

CHD Phone Drill Protocol 2009, March 2009

Timeliness and availability are key components of a successful epidemiology program. Whether it is response to a food or waterborne outbreak, influenza outbreak or a bioterrorism event, the local county health department's on-call epidemiology staff must be reached quickly and rapidly respond to implement control measures around an event of public health significance.

The purpose of these drills is to mimic a physician in the community who needs to report an immediately notifiable disease and does not have access to a phone book or a phone with stored numbers. The physician has to call directory assistance to get the phone number of the CHD.

Phone Drill Protocol

1. Drills are planned in sets of two, consisting of one evening call Monday-Friday (6:00-9:00pm) and one weekend day call Saturday or Sunday (8:00am-5:00pm). The evening and weekend calls to each CHD will not necessarily take place within the same week.
2. The CHDs will not be informed on what days they will be called. For the first set of drills, the CHD will only be told that they will be receiving a drill call soon **(these will be starting in 1 week for ALL CHD's)**.
3. A drill call begins with the tester (physician) calling 'information' to obtain the main number for the county health department.
4. The tester will then call the CHD number. The clock starts the moment the phone begins to ring.
5. If a telephone recording answers, the tester follows instructions to pursue making an urgent case report, including dialing another number if prompted. If an answering service answers, the tester will state that they need to "make an urgent case report" and follow instructions provided by the service.
6. Upon reaching an on call staffer or CHD representative (or reaching anyone who wants more information) the tester will ask "are you authorized by _____ County to take a report of an immediately notifiable condition?" If the answer is no, the tester will ask to speak to someone who is authorized. If the answer is "yes" the tester will announce "This is a drill being conducted by the FDOH Bureau of Epidemiology, do you understand?" Tester will wait for acknowledgement.
7. The tester then logs the time elapsed and at this point the drill is complete.