Drinking water and wastewater utility owners, operators, and staff need to be consistently prepared for emergencies. Clean, safe, and reliable water is often taken for granted; however, this service is essential in maintaining public health and the economic viability of the community served.

The information in this brochure provides more details on how drinking water and wastewater (Water Sector) partners are working together to enhance the security posture of critical Water Sector infrastructure.

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

Office of Water
www.epa.gov/safewater

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Water Sector-Specific Plan Fact Sheet

What is the Water Sector-Specific Plan?

The Water Sector-Specific Plan (Water SSP) is a broad-based critical infrastructure protection implementation strategy for drinking water and wastewater utilities, their regulatory primacy agencies, and the array of training and technical assistance partners that comprise the Water Sector. The plan describes processes and activities to assist drinking water and wastewater utilities as they strive to be better prepared to prevent, detect, respond to, and recover from terrorist attacks, other intentional acts, natural disasters, and other hazards.

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 to the Nation's security, public health and safety, economic vitality, and way of life. We all rely on clean and safe water; therefore, it is critical that we protect the Nation's drinking water and wastewater infrastructure. Whether your area of expertise is emergency management, medical support and health care, agriculture, or economics, water supply is critical to the success of your program. Without a reliable drinking water source and the means to safely dispose of wastes, hospitals will not be able to support a community in need, first responders will not be able to fight fires, hazardous materials workers cannot take decontamination measures, and response workers will not be able to stay onsite due to a lack of potable water. Ultimately, the economic stability of a city, town, or region may be jeopardized without water that is safe to use and drink.

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, which 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, 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 measures of 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 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.

What Does This Mean for Me?

Protecting the Nation's Water Sector critical infrastructure is a shared effort among water and wastewater utilities, emergency management agencies, national Water Sector associations, and local, state, and federal government agencies. Each partner has specific roles to play that include assessing risk, providing resources for security enhancements, providing training and technical assistance, coordinating emergency response activities, and implementing security infrastructure enhancements. Please consider how you can work with these partners in mutually beneficial ways to further support our Nation's security, public health and safety, economic vitality, and way of life.