



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
National Center for Environmental Health  
Vessel Sanitation Program

## Health Practices on Cruise Ships: Training for Employees Transcript

### **Environmental Health**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Vessel Sanitation Program is proud to bring to you the following session: Environmental Health. While this session is primarily for the cruise vessels under the jurisdiction of the Vessel Sanitation Program, it may be used by anyone interested in this topic. This session should not replace existing interactive training, but should be used as an adjunct to a comprehensive training program.

Environmental health. During this session, we will be discussing both air systems and child activity centers.

Learning objectives, ventilation. At the end of this session, you will be able to list the inspection and cleaning frequencies for ventilation systems. You will also be able to list the acceptable methods to make systems accessible for inspections. Learning objectives, child activity center. At the end of this session, you will be able to list some of the signs and symptoms of common infectious childhood diseases, you will be able to describe the procedure to be followed should a child develop symptoms while at the center, and you will list materials and equipment that must be available at toilet rooms and diaper changing stations.

Ventilation systems. HVAC systems. This stands for heating, ventilation, and air conditioning. Air handling systems, construction. Air handling systems must be designed and constructed to be accessible for inspection, maintenance, and cleaning. For inspection, there are some older systems that are not easily accessible. These systems will require in excess of six hours to dismantle to allow the condensate collection system and drain pan to be visible during an inspection. What can be done is a modification to include an inspection port that can be opened during an inspection so that the inspector may view the collection pan to ensure that it is clean and self-draining.

Air conditioning unit. This is an example of an air conditioning unit that would not be accessible during an inspection. And here you may want to include an inspection port to make this unit accessible.

Air systems maintenance. A written maintenance and cleaning plan must be available on the vessel. This can be a paper document, or it can be electronic. Air handling units shall be kept clean. The cooling coils and condensate pans must be maintained clean. You must clean them to remove dirt and organic material. Evaporative condensers must be



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inspected at least annually and must be cleaned as necessary. In general, this would be based on the manufacturer's recommendations, which should take into account the itinerary of the vessel.

**Child activity center.** When considering what a child activity center is, we must take into account there are certain parameters. One, the children are here for child related activities, the children are under six years old and are left at the center by the parents to be cared for by vessel staff. This does not include centers where children are left who are over the age of six or a center where the children are under the age of six and the parent or guardian remains with the child at all times.

**Diaper changing facilities.** If children in diapers are accepted at the child activity center, certain requirements must be met. Regardless of whether or not the vessel staff change the diaper or if the parent is notified to return to change the child's diaper, all these materials must be in place. These include a changing table that is durable, impervious, non-absorbent, and can be easily cleaned, supplies such as disposable diapers, gloves, baby wipes or sanitary wipes, a cleanser and disinfecting for the changing table, an airtight diaper receptacle for soiled diapers, and a sign informing providers that they need to wash their hands in between each diaper change.

**Diaper changing hand wash station.** At each diaper changing station, we want an appropriate hand washing station which includes a supply of soap, paper towels or an automatic hand dryer, hot and cold running water, and a waste receptacle. We want these hand washing stations close by the diaper changing station to ensure that individuals do not have to leave the immediate area to wash their hands in between each diaper change.

**Toilets and hand washing.** If toilet facilities are provided in the child care center, they must be designed and supplied to meet the requirements of the manual. One, you must have child-size toilet fixtures, air dryers or paper towels, soap, toilet tissue, single-use disposable gloves, sanitary wipes or baby wipes, an airtight receptacle, and signs alerting providers to the need to wash their hands and the children's hands after assisting children with the use of the toilet.

**Furnishing and toys.** There are many items in the child activity center, and we need to make sure that these items are cleaned and disinfected at the appropriate frequency. For furnishings, we want to ensure that furnishings are cleanable and are maintained clean. It is not appropriate to use upholstered furniture or furniture that cannot be cleaned and disinfected in a child activity center. Cleaning frequency for touchable surfaces is daily; for mouthable surfaces, in between each use; for tables, highchairs, and linens, in between each use; and for carpeting and decks, daily.

**Children and infectious illness.** There should be a listing available in the child activity center for providers to let them know what are the signs and symptoms of common



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infectious childhood diseases. These can include but are not limited to vomiting and diarrhea, fever, rash, swollen glands, discharge from the nose or eyes, constant or incessant crying, and there may be other signs as well.

Exclusion policy. It is very important to develop a written exclusion policy, one, if a child reports to the center while ill, that that individual is excluded from participating in that child activity center, sent to the medical office before they are allowed to return, or, two, a child has been accepted into the child activity center and, subsequent to that acceptance, becomes ill. This policy should be in writing and should ensure that children are not allowed in the center unless medical clearance has been received.

Sample exclusion policy for ill children. This slide shows an example of an exclusion policy for a cruise vessel. The top shows a child reporting to the child activity center exhibiting signs or symptoms of a common infectious childhood disease. This child should not be admitted into the center and should be sent for medical clearance. The second part of this indicates that a child becomes ill while at the center. Again, this is an example exclusion policy, and a vessel can decide to develop their own. But at a minimum, an exclusion policy should include isolation of that child to keep that child away from other children, but if this child is isolated, they should also be observed and should not be left alone. The parent or guardian should be notified that the child needs to be picked up, and if the parent or child does not respond to that notification, either the medical staff or the child activities staff should take the child down to the medical center. In any case, the child should not be allowed to return to the child activity center until written medical clearance has been received for that child to participate in activities in the child activity center. This concludes the session Environmental Health.

Resources and references. For further information on child activity centers or the CDC, please visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov). For information on the vessel sanitation program, please visit [www.cdc.gov/nceh/vsp](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/vsp). Ventilation. For information on the Environmental Protection Agency, please visit [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov). For information on indoor air quality, please visit [www.epa.gov/iaq](http://www.epa.gov/iaq).