

NEHA NEWS

NEHA Launches New Self-Paced REHS/RS Online Study Course to Strengthen Credential Readiness

The National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) has launched a new self-paced Registered Environmental Health Specialist/Registered Sanitarian (REHS/RS) Online Study Course designed to support entry- to mid-level environmental health professionals as they progress from foundational knowledge to applied practice and credential readiness.

Environmental health professionals enter the field from a wide range of academic backgrounds and career pathways. While many gain strong technical skills and field experience early on, they often seek structured learning opportunities that help organize, connect, and apply environmental health knowledge as responsibilities expand. Our new self-paced REHS/RS Online Study Course is designed to meet professional needs at this crucial stage, helping bridge the gap between knowledge acquisition and professional application.

The course is grounded in our validated REHS/RS job task analysis and aligned with the REHS/RS body of knowledge. Content covers core environmental health domains, including food safety, onsite wastewater, drinking water, recreational water, housing and institutions, inspections, investigations, compliance review, and risk assessment. Delivered in a modular, self-paced format, the course allows learners to move through material systematically or revisit specific topic areas over time, offering flexibility without sacrificing rigor.

“This course was intentionally designed to reflect how environmental health professionals actually learn and practice,” said Rance Baker, NEHA director of Education and Training. “By offering a structured, self-paced option grounded in the REHS/RS body of knowledge, we are helping professionals connect foundational concepts to real-world decision-making while preparing for credentialing in a way that fits their schedules.”

The self-paced course completes our deliberately structured REHS/RS learning portfolio. The *REHS/RS Study Guide* establishes the foundational scientific and regulatory knowledge expected of environmental health professionals. The new REHS/RS Online Study Course builds on that foundation by helping learners reframe and organize information to align with day-to-day practice and regulatory decision-making. The REHS/RS Practice Exam then provides an opportunity to assess readiness, reinforce understanding, and build confidence ahead of the credentialing examination.

Together, these resources form a cohesive learning continuum that supports professional growth at multiple points along the career pathway. While instructor-led trainings, conferences, and live courses remain essential for advanced learning and peer engagement, the self-paced course adds consistency and accessibility—further allowing professionals to learn on their own schedule without travel or time away from crucial duties.

Agencies can also integrate the course into onboarding, mentoring, and professional development programs. Entry-level staff can use it to establish structure early in their careers, while mid-career professionals can leverage the course to consolidate experience, refresh knowledge, and prepare for credentialing as a professional milestone.

For more information about the self-paced REHS/RS Online Study Course, visit www.neha.org/rehs-rs-credential.

Body Art Facility Inspector Training: Building Capacity for Safe Body Art Practices



Photo courtesy of Chris Adams.

As body art practices continue to evolve, environmental health professionals play a crucial role in protecting public health by inspecting and regulating body art facilities. From tattooing and body piercing to cosmetic tattooing, branding, and scarification, these services require informed, consistent, risk-based oversight to protect both clients and artists.

To support this work, NEHA offers the Body Art Facility Inspector Training (BAFIT), a 2-day virtual instructor-led course designed to strengthen inspector understanding of body art practices and inspection principles. Developed with input from experienced body art inspectors and industry professionals, BAFIT is intended to bridge the gap between regulatory requirements and real-world practice.

BAFIT is aligned with the 2024 Body Art Model Code (BAMC, www.neha.org/body-art-model-code), the only comprehensive model code in the U.S. that addresses current body art practices and associated public health risks. Through the course, participants explore how model code provisions can be applied in inspection

scenarios, supporting more consistent, transparent, and defensible regulatory approaches across jurisdictions.

The training addresses key topics relevant to body art inspections, including:

- Common body art procedures and terminology
- Infection control
- Universal practices
- Effective communication with body art professionals
- Risk-based inspections, including a mock inspection activity

Designed for both new and experienced inspectors, BAFIT focuses on the “why” behind inspection requirements and their practical application. The live, virtual format allows participants to engage directly with experienced industry and regulatory instructors and ask questions in real time. With participants joining from across the country, the course also fosters collaboration and the exchange of ideas, supporting shared learning and the consistent application of public health principles across jurisdictions.

Registration is now open for the upcoming April and June training sessions. Additional information, including course dates and registration details, is available at www.neha.org/Virtual-Instructor-Led-BAFIT.

By investing in specialized training such as BAFIT, environmental health professionals can strengthen body art inspection programs, promote safer body art practices, and support public health through informed, consistent regulation.

Readers can also sign up for the quarterly NEHA Body Art Newsletter at <https://bit.ly/neha-body-art-newsletter-signup> to receive updates on future training offerings.

Help Shape the Future of Body Art

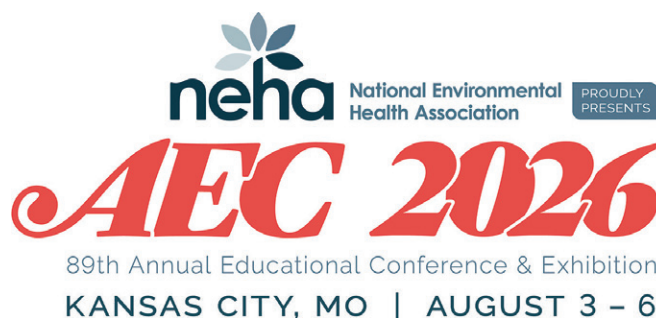
We want to hear from environmental health professionals about their training, resources, skills, and support needs for inspecting and overseeing body art facilities. This expertise will help us identify:

- Areas where additional training or guidance would strengthen inspection capacity
- Resources and tools that would make your work more effective
- Skills or knowledge gaps that should be addressed
- Opportunities to align inspection practices with current industry standards

The needs assessment responses will guide future training programs, inspection resources, and policy recommendations to ensure consistent, effective, and collaborative oversight of the body art industry.

Participation is voluntary, and any feedback will be kept confidential and reported only in a summary form. The assessment takes approximately 12 minutes to complete. Thank you in advance for sharing your experience and insights, which are crucial in shaping the future of safe and effective body art regulation.

Learn more and complete the needs assessment at www.surveymonkey.com/r/H5F3RXX.



Preconference Offerings at the 2026 AEC

Our 2026 Annual Educational Conference (AEC) & Exhibition—to be held on August 3–6 in Kansas City, Missouri—will include a full preconference schedule, allowing attendees to choose from a variety of workshops and training sessions on environmental health topics. More details, added sessions, updates, and registration information can be found at www.neha.org/aec-preconference.

Registration is required for all preconference sessions, regardless of cost. Preconference registration can be added while registering for the main conference. All preconference offerings will take place in person and are eligible for continuing education (CE) contact hours unless otherwise noted. Further, the preconference schedule is subject to change at any time without prior notification.

Climate & Health

BRACE Framework: Building Resilience Against Climate Effects (August 3)

NEHA, in collaboration with experts from ecoAmerica, will host a 4-hr workshop on the updated Building Resilience Against Climate Effects (BRACE) Framework from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This interactive session will build capacity to assess climate and health threats, engage communities, and develop evidence-based strategies that strengthen climate and health resilience. Designed for environmental and public health professionals, the workshop will provide practical tools, real-world examples, and collaborative approaches to protect families and communities from climate-related health risks. *Fee: No cost, but preregistration is required. Limited to 50 registrants.*

Climate Ambassador Training (August 3)

This interactive training equips environmental health professionals with the knowledge and tools to lead local discussions on climate and health. Through hands-on activities and expert insights, attendees will learn how to communicate climate impacts, promote health equity, and strengthen community resilience. Emphasizing the power of local leadership, this training empowers professionals to be effective change agents in driving climate solutions. After completion, participants will be eligible to become a Climate for Health Ambassador. *Fee: No cost, but preregistration is required. Limited to 50 registrants.*

NEHA NEWS

**Emergency Readiness, Recovery, and Resilience***Psychological First Aid (August 3)*

You do not need to be a mental health specialist or a first responder to support your community in the aftermath of a disaster event. A caring passion is all that is required. Psychological first aid (PFA) is an approach that fosters short- and long-term adaptive functioning support. This 1-day training will share the skills, techniques, and resources to provide PFA in your community during and after a disaster event. *Fee: \$75. Preregistration is required. Limited to 60 registrants.*

Food Safety*Certified Professional—Food Safety (CP-FS) Credential Review Course (August 1–3)*

This 2.5-day review course is tailored to enhance your preparation for the challenging CP-FS credential exam. Ideal for professionals with prior food safety knowledge who meet the eligibility requirements for the exam. The course will cover exam content areas as described on our website. The instructor will be available during and after the course for questions. The course includes the CP-FS Study Package (CP-FS manual and virtual CP-FS flash cards). *Fee: \$749. Preregistration is required. Limited to 35 registrants.*

Infectious & Vectorborne Diseases*Know the Signs, Stop the Spread: Practical Pest Control With Purpose (August 3)*

Rodents, cockroaches, and flies remain persistent public health threats. This interactive workshop is designed for professionals in code enforcement, food safety, housing, community health, and vector control. Attendees will learn how to identify the signs of infestations, assess environmental conditions, and apply effective integrated pest management (IPM) strategies—focusing on prevention, sanitation, exclusion, and education. The training includes classroom learning, group activities, and a field tour to build practical skills for sustainable pest control and community engagement. *Fee: No cost, but preregistration is required. Limited to 50 registrants.*

Water Quality*Aquatic Venue Public Health Inspector Course (August 3)*

Gain valuable insight and knowledge on the ins and outs of inspecting public pools with this training from the Council for the Model Aquatic Code (CMAHC) on CDC's Model Aquatic Health Code (MAHC). Attendees who successfully complete the course will gain a 5-year certification as an Aquatic Venue Public Health Inspector. *Fee: \$350. Preregistration is required. Limited to 25 registrants.*

Certified Pool & Spa Operator (Fusion Course From the Pool & Hot Tub Alliance) (August 3)

The Certified Pool & Spa Operator (CPO) is the world's leading verifiable pool and spa training credential for aquatic facility maintenance personnel, health officials, retailers, property owners, and other professionals. Required by most state codes, the CPO certification provides individuals with the basic knowledge, techniques, and skills of pool and spa operations. This training has helped protect millions of swimmers by reducing hazards and increasing safety at aquatic facilities. *Fee: \$550. Preregistration is required. Limited to 40 registrants.*

*Learning About Onsite Wastewater Systems—The Basics to Some Advanced Concepts (August 3)*

Onsite wastewater systems have to be permitted, designed, approved, and inspected by environmental health specialist. This workshop is designed to provide information on the basics of an onsite wastewater system. It will also provide information on some more advanced systems as the workshop progresses. *Fee: \$175. Preregistration is required. Limited to 20 registrants.*

Private Water Network Well Under Pressure: Advancing Competencies to Empower Private Well Professionals (August 3)

Over 43 million people in the U.S. rely on private wells—often without regulatory oversight or standardized safety protocols. This workshop addresses the urgent need for technical train-

ing and field-based skills to protect public health in communities served by private water systems. Designed for professionals at all experience levels, this workshop offers expert-led sessions that equip private water professionals with the tools and confidence to evaluate and identify safe water infrastructure, assess well systems, monitor water quality, and respond effectively to contamination risks. Attendees will gain practical skills, scientific insight, and communication strategies to guide homeowners toward informed decisions. *Fee: No cost, but preregistration is required. Limited to 65 registrants.*

Workforce & Leadership

Calm in the Chaos: Practical De-escalation Skills for Environmental Health Professionals (August 3)

Environmental health professionals often find themselves on the front lines of conflict, navigating tense situations with the public, colleagues, or partners. This interactive 4-hour workshop offers practical tools to stay grounded, communicate effectively, and defuse difficult encounters before they escalate. Join our expert presenters for a dynamic, hands-on learning experience that blends real-world scenarios, group discussions, and reflective practice. *Fee: \$75. Preregistration is required. Limited to 40 registrants.*

Photos from the 2025 AEC are courtesy of Blake Latiolais, B1 Studio LLC.

Register Now for the Retail Program Standards Symposium



The Retail Program Standards Symposium (RPSS) is just around the corner! The Symposium supports and educates retail food safety jurisdictions at state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) levels, whether just beginning with the Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards (Retail Program Standards) from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), or maintaining conformance with them. This year's Symposium focuses on *Progress in Motion*, providing practical, FDA-aligned insights on advancing the Retail Program Standards through sessions with national experts and peers.

The Symposium will be held on April 20–22. It is a free, virtual event. Registration is now open at <https://event.fourwaves.com/rpss2026/pages>.

Join FDA leadership, national experts, and retail food industry peers for 3 days of learning, collaboration, and discussion focused on progress, problem-solving, and continuous improvement in the Retail Program Standards. Attendees will gain:

- Guidance on developing a foodborne illness outbreak tabletop exercise
- Support for building and sustaining a Comprehensive Strategic Improvement Plan (CSIP)
- Resources to help you understand and meet the Retail Program Standards
- Valuable insights from experts at FDA, state and local regulatory agencies, the retail food industry, Conference for Food Protection (CFP) Program Standards Committee members, and leaders from the NEHA–National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) Mentorship Program

The Symposium agenda is designed to support learning, discussion, and peer exchange, with sessions focused on real-world application of the Retail Program Standards. The agenda will feature:

- Plenary and breakout sessions led by SLTT program leaders, federal partners, and subject matter experts
- Sessions focused on program assessment, continuous improvement, and measurable progress
- Opportunities for interactive discussion and shared learning

This 3-day Symposium is presented by the NEHA-FDA Retail Flexible Funding Model (RFFM) Grant Program in collaboration with CFP and funded by FDA under award 3U19FD008288.

To learn more, visit www.neha.org/retail-grants-rpss.

Apply for the Crumline Award

The Samuel J. Crumline Consumer Protection Award is given annually to local environmental health jurisdictions that demonstrate exceptional achievement in providing outstanding food protection services to their communities. The award recognizes innovative programs and methods that reduce or eliminate foodborne illness and highlights the importance of food protection at the local level. Winning programs often offer best practices that can be used by other jurisdiction to advance their food protection programs.

The award is named in honor of Dr. Samuel J. Crumline (1862–1954), a sanitarian physician and public health pioneer renowned for his innovative methods to improve public health protection. The Crumline Award was established in his honor in 1954 and was first awarded in 1955.

Does your local food safety program deserve national recognition? If so, mark your calendars to apply for the 2026 Crumline Award by March 15. Learn more and apply at <https://crumlineaward.com>. 🌸