

Post-Event Tracking of Emergency Responder Health and Function

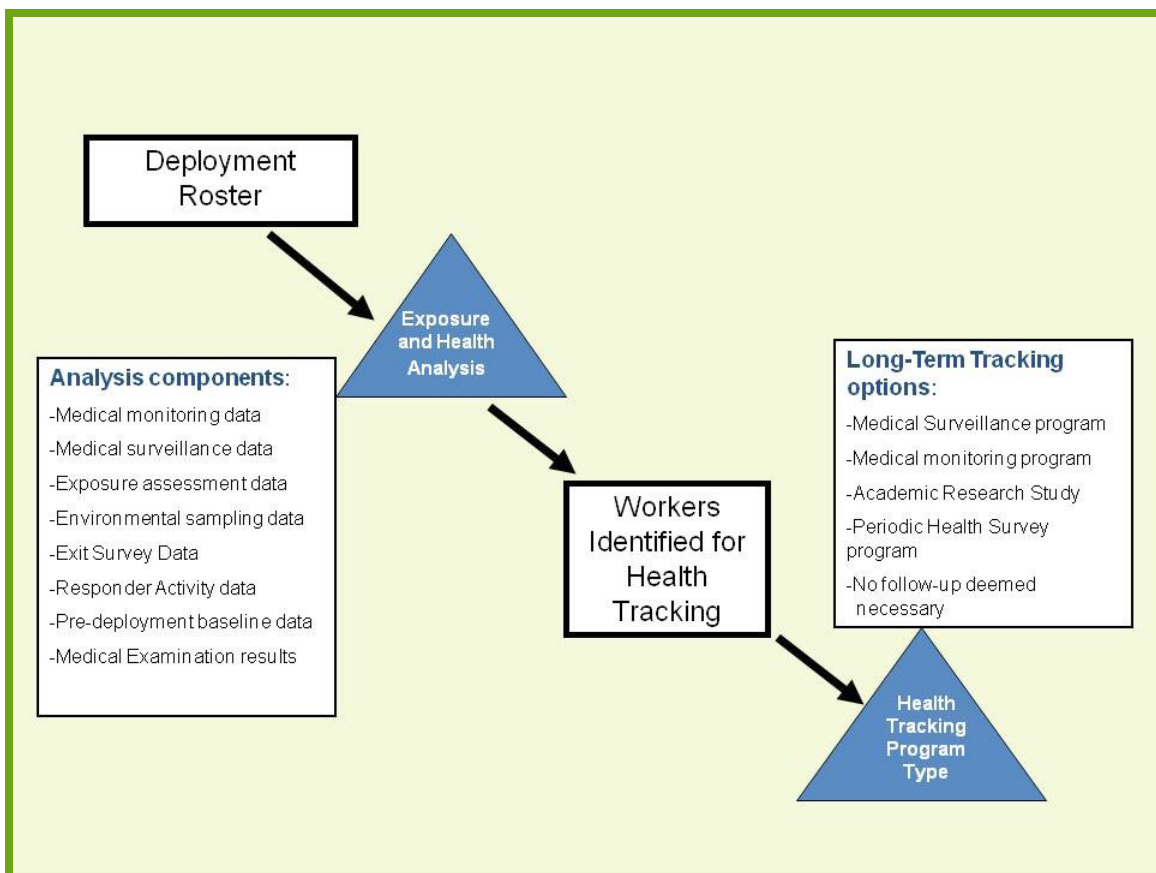
Purpose

The goal is to identify adverse health or functional consequences potentially associated with response work and to intervene early to maximize the chances for recovery and to stop further exposure for workers remaining on-scene. A critical function of the Emergency Responder Health Monitoring and Surveillance (ERHMS) system is to provide the data necessary to determine whether further responder health tracking is warranted and if so, what type of tracking would be most appropriate.

Principles of Post-Event Tracking of Emergency Responder Health and Function

The data from the pre- and during-event portions of ERHMS can be organized into three basic areas of analysis to assist the post-event tracking decision:

1. Evaluation of hazardous exposures, incidents, and activities.
2. Evaluation of adequacy of control strategies.
3. Epidemiologic review of injuries, illnesses, and mental health or performance problems among responders during the event.



Identifying and tracking responders

Constructing a Post-Event Monitoring or Surveillance Protocol

The monitoring protocol should be designed to:

- Conduct early intervention.
- Identify unique symptoms and/or signs that may be related to incident exposures.
- Describe disease rates, trends, and exposure-health outcome relationships.
- Inform future emergency preparedness and response activities.

Content of a Post-Event Monitoring and Surveillance Protocol

The monitoring protocol should:

- Obtain relevant clinical and exposure histories through a medical encounter.
- Perform the appropriate clinical exam(s) and medical tests.
- Provide the worker with an explanation of findings and appropriate referrals when there is a need for treatment or follow-up.

Implementation of a Post-Event Monitoring and Surveillance Protocol

Considerations:

- Should be closely tied with information management.
- A licensed clinician is needed to oversee the screening instruments.
- Data management must conform to recognized standards of acceptability, reproducibility, calibration, and technician certification.

ERHMS

The ERHMS system is a health monitoring and surveillance framework that includes recommendations and tools specific to protect emergency responders during the pre-deployment, deployment, and post-deployment phases of a disaster. The intent of ERHMS is to identify exposures and/or signs and symptoms early in the course of an emergency response in order to prevent or mitigate adverse physical and psychological outcomes and ensure workers maintain their ability to respond effectively and are not harmed in the course of this response work. Data will also help to identify during the post-deployment phase which responders would benefit from medical referral and possible enrollment in a long-term health surveillance program. Please refer to Chapter 10 and section 10T for more information on Post-Event Tracking of Emergency Responder Health and Function.

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For more information on ERHMS, please visit:

erhms.nrt.org & www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/erhms