



Overview



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No attempt to improve Public Health will succeed that does not recognize the fundamental importance of providing and maintaining in every local health agency across Canada an adequate staff of highly skilled and motivated public health professionals. Our national aim should be to produce a cadre of outstanding public health professionals who are adequately qualified and compensated, and who have clear roles, responsibilities and career paths. Without urgent implementation of a public health human resources strategy, that aim cannot be achieved.¹

National Advisory Committee on SARS and Public Health (2003)

The Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors (CIPHI) is the only national association that represents Environmental Public Health Professionals (EHPs)² in Canada. CIPHI, like no other organization, covers a continuum of public health areas, including food safety, drinking water quality, on-site wastewater disposal, indoor air quality, infectious diseases prevention and control, epidemiology, tobacco reduction, and many more environmental health initiatives. CIPHI's mission is to protect the health of Canadians and to represent all EHPs across Canada.

CIPHI's mandate is to advance the profession, science, and practice of environmental public health through certification, advocacy, education, and setting standards. CIPHI designs entry level standards, examines all new EHPs in Canada and certifies successful candidates with the Certificate in Public Health Inspection (Canada), the CPHI(C)³.

The Continuing Professional Competencies (CPC) Program provides a framework, guidelines, and tools to support EHPs in becoming qualified and remaining competent and ethical within the profession. Through self-regulation, professions can set standards of conduct, minimum educational expectations, and competency requirements to encourage individuals entering or practicing in the profession to do so in a competent and professional manner.

¹ For more information see <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/sars-sras/naylor/>.

² During the preparation of this guide, there was an in depth discussion regarding the preferred label for persons working in the field/science/profession of environmental public health. Various different working titles are in use across Canada (e.g. Public Health Inspector and Environmental Health Officer). The National Executive Council adopted the term "Environmental Public Health Professional" during its 5-year strategic planning session to be consistent with US initiatives and make the subtle distinction between human health protection work conducted by health agencies and the ecological protection and pollution prevention work conducted by environmental agencies.

³ For more information on the CPHI(C), please refer to Appendix F.

In the interests of protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the public, it is essential for EPHPs to engage in lifelong learning. Society's expectations demand greater accountability from professionals today. Mandatory continuing professional development is, therefore, becoming more common in many professions. CIPHI's CPC Program establishes an annual process and a minimum benchmark of such effort for EPHPs.

1. Background

For many years CIPHI has directed and managed the CPHI(C) certification process. The CPHI(C) is an important first step supporting individuals entering the field to develop and maintain the requisite capability and experience. Prior to the CPC Program, however, there had not been any obligation to demonstrate continued competency maintenance and development following certification. Any CPHI(C) holder could continue to retain their certification regardless of whether they still practice in the field or remain current.

With the vision of maintaining a national standard for all holders of the CPHI(C) and increasing recognition of the profession, CIPHI initiated the CPC Program. The CPC Program is intended to guide and encourage EPHPs to engage in continued and ongoing development of knowledge and practice throughout Canada.

CIPHI members from across the country were involved in the development of the CPC Program, providing EPHPs with the opportunity to define their national standard and to shape their profession.

2. Objectives

The CPC Program, which is launching in January 2010, has five objectives:

1. To establish a system to encourage all practicing EPHPs in Canada to meet the standards for maintaining the CPHI(C) credential
2. To support EPHPs in gaining and maintaining the skills, knowledge, and abilities essential to their role of protecting the health of Canadians
3. To encourage EPHPs to become increasingly reflective in their practice
4. To help create consistency across the profession and promote workforce development
5. To improve recognition and credibility as a profession

3. Program Components

The CPC Program involves four components, which are all included in this guide.

1. Code of Ethics: CIPHI's Code of Ethics provides the baseline expectation for professional conduct of all EPHPs. It outlines the fundamental principles and ethics that guide the individual professional. The Code of Ethics is included in the red section of this guide.

2. Standards of Practice: The Standards of Practice offer a framework of principles outlining expectations of knowledge, skills, and values. They also inform EPHPs of their accountabilities and the public of what to expect of EPHPs. The standards convey a collective vision of professionalism that guides the daily practices of CPHI(C) holders. The Standards of Practice are included in the purple section of this guide.

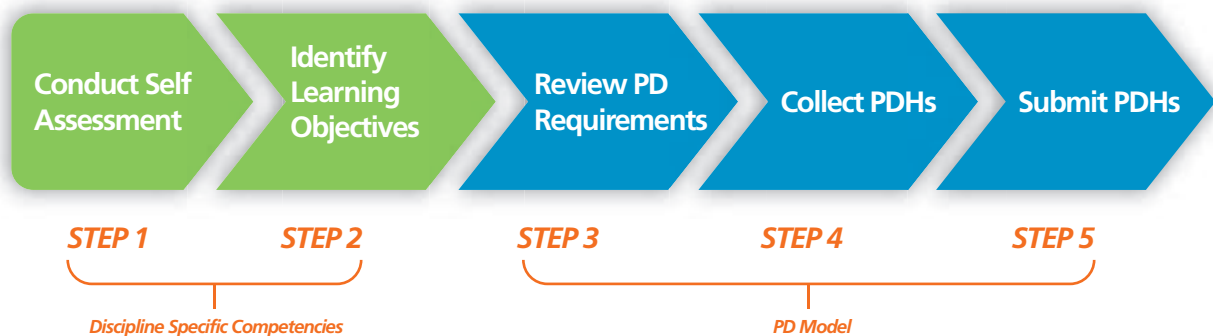
3. Discipline Specific Competencies: CIPHI developed a set of competencies that are specific to the field of environmental public health. These competencies describe the essential knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for ongoing success in the role of an EPHP beyond the CPHI(C) certification. CPHI(C) holders will reflect on these discipline specific competencies to determine opportunities for continued growth and learning. Members will conduct an annual self assessment to help identify personal strengths and development areas to focus on. The competencies will also assist EPHPs to make training decisions and provide a framework for employers to use in defining required skills for both new and experienced EPHPs. The discipline specific competencies are included in the blue section of this guide.

4. Professional Development Model: CIPHI has also created a Professional Development (PD) Model to meet the CPC Program objectives and increase professional competency in Canada's environmental public health field. The PD Model provides a framework to support the continued growth and development of EPHPs across the country while maintaining a standard of service and professional capability. The PD Model quantifies the areas in which EPHPs should direct their professional development in order to maintain and improve their professional competency. To achieve this, the PD Model specifies the annual professional development hours (PDHs) required of regular CIPHI members. PDHs include hours worked in the profession (on the job hours) and a combination of other activities. The PD Model is included in the green section of this guide.

4. Program Steps

The CPC Program involves five steps. Every year, CPHI(C) holders will:

1. Use the discipline specific competencies to conduct a self assessment
2. Identify learning objectives and development goals
3. Review CIPHI's PD requirements
4. Collect PDHs
5. Submit their PDHs through the CIPHI membership site



5. Using This Reference Guide

This reference guide has been created to provide you with all the information you will need to understand and participate in the CPC Program. When new to the program, it is recommended that you read through the guide in order to familiarize yourself with the CPC Program and how it works. After you have a solid understanding of the program, it is intended to serve as a resource to support you in your reflective practice and personal development. The guide is divided into the four key sections described above so that you can easily look up information on each of the program components. The guide also contains a set of appendices including a glossary, references, forms, and other supporting documentation. All other program information is or will be posted on CIPHI's website at www.ciphi.ca.

If you have any questions about the CPC Program, please contact us at cpcprogram@ciphi.ca.