



Emergency Response Planning Template for Public Drinking Water Systems



Rural Community
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Emergency Response Planning Template for Public Drinking Water Systems

RCAP Regional Offices:

If you need technical assistance to complete your Emergency Response Plan, please contact one of our regional offices listed below.



Regional Offices	Contact Number	Web Address
RCAP National Office	888/321-7227	www.rcap.org
Western RCAP	916/447-2854	www.rcac.org
Southeast RCAP	866/928-3731	www.southeastrcap.org
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Planning Template



Introduction

Preparing an emergency response plan is an essential part of managing a drinking water system. Rural Community Assistance Partnership, Inc has developed this template for public water systems serving 3,300 population or fewer to help them develop such plans.



How to use the template

Developing an emergency response plan can take a lot of time and effort. The purpose of this document is to make the job easier and help create a plan that works for your water system. The document is intended for use by any water system and may be modified to fit the specific needs of each system. This document can be used as a starting point based on what is relevant for the type, size, and complexity of the system.

The template is just a guide; you may modify it in any way that works for your system – add sections, take them out, or rearrange them if you wish. You may also use a completely different format for your plan if you find one that works better for your system.

Since this document may contain sensitive information, make sure to keep it stored in a safe and secure location. It is recommended you have one copy stored on-site and one off-site to ensure the document is available in the event you are unable to access your offices or facilities. The document is available electronically on the web at: <http://www.rcap.org>

You should also keep up-to-date plans and schematics of your treatment facility and distribution system (storage tanks, pump stations, etc), as well as up-to-date operations manuals. These should be kept in at least two secure locations, one being with the final version of this emergency response plan.



Section 1. System Information

Keep this basic information easily accessible to authorized staff for emergency responders, repair people, and the news media.

System information

System Identification Number		
System Name and Address		
Directions to the System		
Basic Description and Location of System Facilities		
Location/Town		
Population Served and Service Connections from Division of Drinking Water Records	_____ people	_____ connections
System Owner		
Name, Title, and Phone Number of Person Responsible for Maintaining and Implementing the Emergency Plan		_____ Phone _____ Cell _____ Pager
Location of treatment and distribution schematics and operations manuals		



Section 2. Chain of Command – Lines of Authority

The first response step in any emergency is to inform the person at the top of this list, who is responsible for managing the emergency and making key decisions.

Chain of command – lines of authority

Name and Title	Responsibilities During an Emergency	Contact Numbers



Section 4. Emergency Notification

Notification call-up lists - Use these lists to notify first responders of an emergency.

Emergency Notification List				
Organization or Department	Name & Position	Telephone	Night or Cell Phone	Email
Local Law Enforcement				
Fire Department				
Emergency Medical Services				
Water Operator (if contractor)				
EPA Contact				
Hazmat Hotline				
Interconnected Water System				
Neighboring Water System (not connected)				
RCAP Contact				
Rural Water Contact				

Priority Customers				
Organization or Department	Name & Position	Telephone	Night or Cell Phone	Email
Hospitals or Clinic(s)				
Public or Private Schools				
Wastewater Treatment Plant				
Adult Care Facility				

State, Federal or Tribal Notification List

Organization or Department	Name & Position	Telephone	Night or Cell Phone	Email
State or Tribal Police				
Regulatory Agency State/Federal/Tribal				
Authorized Testing Laboratory				

Service / Repair Notifications

Organization or Department	Name & Position	Telephone	Night or Cell Phone	Email
Electric Utility Co.				
Electrician				
Gas/Propane Supplier				
Water Testing Lab.				
Sewer Utility Co.				
Telephone Co.				
Plumber				
Pump Supplier				
“Call Before You Dig”				
Rental Equipment Supplier				
Chlorine Supplier				
Other Chemical Supplier				
Well Drilling Co.				
Pipe Supplier				

Media Notification List

Organization or Department	Name & Position	Telephone	Night or Cell Phone	Email
Newspaper - Local				
Newspaper – Regional/State/Tribal				
Radio				
Radio				
TV Station				

Notification procedures

Notify water system customers of potential water shortage

Who is Responsible:	
Procedures:	

Alert local law enforcement, state, federal, or tribal drinking water officials, and local health agencies

Who is Responsible:	
Procedures:	

Contact service and repair contractors

Who is Responsible:	
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Procedures:	
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Contact neighboring water systems, if necessary

Who is Responsible:	
Procedures:	

Procedures for issuing a health advisory

Who is Responsible:	
Procedures:	

Other procedures as necessary

Who is Responsible:	
Procedures:	



Section 5. Effective Communication

Communication with customers, the news media, and the general public is a critical part of emergency response.

Designated public spokesperson

Designate a spokesperson (and alternate) and contact your local primacy agency for delivering messages to the news media and the public.

Designate a spokesperson and alternates

Spokesperson	Alternate

Health advisories

During events when water quality and human health are in question, it may be necessary to issue a health advisory that gives advice or recommendations to water system customers on how to protect their health when drinking water is considered unsafe. These advisories are issued when the health risks to the consumers are sufficient, in the estimation of the water system, state or tribal, or local health officials, to warrant such advice.

Health advisories usually take the form of a drinking water warning or boil water advisory. Communication during these times is critical. Health advisories should always be well thought out and provide very clear messages.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has put together a number of tools, including fact sheets, brochures, forms, and templates to help prepare for a health advisory. These are on the web at: <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/pn.html>



Section 6. Response Actions for Specific Events

In any event, there are a series of general steps to take:

1. Analyze the type and severity of the emergency;
2. Take immediate actions to save lives;
3. Take action to reduce injuries and system damage;
4. Make repairs based on priority demand, and
5. Return the system to normal operation.

The following tables identify the assessment, set forth immediate response actions, define what notifications need to be made, and describe important follow-up actions.

A. Power outage

Assessment	
Immediate Actions	
Notifications	
Follow-up Actions	

B. Distribution line break

Assessment	
Immediate Actions	
Notifications	
Follow-up Actions	

C. Chlorine treatment equipment failure

Assessment	
Immediate Actions	
Notifications	
Follow-up Actions	

D. Treatment equipment

Assessment	
Immediate Actions	
Notifications	
Follow-up Actions	

E. Source pump failure

Assessment	
Immediate Actions	
Notifications	
Follow-up Actions	

F. Microbial (coliform, *E. coli*) contamination

Assessment	
Immediate Actions	
Notifications	
Follow-up Actions	

G. Chemical contamination

Assessment	
Immediate Actions	
Notifications	
Follow-up Actions	

H. Vandalism or terrorist attack

Assessment	
Immediate Actions	
Notifications	
Follow-up Actions	

I. Reduction or loss of water in the well

Assessment	
Immediate Actions	
Notifications	
Follow-up Actions	

J. Drought

Assessment	
Immediate Actions	
Notifications	
Follow-up Actions	

K. Flood

Assessment	
Immediate Actions	
Notifications	
Follow-up Actions	

L. Earthquake

Assessment	
Immediate Actions	
Notifications	
Follow-up Actions	

M. Hazardous materials spill in vicinity of sources or system lines

Assessment	
Immediate Actions	
Notifications	
Follow-up Actions	

N. Electronic equipment failure

Assessment	
Immediate Actions	
Notifications	
Follow-up Actions	

O. Cyber attack

Assessment	
Immediate Actions	
Notifications	
Follow-up Actions	

P. Other

Assessment	
Immediate Actions	
Notifications	
Follow-up Actions	



Section 7. Alternative Water Sources

Intertie to adjacent water supply system

Water Systems Within One-Quarter Mile of our System	Feasibility of Connecting

Alternate source(s) of water

Alternative Sources	Names	Phone	Availability	Is the Water Safe for Drinking?
Bottled water Suppliers for potable water use				
Tanker trucks in the area available to deliver bulk water for non potable use				



Section 8. Returning to Normal Operation

Returning to normal operations

Action	Description and Actions



Section 9. Plan Approval

Plan approval

This plan is officially in effect when reviewed, approved, and signed by the following people:

Name/Title	Signature	Date

Disclaimer

This document contains information on how to plan for protection of the assets of your water system. The work necessarily addresses problems in a general nature. You should review local, state, tribal (if applicable), and federal laws and regulations to see how they apply to your specific situation.

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