



## Protection from Environmental Hazards

### Why is protection from environmental hazards important to Iowans?

Environmental health affects every Iowan every day. Iowans may be exposed to environmental conditions that cause disease at home, outdoors and in the workplace. The environmental health workforce is vital to making sure Iowans are safe where they live, work and play.

If a home built prior to 1978 is being remodeled or having work done that disturbs painted surfaces, Lead Professional Certification ensures that lead abatement contractors, lead abatement workers and lead-safe renovators are properly trained and certified to eliminate lead hazards. These practices protect people from elevated blood lead levels due to lead exposure in their home.

We are constantly exposed to both natural and man-made chemicals from the environment in which we live. In fact, our bodies are made up of chemicals, and we consume chemicals (proteins, carbohydrates and fats) in the foods we eat. Determining if an exposure to a chemical is harmful can be difficult and confusing.

### Did you know?

In FY20, almost \$3 million was allocated to 97 counties to provide water tests, well reconstructions, and well and cistern closures to private well owners.

### A focus on health equity

Iowa is a mandatory blood lead testing state, which means that by law all children entering kindergarten are required to have at least one lead test. If indicated by the blood lead level, children receive additional follow-up, which could include additional testing and/or education.

### What does the department do?

- Provides consultation, training, and support to local boards of health, their employees and the general public on environmental topics and issues.
- Provides funding to local health departments to support childhood lead poisoning prevention and protect against groundwater contamination. In 2019, more than 492 elevated blood lead tests were reported. Follow-up testing confirmed 373 lead-poisoned children, who then received additional health services.
- Assists in investigations of illness potentially caused by food, water or other environmental exposures.
- Conducts surveillance on environmental health-related diseases and work-related illness, injuries and deaths.
- Provides reliable toxicological and medical information for health care providers and general public.
- Prepares for and responds to environmental health-related emergencies.
- Coordinates efforts and responses with Department of Natural Resources, Department of Inspections and Appeals, and the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship.
- The Swimming Pool and Spa Program contracts with local environmental health agencies to annually inspect about 1,300 pools, nearly 400 spas, 175 wading pools, and 270 water slides at over 1,200 locations in Iowa.



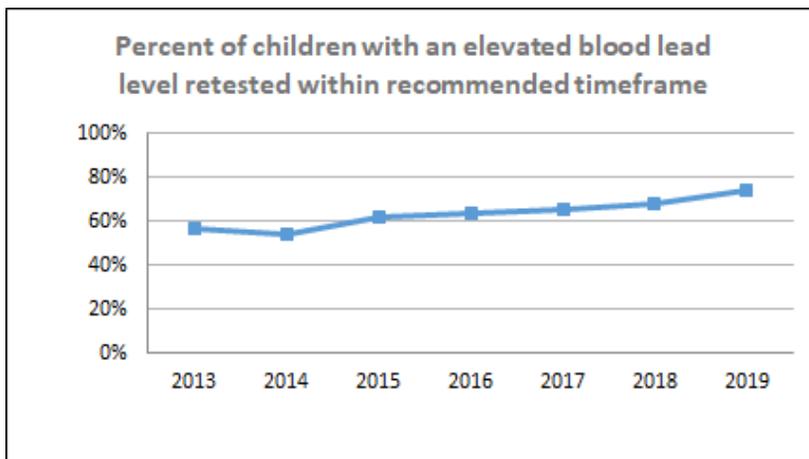
# Protection from Environmental Hazards

Why is protection from environmental hazards important to Iowans? (cont.)

The [Iowa Department of Public Health's Toxicology Manual](#) provides fact sheets and information to educate the public about the health effects from exposure to toxic substances in the environment.

Public pools and spas are reviewed by the department to ensure they meet state requirements to keep people from being injured or getting sick while swimming. These facilities are also inspected at least annually to ensure the pools are being operated properly and safely.

How do we measure our progress?



What can Iowans do to help?

- Consumers and bathers share responsibility for using aquatic facilities in a healthy and safe manner to reduce injuries and illnesses. Always provide direct supervision of your children when they are in or around the water and follow all posted rules.
- Practice [healthy swimming behaviors](#) such as showering before entering the pool to reduce the spread of disease. Iowans can contact their county environmental health office if they would like a free water test for their private well, or if they need help paying for the cost of plugging a well.
- All Iowans should be aware of [lead poisoning risks](#). Iowa parents should be aware of possible exposure to lead hazards and have their children tested for lead poisoning. Adults who work with lead should be aware of their lead exposure level and health impacts. Their children can be poisoned by lead brought home on their clothes, and unborn children can be exposed to lead while a woman is pregnant.

Resources	SFY 2019 Actual	SFY 2020 Actual	SFY 2021 Estimate
State Funds	\$1,564,650	\$1,566,540	\$1,566,540
Federal Funds	\$1,530,518	\$1,402,982	\$1,539,396
Other Funds	\$4,114,821	\$3,984,118	\$5,414,601
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>\$7,209,990</b>	<b>\$6,953,640</b>	<b>\$8,520,537</b>
FTEs	19.88	17.21	26.75