

A Water Security Fact Sheet for State Health and Environmental Agencies



Drinking water and wastewater utility owners, operators, and staff protect public health and the environment every day and it is important that they be prepared to deal with all kinds of emergencies. Clean, safe, and reliable drinking water and dependable wastewater treatment is often taken for granted; however, these services are essential in maintaining public health and economic viability.

Your state drinking water and wastewater agencies are working to support the efforts of public water and wastewater systems to improve their emergency response capabilities. The interdependency between your work and drinking water and wastewater utilities requires collaboration and coordination for security efforts to be successful.

The information below provides more details on how drinking water utilities, wastewater utilities, and others are working together to enhance their security and emergency response capabilities. Please consider how you and your drinking water and wastewater peers can work together to further support security, public health and safety, and economic vitality across the Nation.

Why Should I Be Concerned About Drinking Water and Wastewater Security?

Protecting the critical infrastructure and key resources (CI/KR) of the United States is essential. We all rely on clean and safe water to protect our health, our economy, and the environment; therefore, it is critical that we safeguard the Nation's drinking water and wastewater infrastructure. Whether you

work in emergency management, medical support and health care, or agriculture, water supply is critical to your success. Without a safe and reliable supply of drinking water and the means to safely dispose of wastes in an emergency, hospitals will not be able to support a community in need, first responders will not be able to fight fires or help the injured, hazardous material workers cannot initiate

decontamination measures, and response workers will not be able to stay on the job. Ultimately, the economic stability of a city, town, or region may be jeopardized without water that is safe to use and drink. State programs should take the lead and work collaboratively with the drinking water and wastewater (Water) sector to strengthen the foundations of these critical interdependencies.

What is the Water Sector-Specific Plan?

The Water Sector-Specific Plan (Water SSP) is a broad-based critical infrastructure protection and implementation strategy for drinking water and wastewater utilities, regulatory agencies, and an array of Water Sector training and technical assistance partners. The plan describes how drinking water and wastewater utilities can be better prepared to prevent, detect, respond to, and recover from terrorist attacks, other intentional acts, natural disasters, and other hazards.

How was the Water Sector-Specific Plan Developed?

The Water SSP was created under the guidance of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's National Infrastructure Protection Plan (NIPP). The document was produced by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in coordination with Water Sector security partners including the Water Sector Coordinating Council and the Water Government Coordinating Council, and was released in June of 2007.

What does the Water Sector-Specific Plan Do?

The Water SSP contains four goals and supporting objectives that will drive development of protective programs and measure their success. These goals are:

- sustain protection of public health and the environment;
- recognize and reduce risks;
- maintain a resilient infrastructure; and
- increase communication, outreach, and public confidence.

The Water SSP includes information on identifying assets, assessing risk, prioritizing infrastructure, developing and implementing protective programs, measuring progress, research and development, and outlines EPA's responsibilities as the Water Sector-Specific Agency. The Water SSP is based on the NIPP risk management framework which establishes the process for combining consequence, vulnerability, and threat information to produce a comprehensive, systematic, and rational assessment of national or sector-specific risk that drives CI/KR protection activities.

Where Can I Get More Information?

More information on the NIPP, the Water SSP, and other security-related materials can be found at the following Web sites:

Water SSP and Security Initiatives

<http://cfpub.epa.gov/safewater/watersecurity/index.cfm>

National Infrastructure Protection Plan

<http://www.dhs.gov/nipp>

State Drinking Water Protection Web Sites

http://cfpub.epa.gov/safewater/watersecurity/linkresult.cfm?link_category=5