
Sphere Minimum Humanitarian Standards

Deschutes County Public Health Advisory Board

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*Presentation to the Coordinated Homeless Response Office Board
January 18, 2024*

About the Deschutes County Public Health Advisory Board (PHAB):

PHAB is established to enhance community relations with Deschutes County Health Services to:

- (1.) increase public knowledge about public health issues**
 - (2.) assist in advocating for the services provided by the public health**
 - (3.) inform and advise the Deschutes County Commissioners concerning matters of public health and the public health system in Deschutes County.**
- PHAB members are appointed by the Deschutes County Commissioners
 - Currently 12 volunteer members, representing various sectors of health services
 - Limited capacity; minimal staff and member time



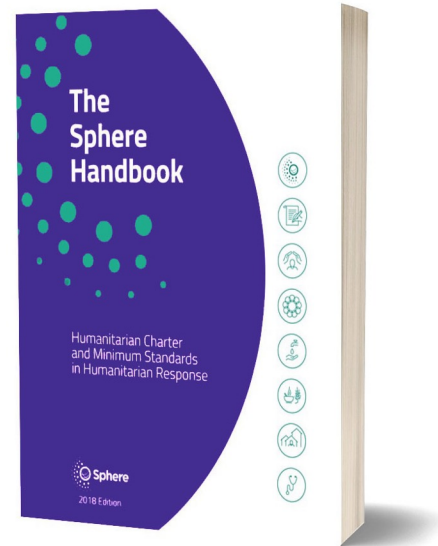
HEALTH SERVICES
PUBLIC HEALTH

Why We're Here:

- **Early 2022:** Former PHAB Chair Dave Huntley drafted the *Minimum Care Advisory for Homeless* document based on the "Sphere Standards."
 - **May 2022:** Under Huntley's leadership, PHAB presented the document to the BOCC for informational purposes. No action was taken at that time.
 - **January 2024:** Upon request from the CHRO Board, PHAB is presenting this document to CHRO for informational purposes.
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The Sphere Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response

- Shared set of **common humanitarian principles and universal minimum humane standards** to ensure the welfare of crisis-affected populations and the the following basic human rights:
 1. the right to life with dignity,
 2. right to receive humanitarian assistance,
 3. the right to protection and security, and
 4. the rights and duties envisaged by international law
- Established in 1997 by leading international aid agencies (UN, Red Cross, etc.) Sphere guidelines are **globally recognized and updated regularly by consensus** to reflect and guide best practices.



Water supply, sanitation and hygiene promotion (WASH)



Food security and nutrition



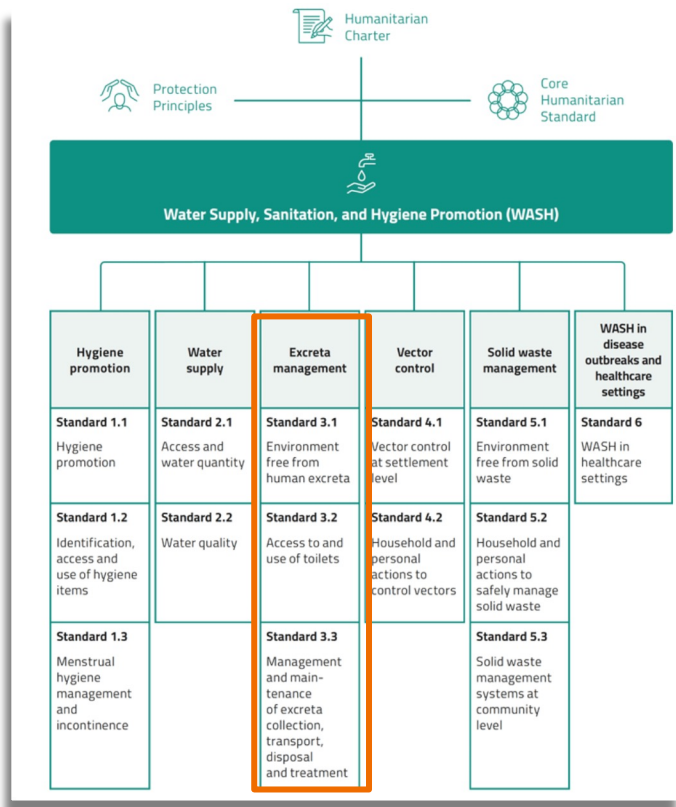
Shelter and settlement



Health

Example Minimum Care Standard

From the *2018 Sphere Handbook: Essential concepts in water supply, sanitation and hygiene promotion*: Water supply, sanitation, and hygiene promotion standards



EXAMPLE: WASH Standard for Excreta Management:

Key Indicators:

3.1: There are no human faeces present in the environment in which people live, learn and work.

3.2.A: All excreta containment facilities are sited appropriately and are an adequate distance from any surface or groundwater source.

3.2.B: Ratio of shared toilets: Minimum 1 per 20 people

3.2.C: Distance between dwelling and shared toilet: Maximum 50 metres

3.2.D: Percentage of toilets that have internal locks and adequate lighting

3.2.E: Percentage of toilets reported as safe by women and girls

3.2.F: Percentage of women and girls satisfied with the menstrual hygiene management options at toilets they regularly use

3.3: All human excreta is disposed of in a manner safe to public health and the environment

Example Minimum Care Standard (continued)

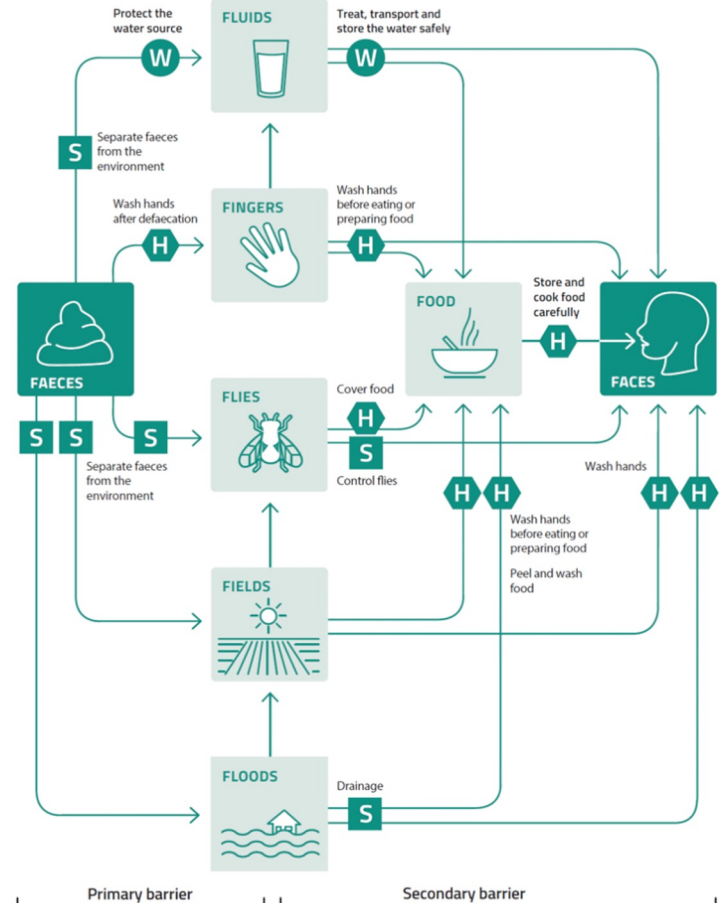
From the *2018 Sphere Handbook: Essential concepts in water supply, sanitation and hygiene promotion*: Water supply, sanitation, and hygiene promotion standards

Appendix 2:

- W** WATER
- S** SANITATION
- H** HYGIENE

Barriers can stop the transmission of disease; these can be primary (preventing the initial contact with the faeces) or secondary (preventing it being ingested by a new person). They can be controlled by water, sanitation and hygiene interventions.

From: www.spherestandards.org



NOTE The diagram is a summary of pathways; other associated routes may be important. Drinking water may be contaminated by a dirty water container, for example, or food may be infected by dirty cooking utensils. © WEDC

The 5 Fs: faeces, fluids, fingers, flies, food (Figure 6)

Source: Water, Engineering and Development Centre (WEDC)

Key Elements of the Minimum Care Standards

- **Public Health Focus:** The Minimum Care Advisory document includes guidance that addresses critical public health concerns, including access to safe water, sanitation, hygiene, and medical care.
- **Protection of Natural Resources:** The guidance emphasizes the importance of preserving natural resources by reducing negative impacts on public lands.
- **Positive Community Interactions:** Encourages more consistent and positive interactions between unhoused residents and outreach providers, public lands stewards, and the general public.
- **Humanitarian Approach:** The standards are based on the SPHERE guidelines, which are recognized globally as a minimum benchmark for humanely providing basic services to displaced populations and refugees, relevant.
- **Established Guidelines:** The Sphere Minimum Care Standards are internationally recognized and used as a tool for advocacy, program evaluation, and needs assessment.

Limitations

1. The Sphere standards for humane care were developed for use in temporary humanitarian aid settings (ie; refugee camps or post-disaster) and **the standards have not been formally adapted and expanded for addressing long-term homelessness.**
 2. The referenced document was **developed without a process of community engagement and consultation** - a crucial element that PHAB recommends incorporating into any future steps.
 3. The Public Health Advisory Board is not in a position to make a formal recommendation to the CHRO Board, and **the referenced document and the Sphere guidelines are presented for informational purposes only.**
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Conclusion

- The *Sphere Minimum Care Standards* provide an important framework option to assess and enhance homeless services in Deschutes County.
- Achieving *-at a minimum-* this globally recognized set of minimum care standards ensures that efforts to address the immediate needs of individuals who are currently living unsheltered in our community are aligned with:
 1. Public Health priorities
 2. The CHRO's larger objectives
 3. International basic human rights
 4. General community priorities related to shared resources and health promotion

Example Minimum Care Standard (continued):

- Approx **1186 unsheltered individuals** in Central Oregon.
(2023 PIT)
 - Applying the Sphere guideline of **one toilet per 20 people**
(The Sphere Association, 2018)
- = Minimum Standards suggest having 59 toilets available.**
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Best Practices Based on Sphere Standards

1. **Further Assessment:** Conduct ongoing evaluation of service provision in Deschutes County against the Sphere minimum care standards.
2. **Community Engagement:** Foster greater community involvement in addressing unsheltered homelessness in line with the standards. Solicit recommendations from service providers, public lands stewards, the CHRO Advisory Board, and other relevant entities to inform actions.
3. **Strategic Policy and Investments:** Based on assessments and community engagement, adopt strategic policies and invest resources into sustainable programs that will enhance public health, dignity, and resource protection.
4. **Long-Term Solutions to Unsheltered Homelessness:** Comprehensive and sustainable support for the continuum of shelter and housing solutions will reduce the need to continually address unsheltered homelessness.

Thank You



For further information, please visit:
www.spherestandards.org