CIPHI’s Continuing Professional Competencies (CPC) Program
Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the CPC Program?

The CPC Program was developed to ensure that Environmental Public Health Professionals, such as Environmental Health Officers, Public Health Inspectors, and CPHI(C) holders working in the profession or industry, are equipped with the skills, knowledge, and abilities essential in their role of protecting the health of Canadians. The CPC Program includes elements such as a code of ethics, standards of practice, discipline specific competencies, and a professional development model.

2. Where can you find out more information about the program?

Electronic copies of the CPC program are available on the CIPHI’s membership website www.ciphimember.ca under the Library tab. CIPHI has established a new entity, the Council of Professional Experience (CoPE), to administer the CPC Program and field any questions regarding CPC related inquires. CoPE can be contacted by email at cope@ciphi.ca

3. Are documents and forms available in French?

Yes, as of February 2010, The French version of the CPC Program Reference Guide became available on CIPHI’s website and hard copies were sent to all francophone colleagues as well. As a national organization, CIPHI is cognizant of the need to ensure that documentation is available in French.

4. Why did CIPHI decide to develop such a program?

With the establishment of the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), competency development in professional public health associations was identified as a key strategy, thus, initiating the launch of the CPC initiative with the goal to develop a framework that is relevant to Environmental Public Health within this larger context. The CPC Program is supported by funding from PHAC.

5. Who has been involved in developing the program?

The CPC Program is the result of a concerted effort of a large group of individuals from the Environmental Public Health profession, many of them volunteers.

6. How will the program benefit participants and employers?

The program allows professionals to self assess and improve their competency by directing and diversifying their professional development activities. In this way, the program can guide professionals’ career development and improve the recognition and credibility of our profession.

Employers will also benefit from the program in several ways. They program will help employers identify staff development and training needs, provide a rationale for securing funds to support workforce development and staffing, and assist with staff engagement.
7. Are employers starting to see the benefits of the CPC Program?

Yes they are. For example, two provinces where CIPHI has been active in connecting with government and agencies are Ontario and Alberta. CIPHI Ontario Branch has met with the Association of Supervisors of Public Health Inspectors in Ontario. The Branch has also held preliminary discussions with the Chair of the Council of Medical Officers of Health to promote the CPC Program and encourage them to incorporate it in their respective agencies. Alberta Health Services is in the process in adopting the CPC Program as the foundation to a "made in Alberta" program for continuing professional development using the professional development model and the discipline specific competency statements as a baseline for Environmental Public Health Professionals.

8. Who should participate in the program?

All Environmental Public Health Professionals should participate in the program starting in 2010.

9. What does the CPC Program involve step-by-step?

CIPHI has developed a set of discipline specific competency statements. Starting in 2010, CPHI(C) holders should use the competencies to conduct a self assessment which can be used to guide professional development activities. You can break the process down into five steps:

1. Using the defined competencies to conduct a self assessment
2. Using the summary of ratings from the self assessment to identify learning objectives
3. Reviewing the professional development model requirements
4. Putting the learning objectives into action and collect professional development hours (PDHs)
5. Submitting PDHs to CIPHI annually by December 31st of each year.

10. What is a Discipline Specific Competency?

CIPHI has developed a set of discipline specific competencies for Environmental Public Health. These competencies describe the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for continued development after receiving the CPHI(C) in the field of Environmental Public Health.

Each discipline specific competency is described by a competency statement. Members will rate themselves against the statements using CIPHI’s Self Assessment Tool. The tool is available through CIPHI’s online member services centre under the Professional Development Category.

11. What is the professional development model?

The professional development model quantifies the areas in which Environmental Public Health Professionals should direct their professional development in order to maintain and improve their professional competency. To achieve this, the professional development model specifies the annual professional development hours (PDHs) required of Regular CIPHI members.

12. What are the professional development requirements?

As part of the CPC Program, CPHI(C) holders will collect 80 professional development hours (PDHs) per year, 50 of which will be obtained from professional practice (i.e. “on-the-job” hours). Even if members work part-time, chances are they will be able to obtain the total allotment of
practice hours. The remaining 30 PDHs will come from a combination of activities such as, taking courses, conference attendance, presentations, research activities, and many more. For example, an MA thesis defence is worth 30 PDHs, a 2-day course (at 6 hours per day) is worth 12 credits, and delivering a 2-hour presentation outside your normal job function is worth 2 credits.

Note that **regular work meetings, teaching food safe and all duties assigned to you as part of your employment fall under the professional practice category** even if they involve a learning or professional development element. Special courses, workshops, and presentations put on by your employer that helps you gain new skills and knowledge falls into the “other activities” category.

You can find more information about the program requirements in the CPC Reference Guide.

The professional development requirements may seem high, but consider that there are exemptions for leaves of absence, retirement, and when resuming active practice. There will also be a depot of available continuing education courses made available through the National Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health.

**13. Should I submit a form to CIPHI to apply for professional development hours (PDHs)?**

No, only organizations/institutions delivering courses should apply for course credits. Organizations/institutions should use the “Application for Approval of Professional Development Hours” Form from the membership service site. Individual members should not apply but should instead record the appropriate number PDHs in their Detailed Activity Records at year-end. It is important to include in the details section the number of hours of the course, the content of the course and an agenda of the course if possible. For questions on PDHs, please email CoPE at cope@ciphi.ca.

**14. What courses, workshops, and conferences have been approved by CIPHI?**

The membership service center has a list of approved courses on the site. It now features a list of professional development opportunities that have been pre-approved for credit in the CPC Program.

**15. How long should I keep supporting documentation?**

CIPHI recommends that you keep any documents supporting the professional development hours (PDHs) that you are claiming for the current calendar year and at least two additional years. Examples of supporting records include conference descriptions and registrations, course descriptions and registrations, proof of presentations delivered, proof of participation on committees and boards, etc.

**16. How will CIPHI monitor participants in the program to ensure they are meeting the requirements?**

CIPHI has established a new entity, the Council of Professional Experience (CoPE), to administer the CPC Program. CoPE will regularly review professional development claims from randomly-selected membership holders to assess the nature and status of their professional
development claims and progress in meeting both their own professional development goals and the needs of the CPC Program.

CIPHI will remind regular members who have not completed their online Detailed Activity Record by December 31st via email.

17. **May I carry-over my PDHs from one year to the next year?**

There is no carry over of PDHs from one year to the next.

18. **If I sit on more than one CIPHI committee may I account for each committee and reach the maximum 20 PDHs for participation?**

No, the maximum amount of PDHs for participation in a CIPHI related committee would be 10 PDHs. The main goal of the CPC program is to encourage members to increase their education to assist them with their continuing growth in the profession.

19. **How much time do I have to submit my year's PDHs?**

The membership service site is open all year round to allow members to access their account and submit their hours periodically throughout the year and all hours should be documented and accounted for by December 31 of each year. The membership service center will allow PDHs to be submitted until January 31 of each year. After January 31 the site to insert your PDHs will be closed and you will only be able to insert PDHs for the present year.