

EIS History

1970s

EIS officers begin research into occupational health as the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) becomes part of CDC.

EIS officers join the local health department in El Paso, Texas, to investigate lead exposure associated with an ore smelter, which increased scientific understanding of lead poisoning as a public health threat. Phaseout of lead in automotive fuel begins by 1973.

EIS officers investigate liver cancer deaths of B.F. Goodrich employees in Louisville, Kentucky. Discovery of vinyl chloride as an occupational hazard leads to exposure standards set by the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA).

EIS officers help set up a field laboratory in Sierra Leone to investigate the cause of a deadly fever found in Lassa, Nigeria, in 1969.

EIS officers in Zaire and Sudan investigate a mysterious fever that sends its victims into shock with massive external and internal hemorrhages. Of 318 people infected, 280 (90%) die. The illness is named Ebola after a nearby river.

CDC investigators discover that a bacterium causes Legionnaires disease. Data collected by more than 20 EIS officers during two previous outbreaks (1965 & 1968) and the 1976 outbreak in Philadelphia are key to the discovery.

An EIS officer suspects a connection between aspirin use and Reye syndrome, a rare neurological disease found mainly in children. The connection is eventually proven.

