

Event Type: Family reunion

Incident: E-Coli outbreak

Narrative

On Sunday, July 23, 2006, a family reunion was held at a water park in Atlanta, GA. The family members had not seen each other in over 5 years. This was a large event; over 100 family members were in attendance. The family had reserved 2 pavilions and had 2 event coordinators assisting them throughout the day. They were having lunch catered by the park --- a BBQ buffet at 1:00 pm. About 20 of the family members were children. Two of the children were still in diapers. The family did not put swim diapers on either of the kids. The 2 children in diapers were allowed to play in a kiddie pool that was connected to several other water systems. A guest alerted a parent in the group that one of the children had a dirty diaper. The child's parents were notified and they took action. They grabbed a diaper and went over to the child that was still in the pool. They laid the child on the pool deck near the water and proceeded to change the child. The restroom with a diaper changing facility was on the other side of the park. They did not have baby wipes so they attempted to cleanse the baby with pool water. Much of the now watered down fecal matter was in the pool. The water quality department at the park had not tested the chlorine levels of the water in over 48 hours. Approximately 48 hours after the incident, it was determined by an area hospital that an e-coli outbreak had occurred. Over the next 72 hours over 100 people would be hospitalized and 6 people would die.

Problem statements

- How often do you think water testing should be conducted? Why?
- What should the parents have done to prevent this from happening?
- What preventive measures should the event coordinator have done to prevent this from happening?
- What preventive measures should the park have done to prevent this from happening?
- What policies and procedures should have been in place in the event fecal matter was introduced into the pool(s)?
- What should aware parents do to protect themselves and children?
- Should the park be allowed to continue to operate? Why or why not?
- How were they able to prove that the park was responsible?
- What should be done for the families of the victims? Who should be responsible for this?
- Develop a short press release for the media...