

GENERALIZED MILK AND FOOD SANITATION¹

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Reorganization of the Philadelphia city government resulting from adoption of the Home Rule Charter in 1951 is an old story. Most people who have followed affairs in Philadelphia are familiar with the upsurge of public opinion that preceded this action. Included in the reorganization program was a drastic reorganization of the Department of Public Health.

REORGANIZATION OF SANITATION SERVICES

Plumbing and housing sanitation were combined with building inspection services in the newly created Department of Licenses and Inspections, along with all licensing functions. The remaining sanitation activities were co-ordinated in a single Division of Environmental Sanitation. Additional programs were developed as needed to fulfill obligations under the Charter for "... air, water, food and drugs, health hazards, the pursuit of occupations affecting the public health, and pests, including animal, insect and plant-life."

To plan and direct programs, a corps of specialized professional engineers, sanitarians, entomologists and veterinarians were assembled in the central office. This staff, also, constituted an immediate source of technical consultation within the Division for the Department, as well as for other city agencies.

Natural functional relationships guided the realignment of services into groupings composing Sections and Units. To provide increased emphasis for animal disease control, veterinary services (including meat inspection) were established in a new Public Health Veterinary Medicine Section. Milk and food activities were combined with restaurant inspection to form the Milk and Food Sanitation Section.

To supervise local programs of swimming pool, private water supply and community sanitation and

to supply consultative service related to public health engineering and vector control, an Environmental Health Section was created. A Housing Hygiene Section was charged with evaluation and investigation of housing conditions related to public health and development of a home accident prevention program.

Surprisingly perhaps, this reorganization provided for the first time in the Philadelphia Department of Public Health an Industrial Sanitation Section concerned with both industrial hygiene and radiological health. Another innovation was the creation of a Training Section to inaugurate an in-service training program for the staff of the Division, conduct independent program evaluation, and assist in the development of community interest in environmental sanitation program objectives.

Recently, air pollution control has been added to the functions of this division. This section is responsible for smoke, odor, dust, and other air pollution control measures.

Prior to this reorganization, all field personnel activities were based from a central office with very loose contact and supervision. Problems of travel, communication, and administration led to the logical establishment of five sanitation districts of about 400,000 population each. All field operations were transferred to these offices under the direct supervision of a district sanitation supervisor. The district sanitation supervisor receives instructions and requests advice directly from the central office. The central office insists that the city-wide program be adhered to closely in each district.

Field personnel formerly maintained contact with the central office by telephone once or twice a day. With their transfer to district offices, the sanitarians report to the office for 30 minutes each morning. During this time, they plan a work schedule for the day, secure information from the files on previous visits, and confer with the District



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supervisor for general or specific directions. Before leaving the office, they indicate where they can be reached at 11:00 A.M., 1:00 P.M., and 3:00 P.M. in case an emergency arises. In the evening, personnel return to the district offices a few minutes before the end of the work day to complete daily reports and review events with the supervisor.

This move was not well received at first. However, as the sanitarians became more familiar with their territories, planning their work and completing the work schedule for the day was less of a chore. The system has proved its value on many occasions when unforeseen emergencies made quick contact essential. It is also an automatic work organizer. In this respect, the system has been instrumental in training employees to develop

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good work habits. When the personnel observed that there was real value in this system and that it was not just a means to check up on them, their discontent diminished.

GENERALIZED INSPECTION

Of possibly more direct concern to milk and food sanitarians, however, is the basic change in inspection services to a generalized program. Therefore, the remainder of this discussion will relate to that subject.

Prior to reorganization in 1953, sanitation services were performed by several specialized units — each with its own staff of inspectors and functioning without relation to other activities.

These were:

1. Food21 inspectors
2. Restaurant12 inspectors
3. Milk 4 inspectors
4. Barber Shop... 3 inspectors

It was necessary for as many as three different inspectors from separate units to visit a restaurant to accomplish all of the work of the Department. This led to overlapping territories, confusion of the public, and inflexible, cumbersome administration.

To us, the solution lay in generalizing inspection. This is not an idea original with Philadelphia; although, Philadelphia has, perhaps, actually put the practice into use to a much greater extent than most major metropolitan health jurisdictions. In 1949, the Conference of Municipal Public Health Engineers' Committee on Sanitation Division Organization advocated generalized sanitation inspection. For years, minimum health units employing only one sanitarian or sanitary engineer have been forced by necessity to conduct a generalized program. This has not been a deterrent to prevent many of these departments from making outstanding progress under trying circumstances.

Obvious advantages of generalization are:

- (1) Duplication of inspection areas is eliminated.
- (2) Reduced area permits better follow-up on violators.
- (3) Less time of travel between establishments.
- (4) One inspector performs complete job in establishment visited.
- (5) General experience develops better personnel for advancement to administrative positions.

(6) Generalized personnel permit more flexible administration in relation to job assignment and program emphasis.

Primary limitation on a generalized program is the ability of an individual to attain proficiency in a number of activities. It was decided that this was practical; provided, that there was a readily available corps of specialists in the central office, that close supervision was exercised through the district offices, and that a continuing training and evaluation program was conducted.

Thus, Philadelphia embarked on a total program for environmental sanitation. Each phase of activity was coordinated with other activities. Most advantageous, however, was the fact that this approach permitted our staff to attack each problem as a team. It meant that we could use the collective talents of all our staff — our engineers, sanitarians, veterinarians, and entomologists — on any problem.

Because of Philadelphia civil service requirements, a complete new series of job classifications had to be approved. The work previously performed by the various inspector groups was included in the job description of a new class called Sanitarian Aide, with some general sanitation duties added.

Since the position required more knowledge and had greater responsibility, a higher pay range was assigned to the job. This also meant that the former inspectors could attain qualification only by examination. To protect their tenure, it was agreed to hold examinations for Sanitarian Aide on a promotional basis only.

To assist in making the transition, the Division inaugurated an in-service training program. Ten to fourteen inspectors at a time were detached from their duty for a period of eleven weeks, and while at full pay they attended one of three training courses during normal working hours. This program covered elementary arithmetic, chemistry, and bacteriology, current practices in water supply, sewage treatment, vector control, and milk and food sanitation; and to a lesser degree the public health

aspects of housing hygiene, accident prevention, heating and ventilation, air pollution, school sanitation, noxious weed control, radiological hazards, and other general sanitation subjects. A training committee with representation from the inspectors, as well as technicians helped plan the course. The material was presented in accordance with the average educational level — about 2 years of high school. This training was followed by a period of supervised work experience in the new job duties.

The examinations for Sanitarian Aide were scheduled to be held shortly after completion of each of the three sessions. It was further agreed that each inspector, in the event he failed the first examination, would have a second opportunity to qualify after about three months supervised work experience. This resulted in a minimum of dislocation, in fact, most inspectors approached their new Sanitarian Aide jobs with tremendously increased enthusiasm after completion of the training period. Only three former inspectors who participated in the complete training program failed to qualify for the new Sanitarian Aide classification.

According to the new job duties, a sanitarian aide performs routine inspections of restaurants, food stores, meat markets, barber shops, etc. and also collects samples of water, milk, and food for examination.

There is another field job — that of Sanitarian I. Personnel with this classification have the same routine duties plus additional responsibility for a more advanced type of work such as inspection of milk and ice-cream plants, meat and other food processing plants, swimming pools and to assist in industrial hygiene and radiation surveys, etc. This category is intended as an entrance position for the college trained sanitary science or sanitary engineering graduate. It is open, however, to Sanitarian Aides on a competitive basis. Previous to the training courses, none of the inspectors taking the Sanitarian I examination were able to pass; however, five inspectors subsequently have qualified.

All newly appointed Sanitarian I employees are given about two weeks orientation and job instruc-

tion for generalized work, followed by a brief period of field training before assignment. After a short period of general work experience, these sanitarians are provided additional training and experience in more technical jobs. Over a two year period, a Sanitarian I will receive experience in milk, food, housing, industrial hygiene, pest control, swimming pools, and other activities.

Plans to train large numbers of personnel in both food and restaurant inspection and milk and milk plant inspection have evoked considerable interest. Heretofore, many jurisdictions, particularly the larger cities, have considered each a specialty in which proficiency is not readily obtained. Selecting five Sanitarians I at a time — one from each district — they have been trained in a period of six weeks to begin routine milk sanitation work. Of course, training must be continued on-the-job. In Philadelphia, the local health department inspects each milk and ice cream plant. There is an industry system for inspecting dairy farms; however, the health department will guide this work through sample surveys. After training, the Sanitarian I is able to perform the routine inspections and also perform the various tests normally made to check high temperature-short time equipment. This does not mean that he is a specialist that can handle all milk problems, but such competency to a practical extent is quickly available in the central office. Ten field personnel and supervisors have al-

ready been trained in this manner. It is intended ultimately to train about 25 sanitarians to do all types of food and milk work. In addition, they will be instructed in other sanitation activities.

Generalization will be practiced to the greatest extent feasible. It is possible, however, that engineering graduates will be utilized to a greater extent on industrial hygiene, radiation hazards, and water and waste problems.

PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION

While many benefits have accrued to the Department from this reorganization and generalization, the personnel have not been without reward. Where else can a young graduate enter the field of Public Health and receive training and experience in all phases of environmental sanitation?

The Department will ultimately reap this benefit by developing supervisors with broad experience.

Admittedly, this system requires greater effort by the employee to maintain proficiency in a number of activities. This has been recognized by establishing a higher pay scale than previously set for inspectors.

For many years, sanitarians have strived to receive professional recognition similar to that accorded physicians and engineers. One does not attain professional stature through desire alone. While activities were confined to narrow specialties, only high school education and two years limited experience were required for appointment. When duties were broaden-

ed, the minimum requirements were advanced to require professional training in sanitary science or engineering or their equivalents. The result was the unusual classification of engineers and sanitarians at the same professional level and the establishment of identical salaries for comparable responsibilities.

Thus by requiring professional qualifications and by demanding professional ability and job performance, professional status was awarded without question.

SUMMARY

In conclusion, the recent reorganization of the city government in Philadelphia has afforded an unusual opportunity to observe the effects of a complete revamping of environmental sanitation services in a comparatively short period of time. On the basis of the limited experience to date, these statements can be verified:

1. A generalized inspection program is practical to an extent greater than practiced in many areas.
2. Personnel with limited education can, through in-service training, improve job performance and perform many generalized inspection duties.
3. Personnel with professional education and training in sanitary science can satisfactorily perform a variety of sanitation inspections, including both food and milk.
4. Professional status as a sanitarian is recognized when there exists professional training, a broad sphere of technical interest and responsibility, and ability to do a professional job.

DISHWASHING MACHINES

Continued from Page 175

checking equipment in the field, or seeing that it is properly installed, maintained or operated. The "ap-

proval program" does aid in making available equipment that will do a satisfactory sanitation job if it is properly installed and operated. We believe the Sanitarian can feel confident that when a dishwashing

machine bearing the National Sanitation Foundation seal of approval is purchased, the cleaning function will be accomplished if the equipment is properly installed, maintained and operated.