protection of the community, control of disease, promotion of sanitary living conditions and protection of the environment from damage and pollution.

Level of Responsibility:

Full responsibility for all public health functions in the Town of Athol in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations, local regulations, and bylaws to protect the health and safety of the community and the environment. Works under the policy direction of the Board of Health and under the administrative direction of the Town Manager with considerable latitude for independent judgement and action; assumes responsibility for developing and achieving the department goals and objectives.

Perform varied duties requiring professional and technical judgement in the interpretation and application of Public Health and Environmental Health and Protection laws and regulations. Exercises judgement and initiative in responding to emergencies and/or inquiries, particularly in situations not clearly defined by precedent or established procedures and to frequently changing conditions. Staff supervision *and* train health service personnel on sanitary code inspection techniques, when necessary, budget and emergency response planning and implementation.

Ability to enforce and interpret regulations firmly, tactfully, and impartially. Ability to deal tactfully and appropriately with the public and town departments in an effective manner. Ability to work independently, under pressure and to manage multiple tasks in a detailed and organized manner. Excellent verbal and written communication to ensure code/regulation/bylaw compliance, skills documenting investigations, writing reports, documenting in a chronological, concise, and understandable format all activity as relates to the duties and responsibilities Coordinate department and town program efforts with other town departments. Ability to read, analyze and interpret technical public and environmental health information and plans.

Has regular access to confidential information on a department-wide basis including laws suits, criminal records/investigations, HIPPA medical records, personnel records, bid records, and other sensitive records involving Department of Child Services, Elders at Risk, and other Social Service organization. Employee has access to department oriented confidential and personal information concerning citizens and businesses. Discretion and maintenance of confidentiality are required. Makes frequent contact with state, regional, and local officials, contractors, builders, engineers, food establishment owners/managers, pool, tanning, tattoo, funeral homes and schools, rental unit owners/managers, housing authorities, condo and manufactured home associations, trash contractors, marijuana retail and grow facility operators and the general public sometimes under stressful and/or emergency conditions.

Essential Duties:

The essential functions or duties listed below are intended only as illustrations of the various types of work that may be performed. The omission of specific statement of duties does not exclude them from the position if the work is similar, related or a logical assignment to the position.

Full administrative management for the Health Department including staff supervision and training, operating and capital budget planning, recommendations to the Board of Health on matters that pertain to public health; assist the Board in the development of public policies and regulations, participates in all town committees and meetings as assigned by the Town Manager; or per town bylaw: Vacant Abandoned, Expedited Permitting Committee, Safety and Development. Review development plans in cooperation with other boards/departments and submit reports and comments as necessary. Implement and administer any grant funded program. Advocate for public health; assist with building constituencies and identifying resources within the community by generating supportive and collaborative relationships with public and private agencies and groups for effective planning and implementation of public health activities. Attend meetings as a member town of the Montachusett Public Health Network for collaborative work on regional public health efforts. Involvement with any additional emerging public health issues, i.e., opioid settlement funds, homelessness, sheltering and climate change.

Field inspector for all public health functions: enforces federal, state and local laws and regulations; enforces the State Sanitary Code; responds to housing, nuisance, trash and illegal dumping complaints, issues emergency condemnations as necessary and manages hoarding cases, enforces the state Childhood Lead Paint Poisoning Prevention Program law, partners with the Attorney General's Office as part of their abandoned housing initiative, enforces the Federal Food code; conducts food establishment inspections, reviews food establishment construction/remodeling plans; enforces the state Title 5 Environmental code; reviews Title 5 inspection reports, observes soil evaluations and perc tests, reviews/approves plans for all new and existing upgrade septic systems, inspects system installations, issues permits for private drinking water wells and evaluates water test results to ensure water is safe for public consumption; enforces the state camp and pool regulations, conducts camp, pool, lodging/motel and marijuana retail and grow facility inspections, enforces state bathing beach code; issues public swimming beach permits, coordinates beach testing, reviews weekly water reports and closes beaches as necessary, enforces local Board of Health regulations i.e., tobacco, tattoo, trash hauler and other regulations as developed. Reviews applications for beaver removal and Outdoor Hydronic Heater installations and issues permits. Takes corrective action, issues instructions to responsible parties regarding changes to be made and performs follow-up inspections to ensure compliance with regulations. Prepares order letters seeking enforcement of violations and initiates court action when necessary.

Primary 24/7 emergency response contact. Responsible for public health emergency preparedness, response planning and implementation in conjunction with the Town's Local Emergency Planning Committee and is the representative for the Department of Public Health's Region 2 Public Health Preparedness Coalition, Public Information Officer in public health matters, all hazards and special population planning, risk communication, isolation and quarantine, conducts drills and responds to state drills, prepares, maintains and updates the Emergency Dispensing Site Plan for the Town and is prepared to implement the plan within a 24 hour Department of Public Health mandate. Use the Health and Homeland Alert Network

(HHAN) and Web-Emergency Operations Center (Web-EOC) for emergency alerts and access. Responsible for Region 2 Emergency Preparedness regional trailer and satellite phone. Enforcement of Governor's Orders, i.e., during a pandemic.

Investigates and reports cases of diseases dangerous to public health working closely with other health personnel and state epidemiologist, conduct food-borne illness investigations, utilize MAVEN (Massachusetts Virtual Epidemiologic Network) for case investigation, informs the public on emerging health issues, food recalls, public health advisories and alerts issued by the state and federal government. Reviews seasonal weekly arbovirus state reports, 24/7 contact for local arbovirus issues, take action as necessary. Pursue legal action when appropriate to enforce codes and regulations to obtain compliance, compiles evidence and documentation for court cases and appears in court as necessary. Respond to emergency scenes requested by Fire and Police Departments.

Job Environment:

Frequent inspection work with light to moderate physical effort while performing duties under varying conditions with exposure to various weather conditions, disagreeable factors and chemical and biological hazards associated with constructions sites, unsanitary housing conditions, old buildings, nuisance complaints, including insects, rodents, dead animals, sewage, mold, asbestos, lead paint, drugs and potential exposure to communicable diseases, conditions associated with residents' mental health problems (e.g. anger, hoarding of trash or animals, substance abuse). Frequently required to climb, reach, bend and kneel to access areas of inspection and in rough terrain. Administrative work is performed under typical office conditions.

May be called upon to work under non-standard conditions during weather or other emergencies or to support Health Department activities (e.g., shelter operations involving a blizzard/hurricane/weather emergency, urgent public health situations including operation of an emergency dispensing site clinic, flu clinic, or other emergency with different hours of work, alternate location, or alternative duties- enforcement of Governor's Orders such as COVID-19 pandemic)

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:

Knowledge and ability to read, research, comprehend, and interpret the Public Health and Environmental Health and Protection related laws and regulations including but not limited to the State Sanitary Code (Housing), Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, Title 5 (onsite septic septic), Federal Food Code, Camp, Pool, Tattoo, Tanning, Bathing Beach, Solid Waste, Adult Use of Marijuana. Thorough knowledge of the laws, rules and regulations pertaining to public health, sanitation, and approved methods and equipment for handling food. Thorough knowledge of principles and practices of subsurface disposal design, installation and testing; ability to read complex plans, working knowledge of current practices and regulations for dealing with solid waste. Working knowledge of current inspection and control procedures, ability to interpret and enforce regulations tactfully and impartially, ability to communicate effectively, orally and in writing, ability to supervise subordinates, ability to deal effectively and appropriately with the general public as well as local, state and federal officials. Ability to respond 24/7 to emergency response and to work and negotiate under stressful conditions. Must carry a work cell phone for emergencies. Computer literate in Word, Excel, Access, Power Point and Outlook.

Work requires discretion, confidentiality, resourcefulness, desire to serve the public, cultural awareness, and adaptability, promoting diversity, collaboration and teamwork, tolerance, punctuality, and time management.

Minimum Entrance Requirements:

Bachelor of Science in Public Health or related field, Registered Sanitarian preferred or the ability to obtain within three years and the following professional certifications: Title 5 Soil Evaluator, Title 5 Inspector, Food Manager, Pool Operator, Lead Determinator, MA PHIT Housing, NIMS 700 (National Incident Management System), ICS 100 and ICS 200(Incident Command System) and/ or the ability to obtain any missing certifications within *one* year of hire;; a valid Massachusetts motor vehicle operators license, and 3-5 years of public health experience.

Approved by the Board of Health November 28,2023