

One Health Harmful Algal Bloom System (OHHABS) Multistate Reporting Guidance

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1. Introduction

This document provides guidance for reporting a harmful algal bloom (HAB) when a bloom impacts the water quality in more than one state or when exposures to the same HAB or HAB toxins occur in more than one state. The terms below will be used in this document for reporting in the One Health Harmful Algal Bloom System (OHHABS):

- “HAB event” will be used to describe a HAB or HAB toxins in a water source (e.g., HAB toxins in a lake)
- “multistate HAB event” will describe a single HAB event that impacts the water quality of more than one state (e.g., in a body of water that crosses state borders) and has no associated cases of illnesses
- “multistate HAB exposure” will describe two or more HAB-associated cases of illness (human or animal) exposed to the same source in more than one state (e.g., HAB event that crosses state borders, contaminated food item consumed in more than one state)

This guidance has been developed with consideration of multistate outbreak reporting in the National Outbreak Reporting System (NORS). Where possible, OHHABS multistate reporting processes follow or have been adapted from NORS multistate reporting processes. An OHHABS multistate HAB exposure that includes multiple human cases of illness may also meet the definition of a NORS multistate exposure outbreak. Please report HAB-associated waterborne and foodborne outbreaks (≥ two human cases of illness) in NORS. Please report HAB events and single cases of human or animal HAB-associated illness in OHHABS.

For more information and resources about OHHABS, please visit [CDC’s OHHABS website](#).

For more information about NORS and foodborne disease outbreak reporting, please visit [CDC’s NORS website](#).

2. Overview of Reporting Multistate HAB Events or HAB-associated Illnesses in OHHABS

HAB events or HAB-associated exposures in the United States or its associated territories that result in illness can be reported in OHHABS.

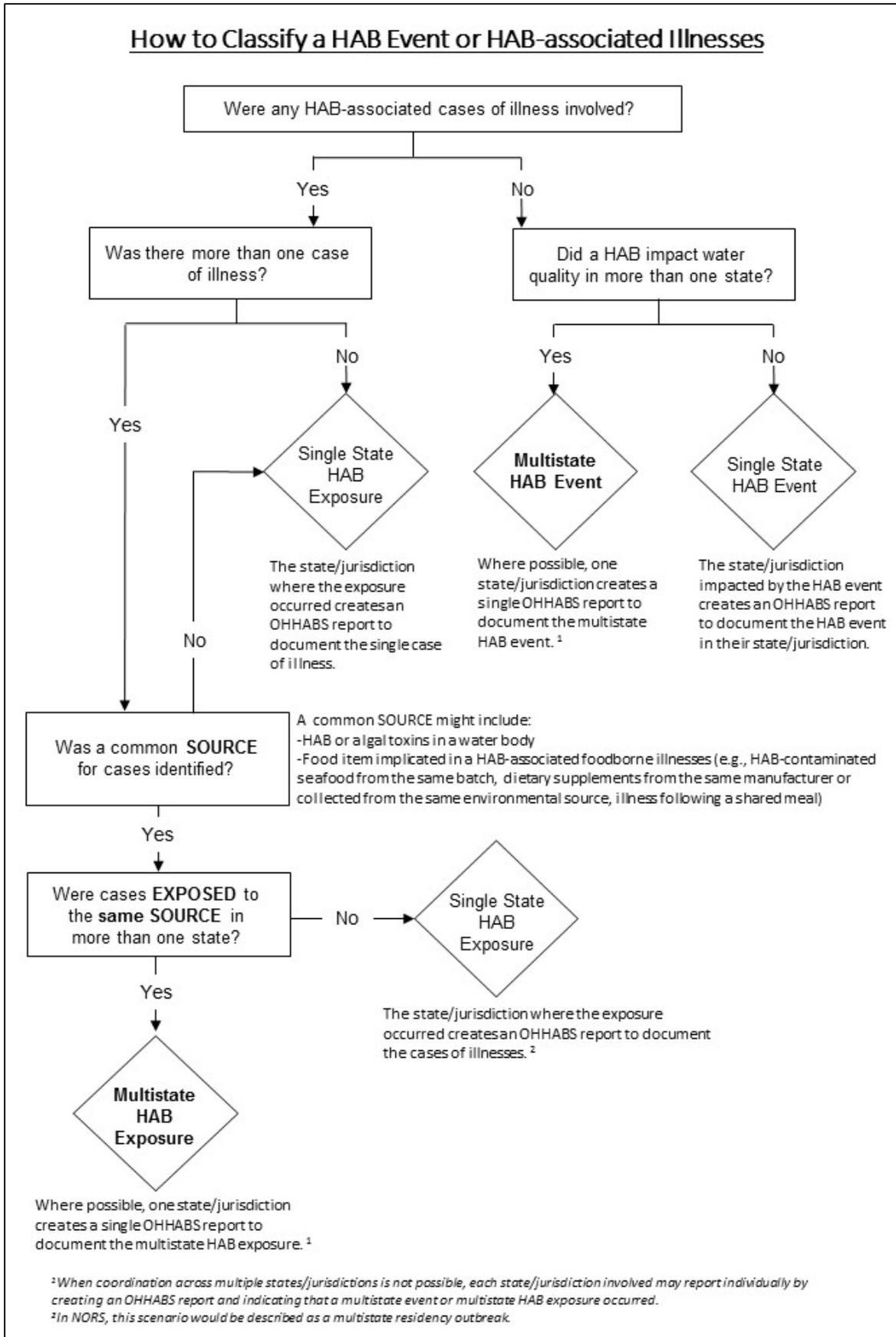
- HAB events that impact the water quality of one or more states/jurisdictions may be reported to OHHABS as a **multistate HAB event**.
- HAB-associated cases of illness as a result of exposure to the same source in more than one state may be reported to OHHABS as a **multistate HAB exposure**.

For multistate reporting in OHHABS, please coordinate with other states/jurisdictions that were impacted. A single OHHABS report may be created by a single state/jurisdiction for a multistate HAB event or multistate HAB exposure, since other states/jurisdictions can be indicated in the report.

In the absence of coordination efforts, each state/jurisdiction may create a report to document the HAB event or HAB exposures in its respective state/jurisdiction. To minimize report duplication and facilitate multistate report consolidation in the future, please document in the remarks of each OHHABS report that other state/jurisdictions were impacted by the same HAB event or that there were similar HAB exposures.

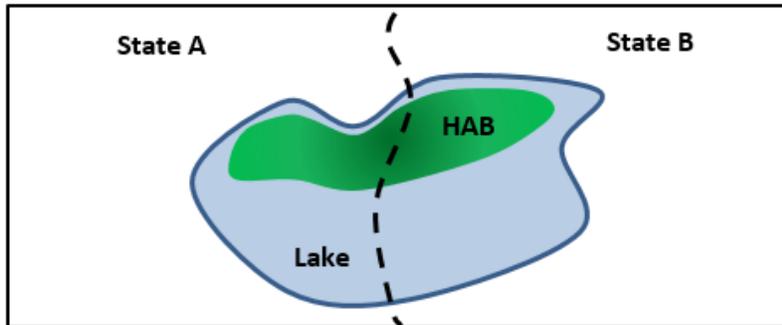
2.1. How to Classify a HAB Event or HAB-associated Illnesses

The following flow chart may be used to classify a HAB event or HAB-associated illnesses as single state or multistate and to determine the appropriate reporting process. For more information about how to report each multistate scenario, please refer to the appropriate multistate reporting sections in this guidance document.



3. Reporting a Multistate HAB Event in OHHABS

If a multistate HAB event is reported by more than one state/jurisdiction, information entered into the Environmental Form of each report will enable multistate HAB event reports to be identified and reduce the likelihood of the same event being counted twice in report summaries or other data uses.



For the multistate waterborne HAB event example in the figure above, a single HAB event in a lake that crosses state borders impacts water quality in both states with no associated cases of illness in either State A or State B.

- Coordinating with the other state, either State A or State B can create a single report to document the HAB event that impacted both states.
- Both states may create a report to document the same HAB event if coordination between the states is not possible.

3.1. Reporting a Multistate HAB Event in the Environmental Form

In the General Section of the Environmental Form, the Dates Tab and the Geographic Description Tab can be used to report general information about the dates, the water source, and the states/jurisdictions that were impacted by the multistate HAB event.

Dates Tab

Information about the date of a multistate HAB event can be indicated in the Dates Tab.

- **Date bloom was first observed** – If an algal bloom was observed (e.g., by environmental staff, beach staff, park staff, the general public), indicate the date it was first observed.
- **Date of bloom notification to Local, Territorial, Tribal, or State Health Authorities** – If a notification of an algal bloom was sent to a health authority (e.g., state public health department, local health department), indicate the date the first bloom notification was sent.
- **If no bloom date available** (Select an option that best describes the event) – If no bloom observation or notification dates are available, report on the other evidence of an algal bloom by selecting an item in the picklist.

Other evidence of an algal bloom may include:

- **Foodborne intoxication** – Select “Foodborne intoxication” if HAB-associated illnesses occurred in humans or animals due to the consumption of food, including but not limited to seafood, shellfish, or dietary supplements. Please provide more information in the “Date Remarks” field about why this picklist value was selected. This option only applies for HAB-associated foodborne illnesses or multistate HAB exposures. For more

information about how to report foodborne illnesses in OHHABS, refer to the OHHABS Foodborne Guidance document on the [OHHABS website](#).

- **Other evidence of harmful algae toxicity** – Select “Other evidence of harmful algae toxicity” if there were other indications that a HAB was present. Please provide more information in the “Date Remarks” field about why this picklist value was selected.
- **Date Remarks** – Describe any relevant date information that was not documented above. For example, if the no bloom date option was selected, please explain details in this section.

Geographic Description Tab

Information about the geographic location of the HAB event and other states/jurisdictions that were impacted can be documented in the Geographic Description Tab.

Location:

- **State/Jurisdiction** – For a multistate HAB event, this field will indicate a state or jurisdiction in which the HAB event impacted water quality. This field will be auto-populated with the state/jurisdiction that created the OHHABS report and cannot be changed, therefore, the report should be created by a state/jurisdiction for which water quality was impacted by the bloom.
- **Counties** – Indicate the county or counties in which the HAB event occurred. Select all counties that apply.

- **Did an algal bloom impact water quality in any other states/jurisdictions?** – This field better characterizes the magnitude of the bloom and makes it easier to identify and link reports for multistate HAB events that might be entered by multiple reporting states.
 - Select “Yes” if more than one state was impacted by a HAB event. If the response is “Yes”, select the other states impacted in the “Other States” field.
 - Select “Unknown” if you are unsure if other states were impacted by the HAB event. For example, if a HAB event occurred in a water body that borders another state/jurisdiction, select “Unknown” if it is unknown whether the other state’s water quality was impacted. If “Unknown” is selected, please describe in the “Geographic Remarks” field.
- **If yes, what other states were impacted?** – If other states or jurisdictions were impacted by a HAB event, select all that apply.
- **Official name of water body** – Indicate the widely accepted, government-standardized, or the dominantly used name of the water body in which the HAB event occurred. For more information on official water body names or to search for official water body names, visit the United States Geological Survey (USGS) Website for [Geographic Names](#). An example of an official water body is Lake Huron.
- **Common name of water body** – Indicate the local or regional name in which the water body is commonly referred where the HAB event occurred. This may not be the official or government-standardized name. An example of a common water body is Tawas Bay, a localized part of Lake Huron.
- **Specific location name** – If applicable, indicate the exact location that the HAB event was observed or documented. This may refer to localized areas of the water body (e.g., bays, inlets, channels) or near the water body (e.g., beaches). Example of a specific location name are Sturgeon Point, Paradise Beach, or East Tawas Bay Beach on Lake Huron.
- **Nearest city/town** – If applicable, indicate the nearest city or town to the water body where the HAB event occurred.

In the General Section, in the Water Body Characteristics Tab, OHHABS users may provide a more detailed description of the location and the water body in the “Geographic Description Remarks”.

- **Geographic Description Remarks** – Please provide a detailed description of the multistate aspects of the HAB event in the Geographic Description Remarks. Describe any relevant geographic description information that may not have been captured in Geographic Description section. If the other state’s OHHABS State Report ID or CDC Report ID is known, please document the ID in the Other Systems Tab in the Environmental Form.

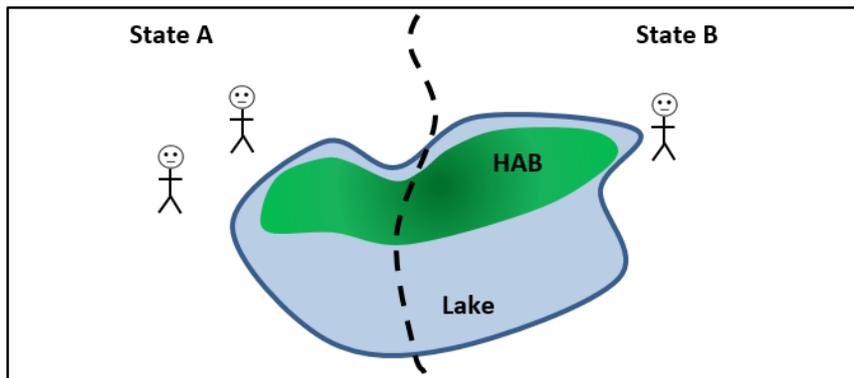
4. Reporting a Multistate HAB Exposure in OHHABS

To report a multistate HAB exposure, please coordinate with the other states/jurisdictions to document all HAB-associated human or animal case(s) in a single OHHABS report. If this is not possible, each state may create its own OHHABS report and should only report the case(s) that were exposed in its state/jurisdiction to minimize duplication.

Step 1: The OHHABS user enters data in the Environmental Form to document environmental or observational data about the common source of exposure.

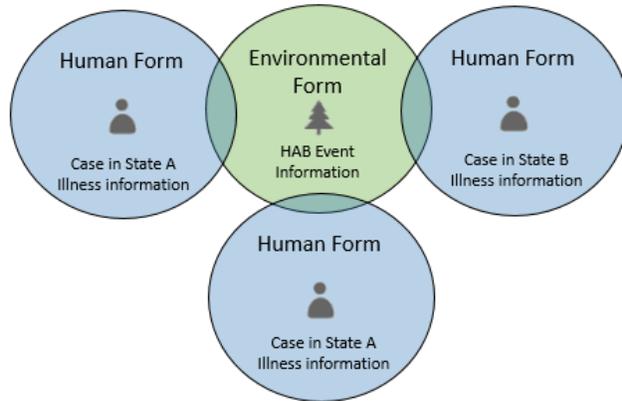
- Refer to the guidance in the **Reporting a Multistate HAB Event in OHHABS** section of this document for more information about how to report a multistate HAB event. Exceptions include food items and bottled water.
- Refer to the guidance in the **Reporting a Multistate HAB-associated Foodborne Exposure in OHHABS** section for more information about how to report a multistate HAB exposure involving food or bottled water.

Step 2: The OHHABS user enters data in Human or Animal Form(s) about each case of illness exposed to the common source in their state/jurisdiction.

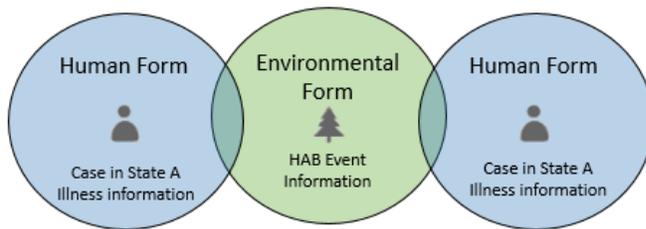


For the multistate HAB exposure example in the figure above, a single HAB event in a lake affects both State A and State B.

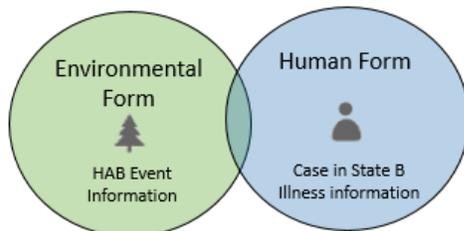
- Coordinating with the other state, either State A or State B can create a single report to document the cases of illness. For example, State A can report the human case of illness exposed in State B. Within a single OHHABS report, State A can document information about the exposure and illness for each case of illness in the Human Forms and the location of the HAB event in the Environmental Form.
 - State A creates an OHHAB report to document the three human cases.



- If coordination between the states is not possible, both states may create a report to document the case(s) of illness exposed in their state. In both reports, each state can document exposure and illness information in the Human Form(s) and information about the HAB event that impacted the water quality in the other state in the Environmental Form. Both states document environmental information about the multistate HAB event.
 - State A creates an OHHABS report to document the two human cases exposed in State A.



- State B creates an OHHABS report to document the single human case exposed in State B.



4.1. Reporting a Multistate HAB Exposure in the Human Form

Multistate HAB exposures are reported in a manner similar to single state HAB exposures, and have fields where OHHABS users can provide information to more easily identify that this is a multistate HAB exposure. For general guidance on how to report information in the Human Form, please refer to the Human Form Guidance document on the [OHHABS website](#).

In the Human Form in the Human Exposure Information Section and the Exposure Description Tab, information about the multistate HAB exposure can be reported.

- **State(s) where exposure occurred?** – Indicate the state(s) or jurisdiction(s) where the person’s exposure occurred. If the exposure occurred in multiple states, select all states that apply. **This is a required field.**
- **Count(ies) where exposure occurred?** – Counties displayed are dependent on the “State(s) where the exposure occurred”. If more than one state is selected, the corresponding states’ counties will appear alphabetically by state. Indicate in which count(ies) the person’s exposure occurred. If the exposure occurred in multiple counties, select the counties that apply.
- **Setting(s) of the exposure?** – Indicate the setting(s) where the person was exposed to algae or algal toxins. Select all settings that apply.
- **Specific location name** – The “Specific location name” is the specific name of a beach, park, or water body where the person was exposed to algae or algal toxins. For a multistate HAB exposure, if the common source is a water body, please also provide the specific name of the water body or describe further in the “Exposure Remarks” field in the Exposure Routes and Remarks Tab.

4.2. Reporting a Multistate HAB Exposure in the Animal Form

Multistate HAB exposures are reported in manner similar to single state HAB exposures in the Animal Form, and have fields where OHHABS users can provide information to more easily identify that this is a multistate HAB exposure. For general guidance on how to report information in the Animal Form, please refer to the Animal Form Guidance document on the [OHHABS website](#).

In the Animal Form in the Exposure Description Section and the Location Tab, information about the multistate HAB exposure can be reported.

The screenshot shows the 'Location' tab in the OHHABS Animal Form. The interface includes a 'Save' button in the top right corner. The main content area is divided into three sections: 'State(s) where exposure occurred?' with a dropdown menu listing states (CDC, Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado); 'Count(ies) where exposure occurred?' with a dropdown menu; 'Setting(s) of the exposure:' with a dropdown menu listing settings (Animal boarding/day care, Apartment/Condo, Beach - Nonspecific, Beach - Private, Beach - Public, Camp/Cabin Setting, Club (Requires Membership)); and 'Specific location name:' with a text input field.

- **State(s) where exposure occurred?** – Indicate the state(s) or jurisdiction(s) where the animal’s exposure occurred. If the exposure occurred in multiple states, select all states that apply. **This is a required field.**
- **Count(ies) where exposure occurred?** – Counties displayed are dependent on the “State(s) where the exposure occurred”. If more than one state is selected, the corresponding states’ counties will appear alphabetically by state. Indicate in which count(ies) the animal’s exposure occurred. If the exposure occurred in multiple counties, select the counties that apply.
- **Setting(s) of the exposure?** – Indicate the setting(s) where the animal was exposed to algae or algal toxins. Select all settings that apply.
- **Specific location name** – The “Specific location name” is the specific name of a beach, park, or water body where the animal was exposed to algae or algal toxins. For a multistate HAB exposure, if the common source is a water body, please also provide the specific name of the water body or describe further in the “Exposure Remarks” field in the Exposure Routes and Remarks Tab.

5. Reporting a Multistate HAB-associated Foodborne Exposure in OHHABS

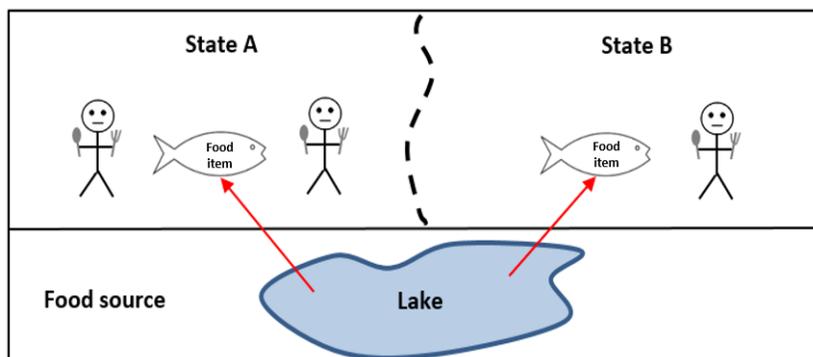
To report a multistate HAB-associated foodborne exposure, please coordinate with other states/jurisdictions to document all HAB-associated human or animal case(s) in a single report. If this is not possible, each state may create its own OHHABS report and should only report the case(s) that were exposed in their state/jurisdiction to minimize duplication.

Step 1: An OHHABS user reporting a multistate HAB-associated foodborne exposure enters data in the Environmental Form to document information about the same food source (e.g., location of fish or shellfish catch or harvest) for the food item to which cases were exposed. The food source is the location in which the food item was caught, harvested, or produced.

- **Environmental Form data are reported in the same manner for single state or multistate HAB-associated foodborne exposures.** Refer to the OHHABS Foodborne Illness Guidance document on the [OHHABS website](#).

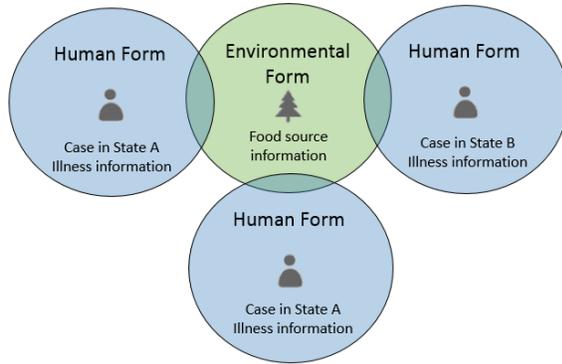
Step 2: The OHHABS user enters data in Human or Animal Form(s) about each case of illness exposed to the food item in their state/jurisdiction. The specific food type can be indicated in the Human and Animal Forms. Please refer to the OHHABS Foodborne Illness Guidance document on the [OHHABS website](#) for more information.

- **Foodborne illness data are reported in the same manner that HAB-associated foodborne illnesses in a single state are reported in OHHABS.** Refer to the OHHABS Foodborne Illness Guidance document on the [OHHABS website](#).

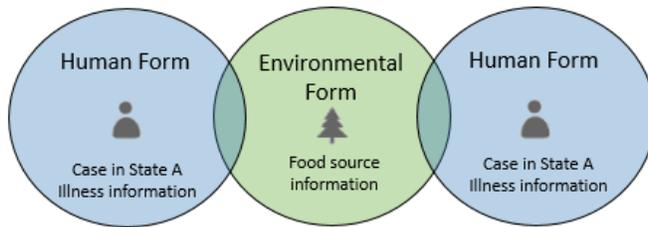


For the multistate HAB-associated foodborne exposure example in the figure above, exposures to a food item from the same, common food source (e.g., fish from the same harvest or catch location) occur in both State A and State B.

- Coordinating with the other state, either State A or State B can create a single OHHABS report to document the cases of illness. For example, State A can report the human case of illness exposed in State B. State A can create a single OHHABS report and document information about the exposure, illness, and food item in the Human Forms and the location of the common food source in the Environmental Form.
 - State A creates an OHHAB report to document the three human cases.



- If coordination between the states is not possible, both states may create a report to document the case(s) of illness exposed to the food item in their state. In both reports, each state can document exposure, illness, and food item information in the Human Form(s) and information about the common food source in the Environmental Form. Both states document environmental information about the multistate HAB event.
 - State A creates an OHHABS report to document the two human cases exposed to a food item in State A from the common food source.



- State B creates an OHHABS report to document the single human case exposed to a food item in State B from the common food source.

