

Before a Disaster Impacts Your Utility

1. **Update Communications Plan:** Ensure your internal communications plan is current. Prepare for potential cell service loss with a contingency plan to meet at a predetermined location.
2. **Stock Supplies:** Maintain a reasonable inventory of extra supplies, chemicals, spare parts, and tools to quickly mitigate impacts.
3. **Emergency Power:** As much as is feasible, be able to operate on emergency generators, consider fueling post-disaster, test equipment regularly.
4. **Revise Emergency Response Plan (ERP):** Update your ERP annually and after each incident. Ensure all staff understand it and have easy access when needed.
5. **Prepare for Emergency Actions:** Be ready to take swift emergency measures, such as shutting valves or keeping tanks in reserve. Integrate these actions into your ERP for quick execution with minimal deliberation. Practice and discuss these actions with staff regularly.
6. **Adaptability:** Be prepared to assess situations quickly and recognize when an incident exceeds your utility's capacity. Be ready to pivot and request help with minimal resistance.

After a Disaster Impacts Your Utility

1. **Self-Sufficient Response:** If initial assessments indicate you can safely and quickly restore service, focus on that work and inform tribal government and federal partners to ensure they know you have the situation under control.
2. **Requesting Support:** If assessments show you cannot respond quickly, be ready to request support through the disaster declaration process. Consult with partners and coordinate with local disaster response groups. Prioritize communications and coordination, as there is no benefit in "going it alone" when overwhelmed.
3. **Efficient Resource Requests:** Collaborate with response partners to navigate the resource request process efficiently. If federal support is needed, FEMA can deploy responders to assist.

During Disaster Response with Federal Partners

1. **Coordinate and Communicate:** Allocate resources to coordination and communication. Lead infrastructure efforts, with outside responders acting as force multipliers.
2. **Support from Responders:** In some cases, your staff may simply facilitate access while responders handle the heavy lifting and provide more rapid results.
3. **Maintain Decision-Making Role:** While you may need to cede some control, critical decisions should follow established protocols in partnership with Region 9 EPA Tribal Drinking Water Program. Responders are there to support, not take over. Your leadership is crucial in restoring services to customers, and you should be prepared to let response partners manage significant operations to support you.

