

# Guidelines for authors writing for the Chemical Hazards and Poisons Report



The Health Protection Agency welcomes contributions to the Chemical Hazards and Poisons (CHaP) Report from professionals working in environmental public health and allied disciplines. We have previously published work from staff in the National Health Service, Environment Agency, local authorities, emergency services, United Nations and academia, as well as from HPA staff.

We publish articles of public health relevance on the following subjects:

- acute chemical incidents
- chronic chemical incidents
- case studies and lessons identified
- action cards and incident management guidelines
- emergency planning, e.g. preparing for the Olympics
- emerging issues
- exercise reviews
- environmental and public health research
- policy issues
- meeting and conference reports.

This document sets out the article submission and publication process, as well as style guidelines for potential authors.

## 1. Quality

The CHaP Report is a respected HPA publication that has a readership of thousands of professionals in the UK and abroad and is available to the public through the HPA website. As such we can only accept articles of high quality, in terms of both science and readability. We therefore request that all potential authors read the information provided here regarding the publication process. For examples of the quality expected please see recent publications at:

[www.hpa.org.uk/chemicals/reports](http://www.hpa.org.uk/chemicals/reports)

We encourage contributors from all backgrounds and the team of editors is happy to assist potential authors who are not used to writing reports or where English is not the author's first language. If you require help or wish to discuss your idea further please email [chapreport@hpa.org.uk](mailto:chapreport@hpa.org.uk).

## 2. Article content

Topics and suggested content headings are provided below. For all articles, the relevance to public health must be clear.

### 2.1 Incident response, case studies and exercise reviews

To provide a more holistic and informative account of the incident and learning points, we encourage authors to consider asking colleagues in other organisations involved in the incident to co-author the article.

*Suggested length: 1000-1800 words*

- General background / introduction
- Overview of incident
- Potential public health implications
- Discussion
- Key learning points, including what went well and areas for improvement
- Photos, maps, graphs or tables if relevant

## **2.2 Incident response tools**

The CHaP Report can be used to launch new incident response tools, such as action cards or decision-making tools.

*Suggested length: 800 words*

- General background / introduction / need for tool
- Overview of tool (including who it is aimed at)
- Access (location and how to access, e.g. URL)
- Examples of use
- Feedback, updates and future developments

As the CHaP Report is published as a fixed PDF, the tool itself should only be included if it is finalised and unlikely to be updated or improved.

## **2.3 Environmental or toxicological research**

*Suggested length: 1000-1800 words*

- General background / introduction
- Methods
- Results
- Discussion
- Application of research to health protection or incident response
- Photos, maps, graphs or tables if relevant

## **2.4 Natural hazards, climate change and extreme events**

*Suggested length: 1000-1800 words*

- General background / introduction
- Methods
- Results
- Discussion, including public health implications
- Case studies if possible
- Photos, maps, graphs or tables if relevant

## **2.5 Conference or meeting reports**

*Suggested length: 800 words*

Conference or meeting reports should be submitted only where a clear relevance to incident response or public health is demonstrated. A title covering the theme of the conference, e.g. 'Food and public health' is preferable to a title including the full name and date of the conference, e.g. 'Health Protection, University of Warwick, September 2010'.

- Name, date and location of conference / meeting
- Key pieces of new research, learning points and application to public health
- Where to obtain further information such as conference proceedings

## **2.6 News and updates**

*Suggested length: 150 words*

Please send any news or updates you would like to be considered for publication to [chapreport@hpa.org.uk](mailto:chapreport@hpa.org.uk). News and updates includes subjects such as:

- Summary of new publications and reports
- Updates of what's new in the field
- Horizon scanning – up and coming issues

## **2.7 Training events**

Articles on training courses or training attended will not be published. Training events will be listed on the last page of the report with a link to the relevant webpage.

- Name, date and location of training event
- Link to webpage

### 3. Article submission process

#### 3.1 Initial submission of short article summary

*1 → [Please submit your short article summary to chapreport@hpa.org.uk](mailto:chapreport@hpa.org.uk)*

Prior to submission of an article for publication we request authors submit a short summary of their proposed article. This will allow us to confirm the article meets the criteria of the CHaP Report. It will also allow us to identify key articles for consideration as feature articles in upcoming editions.

The short summary, similar to an abstract, should spell out the background of the article, the public health implications and the conclusions it may draw. Ideally the summary should be no more than 150 words, giving a broad overview of the article and the main points you will address.

Following receipt of the summary the editing team will request the full article or will make suggestions for changes which will make your article suitable for publication in the CHaP Report. If the article does not meet the criteria of the report the reason for this will be given. If the article fits with the theme of an upcoming edition, the editing team will contact the lead author to discuss.

#### 3.2 Submission of full article

*2 → [Prepare article according to author guidelines \(see Section 6: Style guidelines\)](#)*

*3 → [Complete the 'Permission to Publish form', available online at: www.hpa.org.uk/chemicals/reports](http://www.hpa.org.uk/chemicals/reports)*

The 'Permission to Publish' form is required to confirm all authors (including co-authors), respective managers and press officers are aware of the intention to publish in the HPA CHaP Report and accept responsibility for its content. It is the lead author's responsibility to confirm permission to publish. Please note that obtaining permission may take several weeks so seeking approval should not be delayed. The article should meet the criteria of the report, noted in this document, and be of high quality (see *Style guidelines*).

**Photographs:** Photographs should be submitted at this stage in appropriate resolution. Photographs and images must be the property of the author or the author must provide written evidence at submission confirming permission has been obtained for use (see 6.4 *Figures* below).

**File naming:** Please name the file as follows: <IncidentType><lead author name><v#>, e.g. "**ChemicalSpillAtFactory\_JohnSmith\_v1**".

This will avoid confusion with articles of similar title.

*4 → [Complete 'Article submission checklist', available online at: www.hpa.org.uk/chemicals/reports](http://www.hpa.org.uk/chemicals/reports)*

*5 → [Submit first draft of article with completed 'Permission to Publish form', photographs and images and 'Article submission checklist' to: chapreport@hpa.org.uk](mailto:chapreport@hpa.org.uk)*

Following receipt of the article the editorial team will make an initial assessment of its content. It will be returned if key learning points have not been identified or the work presented is unclear. Advice will be provided regarding how to adapt the article to make it suitable for publication if required. If this is your first scientific article, and you have concerns, the editing team will be happy to advise and assist you.

### 4. Article editing process

All liaison regarding the submitted article will be directed to the author submitting the article (lead author).

*6 → [Liaison between lead author and editor to finalise content of article](#)*

Once submitted your article will go through the following stages:

#### 4.1 Scientific review and style editing

**Scientific review:** Your article will be reviewed by a scientist from the Centre for Radiation, Chemical and Environmental Hazards (CRCE) who will assess it for scientific content, and highlight any points they feel require clarification. Your assigned member of the editing team will liaise with you throughout the process and will be able to answer any questions you have.

**Style editing:** Your article will be edited for English, grammar and HPA house style. Please be aware that some changes may be required to meet HPA guidelines.

A copy of the revised article will be emailed to the lead author with tracked changes and comments. Tracked changes should be accepted and any comments addressed. Publication cannot be confirmed unless these issues are addressed. If you do not agree with any of the comments or changes these should be justified on a point by point basis. Significant changes will not be made without your approval.

#### Deadlines

The editing process can be lengthy. To meet the publication date a number of deadlines are set and therefore the editing team require a prompt response from authors addressing any issues raised. Your assigned editor will inform authors of deadlines throughout the editing process and we request authors try their best to meet these deadlines as otherwise publication of the article can be delayed. Delays during the editing processes may result in publication in a subsequent issue. If you require help or are struggling to make the changes by a specified deadline please contact your editor to discuss. They are there to assist you in your article's publication.

#### 4.2 In house sign off

This final acceptance stage confirms the article is ready for publication.

#### 4.3 Final proof read

[7 → Proof-read article and confirm approval for publication](#)

Following the final sign off the lead author will be provided with a PDF version of the final article. The lead author is responsible for the final proof read. At this stage only minor changes are possible (e.g. typos and spelling); extensive changes cannot be made. This stage may be a few days before publication. If you are unable to proof-read the article, it will be checked by the editing team on your behalf.

### 5. Publication of the article

All lead authors will be automatically added to the CHaP Report subscription list and you will receive an email when the report is published. The report is published as a PDF, available on the HPA website. Please let us know if your co-authors would like to be added to the list or if you do not wish to be added. We cannot provide hard copies of the report to authors.

## 6. Style guidelines

### 6.1 Format and length

**Format:** Articles should be submitted in Microsoft Word format, with tables included at the end of the document. Figures should also be supplied separately (see below). Please use the same font throughout and make headings and subheadings clear, for example use **bold** or *italic font*. Headings can be used throughout to highlight key sections.

**Length:** Typically articles should be between 1000 and 1800 words in length. We will consider slightly longer or shorter papers. (See 2. *Article content* above.)

### 6.2 Language

Articles should be clear and understandable for readers from a wide range of disciplines. Clarity and conciseness of expression are preferred. Standard English grammar and spellings should be used (e.g. recognised, not recognized).

**Definitions:** All terms which are not universally recognised require a definition.

**Abbreviations:** The use of abbreviations is encouraged, however all abbreviations should be defined on first use in the text, e.g.: The Environment Agency (EA)

**Dates:** Dates should be in the format 23 April 2010.

**Bullet points:** Bullet points and numbered lists are useful to simplify text, however long lists should be avoided. If the text within items in a list is long, a structure of (sub) headings should be considered. When using bullet points, if the list is introduced with a colon, all the points should start with a small letter with the last point ending with a full stop, e.g.:

CRCE regularly responds to chemical incidents involving:

- smoke
- carbon monoxide
- mercury
- chlorine
- ammonia.

**Recommendations:** Any recommendations should be in a discussion section and authors should make it clear whether the recommendations are their own personal opinions or the position of their organisation; give references where necessary.

### 6.3 Key requirements

**Title:** The article title should be short, straightforward and as informative as possible. It should not exceed 15 words, e. g.: Investigation of chemical leaks from refrigerators in healthcare settings in London

A main title followed by a subtitle (of smaller font) can be used.

**Authors:** Author names should be provided in full along with their affiliations; do not use titles (e.g. Dr). Contact details should be provided for the corresponding author to whom all correspondence regarding the article can be sent. For example:

Jim Stewart-Evans<sup>1</sup>, Andrew Sharman<sup>2</sup>, Fran Pitt<sup>3</sup>, Susie Singleton<sup>3</sup>, Kate Wedgwood<sup>3</sup>, Simon Wilkinson<sup>4</sup> and Naima Bradley<sup>1</sup>

- 1 Centre for Radiation, Chemical and Environmental Hazards, Health Protection Agency
  - 2 Queens Medical Centre, Nottingham
  - 3 Health Protection Unit East Midlands (North)
  - 4 Medical Toxicology Research Centre, University of Newcastle
- email: [james.stewart-evans@hpa.org.uk](mailto:james.stewart-evans@hpa.org.uk)

All correspondence throughout the publication process will be with the author submitting the article (lead author). The lead author is responsible for ensuring that all those named as co-authors have agreed to the final text. (see 3.2 *Submission of full article*)

### 6.4 Tables and figures

Figures comprise graphs, charts, histograms, illustrations, drawings and photographs. Results are often more readily grasped when they are presented in a table or as a graph rather than as prose. The appearance of graphics is the responsibility of the author. Graphics must be high quality and lettering must be legible on publication. Titles are required for all tables and figures.

All figures and tables must all be cited within the main text. Figures and tables should be numbered if there is more than one (e.g. Figure 1 or Table 1) in the order in which they are cited in the text. A short descriptive title should be given for each as in the examples below. For figures the numbered title should be placed below the figure. A reference must be provided if the figure is not your own (see Figure 1 below). Where possible please supply tables/graphs in an editable format so they can be reformatted to HPA style if required during the publication process.

**Tables:** Tables should be provided in Microsoft Word format, and placed for submission purposes at the end of the article. A reference must be provided if the source of the data presented in the tables is not your own (see Table 2 superscript below). The numbered title should be placed above the table.

**Table 1: Types of information available on carbon monoxide poisoning cases from each data source<sup>1,2</sup>**

	ONS mortality data	Hospital episode statistics	HSE data
Age and sex	Yes	Yes	Some
Considered to be confirmed carbon monoxide exposure	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cause of exposure	Some	No	Yes
Location	Yes	No	Yes
Detail of clinical outcome	Yes	No	No
Available in a standardised database	Yes	Yes	Yes
Frequency available	Quarterly	Annually	Real-time

**Figures:** Photographs and images must be the property of the author or the author must provide written evidence that permission for use has been obtained from the image owner before the image can be published. This is the responsibility of the author. Written permission from the copyright holder (usually publisher) should be submitted at article submission (email is fine). Please note it can take several weeks to obtain permission for use of a figure, and this can lead to a delay in the article's publication. The HPA has a stock of generic photographs which we have permission to use, for example fires and floods; please check with your editor if you would like to use one of these.



**Figure 1: Chimney and roof damage in Folkestone (S Sargeant © NERC 2007)**

**Graphs:** All axes must be clearly labelled with units specified. Where possible please supply graphs in an editable format so they can be reformatted if required during the publication process. A reference must be provided if the source of the data presented in the graph is not your own.

Photographs: Photographs should be submitted as separate high resolution TIFF, jpeg or bitmap files. Please note capturing GIFs or JPEGs from websites is unlikely to produce images suitable for publication. Source details must be provided if applicable (e.g. reference, copyright, permission or acknowledgement).

## 6.5 Acknowledgments

The author can acknowledge the work of other researchers and colleagues when appropriate, or when a relevant discussion has taken place, at the end of the article, e.g.:

Karen Lloyd, Peter Kendal and Dr Deb Wilson from HPA North East provided helpful comments in the preparation of this article.

If funding support was provided for the work discussed please state the funding body and reference/project number. Project websites and funding body images can also be included in the acknowledgements.

## 6.6 References

References should be in the *British Medical Journal* style of referencing (numerical system). Citations should be made using superscript, with the numbers in sequence at appropriate locations in the text. The full references should be listed in numerical order at the end of the article.

Please do not use endnote or footnotes, as these have a habit of leading to errors during the publication process. It is the author's responsibility to ensure citations are correct and correspond to the correct reference during the final proof read prior to publication.

Journal: Surnames followed by initials; Article Title: Journal title; Year of publication; Volume (issue number); Start and end pages.

Electronic Journal: Surnames followed by initials; Article Title: Journal title; Year of publication; Volume (issue number); Start and end pages; URL [Available at....].

Chapter in Book: Surnames followed by initials: Chapter title; In: Book editor surnames followed by initials eds. Book Title (Title case); Location and name of published; Year of publication; Start and end pages.

Book: Surname followed by initials; Book title (Title case); Name of publisher; Location of publisher; Year of publication; Volume; First and last pages.

Website citations: Name of website owner; Title of webpage; URL [Available at....]; Access date [e.g. (accessed 02/06/2011)]. The access date is required because information within pages can change over time even if the URL remains the same.

Examples of references:

- 1 Bartholomew RE. Little Green Men, Meowing Nuns and Head-Hunting Panics: A Study of Mass Psychogenic Illness and Social Delusion. McFarland and Company Inc, North Carolina, 2001.
- 2 Jones TF, Jones MD, Allen S et al. Mass psychogenic illness attributed to toxic exposure at a high school. *N Engl J Med* 2000; 342(2): 96-100.
- 3 Page L, Wessely S. Health and social impacts of chemical incidents. *CHaP Report* 2005; 5: 36-37. Available at [www.hpa.org.uk/chemicals/reports](http://www.hpa.org.uk/chemicals/reports)
- 4 Health Protection Agency. Chemical incident management. Available at <http://www.hpa.org.uk/webw/HPAweb&Page&HPAwebAutoListName/Page/1158313435037?p=1158313435037> (accessed 27/04/2009).