



Environmental Health

Environmental Health

The field of environmental health, in the context of public health, addresses the impact the environment has on our health.

The DeKalb County Board of Health's Division of Environmental Health works to reduce the risk of illness and injury related to interactions between people and their environment. The division informs the public about environmental health hazards; prevents illness through monitoring, assessment and education; and protects the public from environmental health risks.

The Division of Environmental Health issues permits, conducts inspections, and responds to complaints and requests for service. The data in this chapter are derived from these activities.

PERMITS AND INSPECTIONS

The division issues annual permits to regulated facilities. These facilities are food service establishments, public swimming pools and spas, tourist accommodations (motels and hotels), and body crafting (tattooing and piercing) businesses and individuals. It also conducts pre-opening, routine, follow-up and complaint-related inspections.

The division regulates septic systems through inspecting and permitting new, repaired and modified systems. Septic systems are not routinely inspected; they are inspected in response to complaints.

The number of active annual permits varies by year. For each year from 2008 through 2012, there were approximately:

- 2,000 food service permits.
- 800 swimming pool and spa permits.
- 100 tourist accommodation permits.
- 30 body crafting studio permits and 100 body crafter permits.
- 100 septic system (new installation and repair) permits.

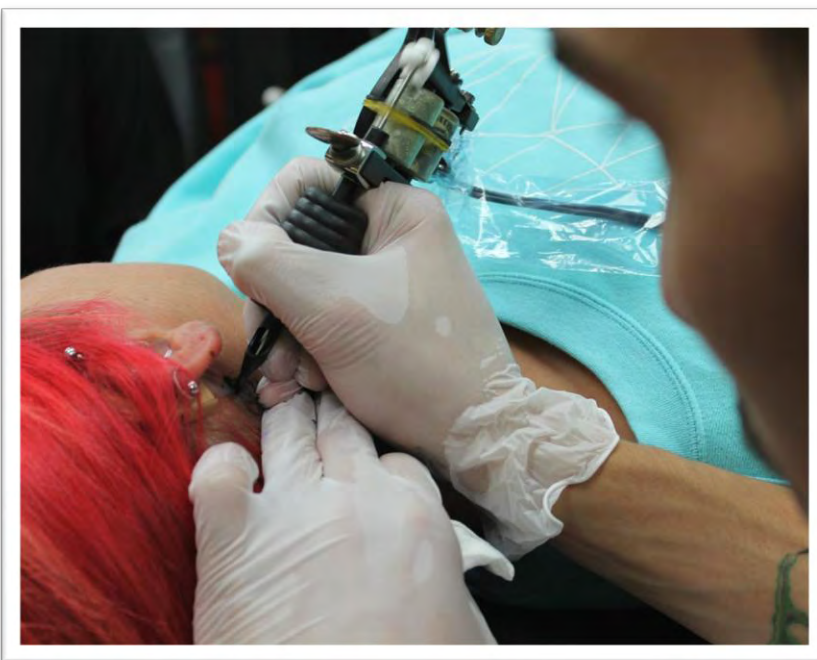
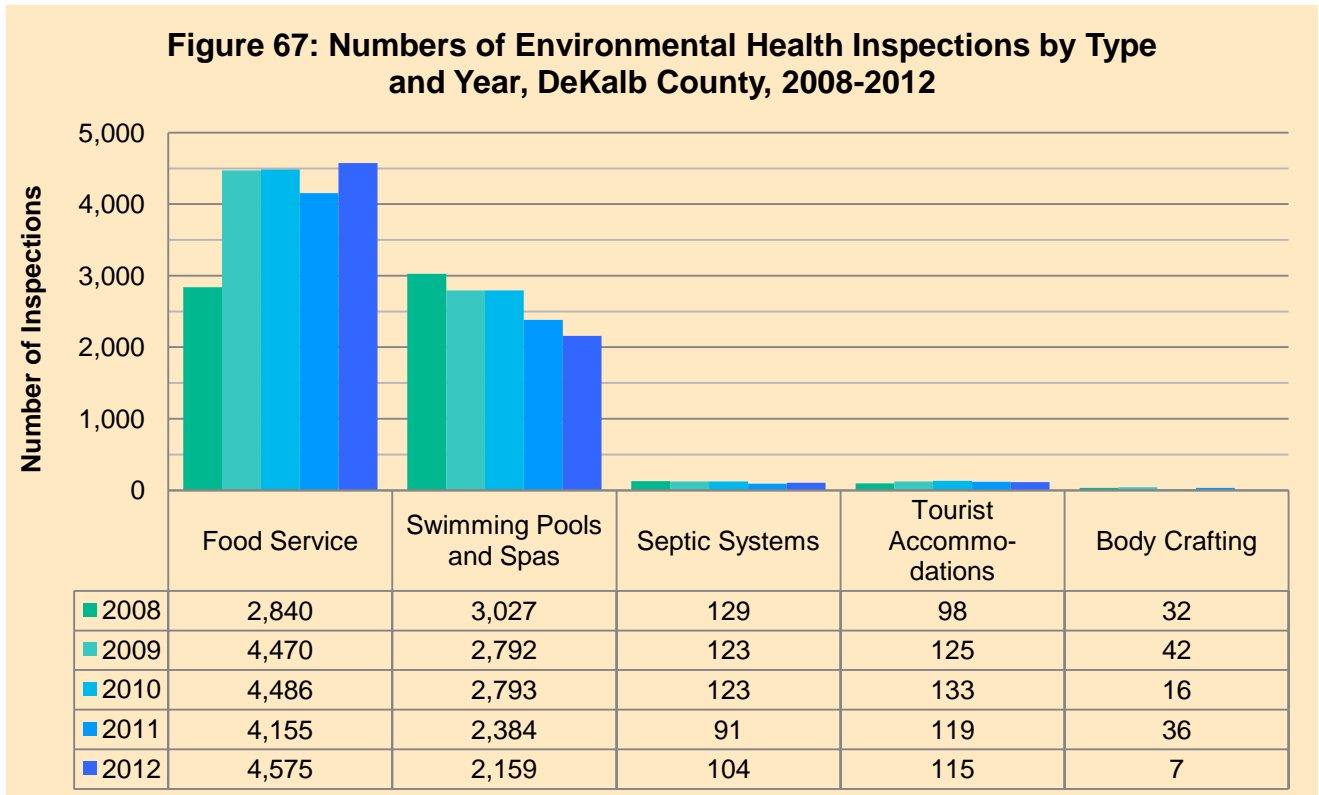


Figure 67 shows the number of environmental health inspections by type and year from 2008 through 2012:

- Inspections of food service establishments, swimming pools and spas account for 96 percent of all inspections.



Source: Digital Health Department, 2015.

In routine inspections of food service establishments conducted from 2008 through 2012:

- 57 percent of establishments scored a 90 percent or higher.
- 85 percent of establishments scored an 80 percent or higher.
- The three most common violations were:
 - Improper cold holding temperatures.
 - Inadequately cleaned and sanitized food contact surfaces.
 - Improperly used and stored wiping cloths.

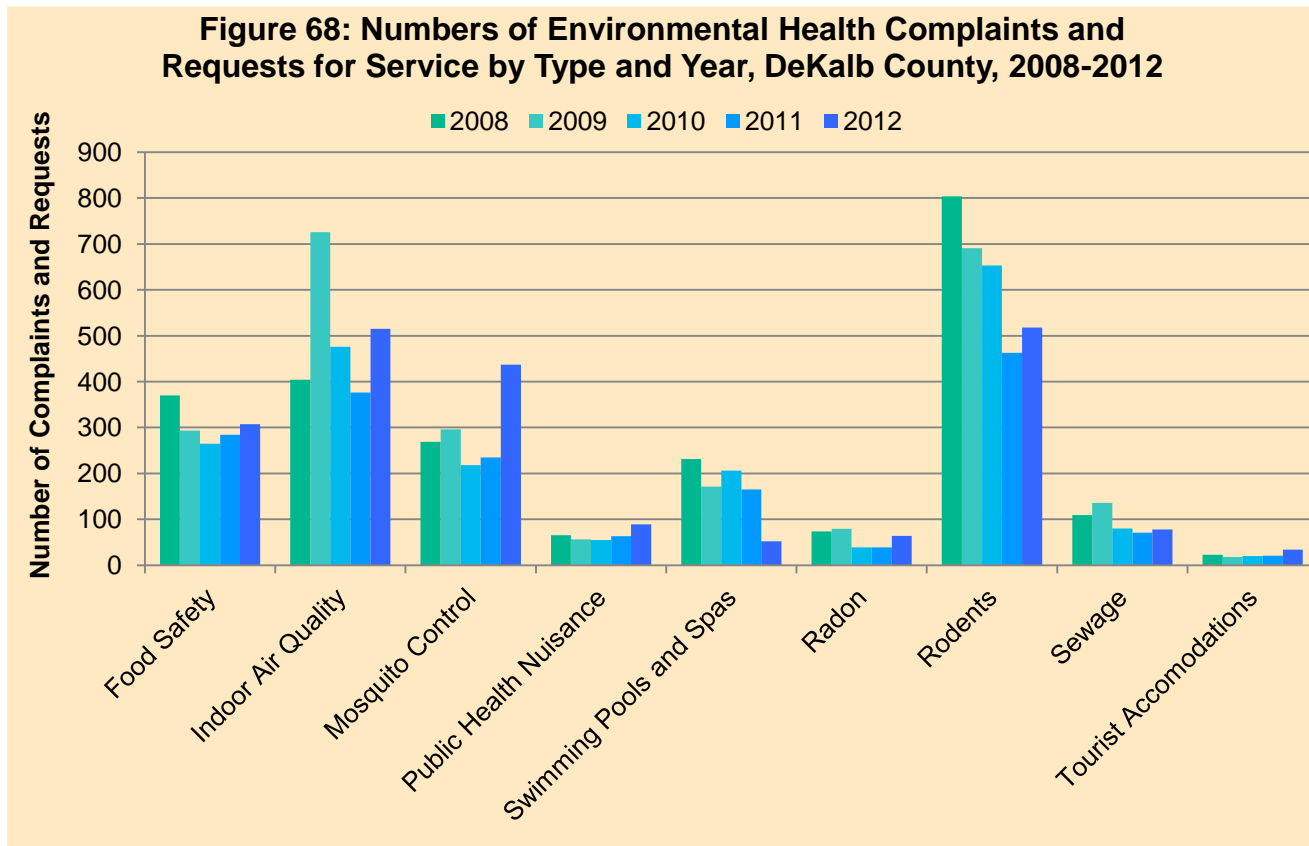
COMPLAINTS AND REQUESTS FOR SERVICE

The Division of Environmental Health also receives and follows up on complaints and requests for service from the public. In addition to responding to concerns about regulated facilities, the staff addresses:

- Indoor air quality, like odors and spores from mold and mildew.
- Mosquitoes, since they can transmit West Nile virus.
- Nuisances, like overflowing dumpsters and conditions that can breed pests.
- Radon, a colorless, odorless gas that can cause cancer.

Figure 68 shows the number of complaints and requests received by type and year from 2008 through 2012:

- In 2009, the spike in indoor air quality complaints may have been due to flooding in much of the county and increased concern about mold and mildew.
- In 2012, the spike in mosquito control complaints may have been due to media coverage of a national increase in the number of human West Nile virus infections.



Source: Digital Health Department, 2015.

What can you do about environmental health issues?

- Learn more about the way the environment affects your health.
- Check the Board of Health’s website for the inspection scores of local restaurants, pools and spas.
- Report environmental health issues to the Board of Health.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

DeKalb County	Metropolitan Atlanta	Georgia and Beyond
<p>DeKalb County Animal Services and Enforcement 404.294.2996 http://web.co.dekalb.ga.us/DKAS/west_nile.htm</p>		<p>American Lung Association 1.800.LUNGUSA or 1.800.586.4872 http://www.lung.org/healthy-air/</p>
<p>DeKalb County Board of Health, Division of Environmental Health 404.508.7900 http://www.dekalbhealth.net/envhealth/</p>		<p>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 1.800.232.4636 http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/rwi/</p>
<p>DeKalb County Planning and Sustainability, Code Compliance 404.687.3700 http://planningdekalb.net/?page_id=311</p>		<p>Georgia Department of Public Health, Environmental Health 404.657.6534 http://dph.georgia.gov/environmental-health</p>
<p>Keep DeKalb Beautiful 404.294.2010 http://web.co.dekalb.ga.us/beautiful/index.html</p>		<p>National Library of Medicine, MedlinePlus http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/foodsafety.html http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/001334.htm</p>
		<p>U.S. Department of Health and Human Services http://www.foodsafety.gov/</p>
		<p>U.S. Environmental Protection Agency http://www.epa.gov/radon</p>