

# St. Paul – Ramsey County Public Health

## Environmental Health Division

EH work, at its core, is about shaping, building and sustaining environmental conditions that are conducive to population health, now and in the future.

### Environmental Health

The science and art of

- Identifying agents of disease or injury,
- Designing programs to prevent transmission of the agent in the environment, and
- Protecting people from exposure to the agent.

### Environmental Protection

The science and art of:

- Identifying threats to environmental quality,
- Designing and implementing programs to prevent degradation of the environment, and
- Preventing environmental contamination or degradation.



**Solid & Hazardous Waste Compliance** | ensures businesses dispose of solid and hazardous waste correctly

**Supervisor:** Michael Reed | [michael.reed@ramseycounty.us](mailto:michael.reed@ramseycounty.us) | 651-266-1181

- Why do we do this? → To reduce the risk of chemical waste exposure to human health and the environment.
- We work with businesses to ensure proper handling and disposal of solid waste, hazardous waste (paint, used oil, solvents, etc.) and demolition waste.
- We lead with technical assistance, consultation and education in partnership with businesses.
- We license and inspect:
  - over 1,800 hazardous waste generators;
  - 14 hazardous waste facilities;
  - 10 solid waste facilities; and
  - 88 solid waste haulers.
- We work with a wide range of business types, including print shops, health care facilities, manufacturers, dry cleaners and auto body shops.

### INTERESTING INITIATIVES & ACHIEVEMENTS

The pre-demolition program inspects all full house demolitions and all commercial/industrial major renovations and demolitions. Proper recycling or disposal is confirmed for appliances, asbestos, electronics and demolition waste.

In 2015, the pre-demolition program confirmed 35,969 fluorescent lamps, 6,632 gallons of flammable solvent and 393 vehicle batteries were properly disposed.

## Community Environmental Health | keeps our food, pools and lodging safe and clean

**Supervisor:** Mark Clary | [mark.clary@ramseycounty.us](mailto:mark.clary@ramseycounty.us) | 651-266-1170

- Why do we do this? → To reduce the risk of disease or injury from contaminated food or water, unsafe pools, dangerous lodging conditions and public health nuisances.
- We license and inspect restaurants, food retailers, vending machines, mobile home parks, pools, lodging and temporary food events to ensure food safety and reduce other public health risks.
- We work with MDH during foodborne outbreaks as well as respond to complaints, emergencies and garbage houses.
- We provide training for businesses and individuals on food and pool safety.
- We review construction plans for new establishments that we license.
- We test non-community water supplies.
- We license and inspect
  - over 750 restaurants;
  - 172 public pools;
  - 39 lodging establishments; and
  - 16 mobile home parks.

### INTERESTING INITIATIVES & ACHIEVEMENTS

In 2013, we worked with the City of White Bear Lake on food safety as they set out to break the record for the world's longest ice cream sundae.

220 gallons of ice cream were safely scooped to create a 1101-foot sundae.

We made sure volunteers practiced food safety procedures while creating the sundae and when serving it to the public.

## Lead & Healthy Homes | reduces environmental risks in the home

**Supervisor:** Jim Yannarely | [jim.yannarely@ramseycounty.us](mailto:jim.yannarely@ramseycounty.us) | 651-266-1138

- Why do we do this? → To reduce the risk of lead poisoning and disease or injury from dangerous housing conditions.
- Through the lead program we:
  - Run a primary prevention program to reduce lead exposure in children.
  - Respond to elevated blood lead levels in children by evaluating the home for the source of lead exposure.
  - Identify homes containing deteriorated lead-based paints and work with the owners to minimize and reduce the hazardous situation.

### INTERESTING INITIATIVES & ACHIEVEMENTS

We work closely with public health nurses to educate families on reducing exposure to lead and asthma triggers.

Since its inception in 1994, the number of elevated blood lead levels ( $\geq 10 \mu\text{g/dL}$ ) in children has drastically decreased in Ramsey County.

- The Healthy Homes program:
  - Decreases the risk of environmental exposure to asthma triggers for children suffering from chronic asthma.
  - Educates about risk reduction techniques and distributes items, such as vacuums, to reduce exposure to dust, pet dander and other asthma triggers.

**Solid Waste Operations** | manages yard waste, household hazardous waste, organics and medicine collection

**Supervisor:** John Springman | [john.springman@ramseycounty.us](mailto:john.springman@ramseycounty.us) | 651-266-1150

- Why do we do this? → To reduce the risk of harm to health and the environment by properly managing discarded chemicals and to recover resources for reuse and recycling.
- We operate collection sites for yard waste (leaves, grass, woody material) and source separated organics (mainly food waste), and ensure that material is recycled.
- We manage the collection of household hazardous waste (HHW), pharmaceutical waste and sharps so that these items are properly managed.
- All Ramsey County residents can use these drop-off sites for free. The household hazardous waste sites are available to residents of the metro area.

**INTERESTING INITIATIVES & ACHIEVEMENTS**

The seven yard waste collection sites serve over 430,000 visitors per year.

27,000 tons of tree and shrub waste were collected and used as fuel by Saint Paul District Energy.

Since 1991 over 13,000 tons of chemical waste have been kept out the trash through the HHW program.

**Solid Waste Programs** | manages external & internal waste programs

**Supervisor:** Vacant – to be hired early 2018

- Why do we do this? → To reduce the risk of harm to health and the environment by partnering with public, private and non-profit entities to manage waste as a resource.
- We partner with municipalities to make sure residents have efficient and effective recycling services, and we provide technical assistance, consulting and financial assistance.
- We work with school districts to adopt and apply sustainability policies and implement waste reduction, reuse and recycling programs with grants and technical assistance.

**INTERESTING INITIATIVES & ACHIEVEMENTS**

Food waste makes up over 25% of the trash thrown away by residents and businesses.

Recycling is an important economic activity – over 4,000 jobs in Ramsey County are associated with recycling, with over \$800 million in economic activity.

- We partner with private and non-profit service providers, such as Second Harvest Heartland, to reduce waste, encourage reuse and increase recycling.
- We use strategies in our master plan to reduce waste (including food waste), encourage reuse and increase recycling in places, such as apartment buildings.
- We coordinate recycling and waste programs for all Ramsey County facilities.
- We promote and support away-from-home recycling efforts.

### Outreach & Engagement | connects with the community

**Supervisor:** Mary Elizabeth Berglund | [maryelizabeth.berglund@ramseycounty.us](mailto:maryelizabeth.berglund@ramseycounty.us) | 651-266-1125

- Why do we do this? → To reduce the risk of harm to health and the environment by engaging with many communities and creating connections and dialogue to build knowledge about environmental health and protection.
- This is a public-facing unit. We engage and educate the community on a variety of topics, such as recycling, waste reduction, food safety, reuse, and safe disposal of sharps, medicine and household hazardous waste.
- We reach out to all cultures, meeting people where they are at, literally and figuratively, as we engage on environmental issues.
- We manage advertising, social media and traditional communications related to our programs.
- We educate students in local schools via toolkits, games, tours and other materials.
- We promote reuse with our Fix-It Clinics.

#### INTERESTING INITIATIVES & ACHIEVEMENTS

At monthly Fix-It Clinics, residents bring in small household appliances, clothing, electronics and more to receive free guided assistance from volunteers with repair skills to disassemble, troubleshoot and fix items.

Since its inception in July of 2015, the Fix-it Clinic program has successfully kept over 8,000 pounds of material out of the waste stream.

### Administrative Support | supports all programs

**Supervisor:** Mary Elizabeth Berglund | [maryelizabeth.berglund@ramseycounty.us](mailto:maryelizabeth.berglund@ramseycounty.us) | 651-266-1125

- We are the face of the Division - the employees many people first encounter on the phone, by computer or in person.
- We support program areas in the Division by administering reporting and licensing processes for businesses within Ramsey County.
- We manage the line-of-business databases and computer applications for the Division.

- We manage all office supplies and equipment.
- We provide all administrative support for food safety, hazardous waste and other trainings.
- We design forms, write letters, coordinate mailings and edit documents.
- We provide customer service to all Ramsey County residents and businesses.
- We keep the Division running smoothly.

### Policy, Planning and Evaluation | the policy think tanks

**Supervisor:** Zack Hansen | [zack.hansen@ramseycounty.us](mailto:zack.hansen@ramseycounty.us) | 651-266-1160

We are responsible for a variety of projects including:

- Support for Department planning work such as public health accreditation, performance measurement and management, strategic planning;
- Preparing policy analyses on environmental health topics for Board discussion, e.g. E-Cigarettes;
- Development of the Ramsey County Solid Waste Management Master Plan;
- Coordinate work on resilience planning;
- Data collection, evaluation, reporting, including the Open Data project.

### Climate Change and Health | Evaluating, Planning, Partnering

Working with the Health Protection Division, we:

- Develop and maintain the Department’s Health Vulnerability Assessment;
- Coordinate with state and local partners on adaption strategies for effects of a changing climate on health.

### Energy and Sustainability | Policy, Planning, Partnering

We are responsible for:

- Planning for internal county energy and sustainability;
- Coordinating energy-related projects: e.g. consolidating fleet operations, community solar gardens, measuring energy use, environmental preferable purchasing;
- Supporting regional collaboration on energy issues.

### Environmental Health Emergency Preparedness | Planning, Partnering

Working with the Health Protection Division, we:

- Maintain an EH Annex to the Department’s Public Health Preparedness Plan;
- Partner and train with others to prepare for EH responses to emergencies;
- Develop and maintain emergency response tools.

## Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Board | Partners in Innovation

We work with Washington County to lead in providing solid waste services to all residents, businesses and institutions in the two counties.

- Pivoting from waste to resource: cutting edge public policy work.
- BizRecycling: innovative programs for businesses to increase recycling: free technical assistance and \$10,000 grants, plus partnering with business associations, serving schools and institutions.
- We own the Recycling & Energy Center in Newport, MN.
  - A value-added manufacturing plant, which processes trash into resources.
  - Currently separates recyclables and produces a fuel used to produce electricity.
  - Pursuing new technologies to use resources better; biofuels, green chemistry, biogas, composting, recycling.
- Websites!
  - [www.BizRecycling.com](http://www.BizRecycling.com)
  - [www.MoreValueLessTrash.com](http://www.MoreValueLessTrash.com)
- New partnership between Hennepin, Ramsey, Washington Counties to focus on waste and energy policy development.

### INTERESTING INITIATIVES & ACHIEVEMENTS

Since 2014, 482 grants have been awarded to businesses, totaling over \$2.6 million, which has greatly increased availability of recycling in businesses in Ramsey and Washington Counties.