



## **NHDES Wastewater Engineering Bureau (WWEB) COVID-19 FAQs & Information for Public Wastewater Systems**

*June 12, 2020*

The NHDES, Wastewater Engineering Bureau (WWEB), understands that wastewater treatment operators will continue to face challenges in the days and weeks and months ahead related to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is as important as ever that we assure that all wastewater infrastructure is properly operated and maintained to ensure the protection of public health and the waters of the state. You may have questions or concerns regarding how to handle various situations. In this document the WWEB tries to address as many of these questions and concerns as possible. As you are aware, the situation is changing rapidly, so the WWEB will do its best to adjust and keep you informed. As information changes this document will be updated and reissued. NHDES has a webpage dedicated to COVID-19 updates which can be found at <https://www.des.nh.gov/covid19/index.htm>.

Assistance is always available from the WWEB Operations staff and your NPDES inspectors. Please continue to utilize these individuals as your primary points of contact. We ask that you keep in regular communication with our Operations staff and/or your inspector regarding any issues you are having. We will do our best to help you troubleshoot issues and assist you to get the help you may need. The WWEB is also committed to using whatever discretion and flexibility we have to appropriately deal with situations as they arise.

The WWEB continues to work with our technical assistance and training partners (New Hampshire Water Pollution Control Association, New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission, Granite State Rural Water Association, New England Water Environment Association and Northeast Water & Wastewater Training Associates, Inc.) to get important information out to wastewater systems.

Now more than ever your efforts to manage New Hampshire's wastewater infrastructure is sincerely appreciated. THANK YOU for your service and your dedication to protect public health and the waters of our state during these challenging times!

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### **Contacts**

Most NHDES staff is working remotely, but, as always, you can reach us via e-mail or by calling. If you do call you will need to leave a message and someone will get back to you. We are doing our best to conduct business as usual. Since WWEB staff is not in the office often to routinely collect mail please submit any necessary paperwork via e-mail as much as possible.

If you experience any issues that may impact your ability to maintain operations and provide adequate wastewater treatment, please contact us immediately at one of the numbers below (Monday-Friday 8:00-4:00). For after hours, contact us via the NH State Police at 603-223-4381 and ask for the on-call person at NHDES. You will be directed to the NHDES Spill Response On-Call staff who will contact us.

WWEB General Program Contacts		
Bureau Administrator:	Tracy Wood	603-271-2001
Operations Staff:	Ken Kessler	603-271-3549
	Richard "Dick" Emberley	603-271-2940
	John Adie	603-271-2586
NPDES Compliance:	Teresa Ptak	603-271-1497
NPDES Inspectors:	Nancy Lesieur	603-271-2985
	Stephanie Larson	603-271-1493
	Jocelyn Henry	603-271-1494
NPDES Permitting:	Stergios Spanos	603-848-0975
Additional Contacts	<a href="https://www.des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wweb/categories/contactus.htm">https://www.des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wweb/categories/contactus.htm</a>	

## Safety

First and foremost, is the safety of our wastewater professionals. People should follow the latest CDC guidelines for Reducing Health Risks to Workers Handling Human Waste or Sewage. [https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/global/sanitation/workers\\_handlingwaste.html](https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/global/sanitation/workers_handlingwaste.html)

Further, in general, people should follow the latest CDC guidelines for social distancing and proper hygiene. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/prevention.html>

The WWEB is using the Water Environment Federation (WEF) recommendations in The Water Professional's Guide to COVID-19 as safety guidelines for wastewater professionals during the current outbreak of the novel coronavirus COVID-19. <https://www.wef.org/news-hub/wef-news/the-water-professionals-guide-to-the-2019-novel-coronavirus/>

Per OSHA there is no evidence to suggest that additional, COVID-19-specific protections are needed for employees involved in wastewater management operations, including those at wastewater treatment facilities. Wastewater treatment plant operations should ensure workers follow routine practices to prevent exposure to wastewater, including using the engineering and administrative controls, safe work practices, and PPE normally required for work tasks when handling untreated wastewater. <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/controlprevention.html>

- **Goggles:** to protect eyes from splashes of human waste or sewage.
- **Protective face mask or splash-proof face shield** to protect nose and mouth from splashes of human waste or sewage. Depending on the type of work this could include N95 masks with a verification of "face fit" testing for the employee including the limitation of facial hair.
- **Liquid-repellent coveralls** to keep human waste or sewage off clothing.

- **Waterproof gloves** to prevent exposure to human waste or sewage.
- **Rubber boots:** to prevent exposure to human waste or sewage.

For septage receiving and management, NHDES recommends disinfecting wands and hoses that have come into contact with the septage. Chlorine is extensively used for wastewater disinfection due to its effectiveness, low cost, and ease of application. Please refer to [Env-Wq 1605.09](#) on proper transportation of septage and spill control disinfection measures using household bleach. Additional guidance for disinfectants can be obtained on the EPA listing of disinfectants meeting their criteria for use against COVID-19. <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>

### **Continuing Operation in the Workplace**

To ensure continuity of operations of essential functions, CDC advises that critical infrastructure workers may be permitted to continue work following potential exposure to COVID-19, provided they remain asymptomatic and additional precautions are implemented to protect them and the community. According to the CDC, in cases where workers have had an exposure but remain asymptomatic, they and their employers should engage in pre-screening, regular monitoring, wearing a face mask, social distancing, and workplace disinfecting and cleaning. As noted in its discussion of face masks, the CDC says employers can approve employees' supplied face coverings in the event of shortages of normal PPE (its "[Cloth Face Covers](#)" [webpage](#) provides recommendations on how to make your own). The CDC states that an employee who becomes sick during their work shift should be sent home immediately and that the surfaces in their workplaces be cleaned and disinfected and a list of persons who had contact with the ill employee compiled. The CDC advises that this guidance should be implemented in conjunction with its previously published [Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019](#).

If you are in need of PPE and are not able to obtain it through normal procurement processes, you should contact your local emergency management director. NHDES is aware that Granite State Rural Water Association has procured some masks for their members to purchase. They can be contacted at [www.granitestatewater.org](http://www.granitestatewater.org).

Granite State Rural Water Association (GSRWA)'s Webinar Recording of "COVID Tools & Best Practices" from April 28<sup>th</sup>

- To view a recording of the webinar [click here](#). To view the handouts [click here](#).
- COVID-19: Safety & Health Practices with Enhanced PPE – [Click here to view the EFI Global slides](#).
- COVID Disinfection and Cleaning Best Practices – [Click here to view the ServiceMaster Elite slides](#).

### **Cloth Masks Available**

EPA and FEMA were able to secure cloth masks for drinking water and wastewater workers that need them. NH received 60,000 of these cloth masks to be distributed directly to water and wastewater utilities throughout the state. Requests for orders were sent out to community water systems. Water

and wastewater staff that are interested in requesting free cloth masks through this program can contact Stephanie Nistico at [stephanie.nistico@des.nh.gov](mailto:stephanie.nistico@des.nh.gov).

Be aware of fraudulent masks

<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/usernotices/counterfeitResp.html>

- Make sure to order from trusted sources
- The FBI Washington Field Office and FBI HQ have each established COVID-19 fraud task forces due to the prevalence of procurement fraud and other schemes. If you think you have information about suspicious activity by a vendor, or believe your organization was a victim of a scam or attempted fraud involving PPE, please report it to your local FBI field office or contact the National Center for Disaster Fraud Hotline at 866-720-5721 or via email at [disaster@leo.gov](mailto:disaster@leo.gov).

#### **Q: Does COVID-19 survive in wastewater?**

A: The World Health Organization (WHO) has indicated that “there is no evidence to date that COVID-19 virus has been transmitted via sewer systems, with or without wastewater treatment.” COVID-19 concentrations and survival in feces, sewage or water are currently unknown.

Refer to EPA and CDC’s messaging about safety of drinking water:

- EPA Coronavirus and Drinking Water and Wastewater  
<https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-drinking-water-and-wastewater>
- CDC Water Transmission and COVID-19  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/water.html>

## Reopening Resources

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce has made available a “[Reopening Business Digital Resources Center](#),” a site that presents the latest state guidelines, guidance and advice for businesses, and other tools and resources to help employers and employees return to work safely and successfully.

## NPDES Compliance Sampling

The mission of the NHDES and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is to protect human health and the environment, and during this time of unprecedented public health concerns, that mission is even more critical. On March 26, EPA released a [temporary policy](#) regarding the agency's enforcement of environmental legal obligations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This temporary policy is not a license to pollute. The policy merely says that EPA will not seek penalties for noncompliance with routine monitoring and reporting requirements, if, on a case-by-case basis, EPA agrees that such noncompliance was caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Regulated parties must document the basis for any claim that the pandemic prevented them from conducting that routine monitoring and reporting and present it to NHDES and EPA upon request. Frequently asked questions ([FAQs](#)) regarding the temporary policy are currently available and updated as needed.

The NHDES and EPA have no intention of relaxing NPDES compliance sampling schedules. Samples must be taken and results submitted as required. If compliance is not reasonably practicable, facilities must act to minimize the effects and duration of the noncompliance and return to compliance as soon as possible. Entities should use existing procedures to report noncompliance and/or anticipated noncompliance to NHDES and EPA, namely your NPDES inspector and Solanch Pastrana-Del Valle ([pastrana-del-valle.solanch@epa.gov](mailto:pastrana-del-valle.solanch@epa.gov)).

## NPDES Compliance Reporting

On March 31, EPA released a [temporary advisory](#) for NPDES Reporting in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Again, the NHDES and EPA have no intention of relaxing NPDES compliance reporting schedules. The Discharge Monitoring Report (DMR) is to be submitted by the due date. If for reasons related to COVID-19, you are able to obtain and analyze some but not all of your samples required by your permit, adjust your DMR with the information you have been able to obtain. If you are not able to sample or analyze any of the samples required for a parameter by your permit, submit your DMR using the No Data Indicator or NODI code of "Z" - "COVID-19." Either scenario requires the permittee to provide an explanation in either the comment section of the DMR or in a separate attachment added to the DMR. The explanation should identify the specific reasons for the sampling/reporting delay and how COVID-19 was the cause of the noncompliance. Further guidance is available at the [NetDMR Support Portal](#).

For other reports, such as those required on an annual basis, the agencies anticipate reasonable measures to meet deadlines. If for reasons related to COVID-19, you are not able to timely submit any reports required by your permit you should document the specific reasons for the delay, and submit the report as soon as possible. In addition, please update NHDES and EPA as to when you expect to be able to submit your report.

## Laboratory Services

The State lab is operating under normal business hours to support NPDES compliance sampling. And, per recent inquiries of private labs throughout the state, all of the private labs are also operating. If you have any questions about lab hours or sample drop off procedures, please contact your laboratory directly.

### Sample Drop Off at NH DHHS Public Health Lab?

Go to the main entrance door at NHDES on 29 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH. Under the portico there is a table and instructions to call lab staff who will come collect the sample while maintaining social distancing. Please remain at the entrance until your sample is collected.

## NPDES Compliance Inspections

The WWEB suspended all in person site visits including routine NPDES compliance inspections starting in late March. The WWEB tentatively plans to resume in person routine NPDES compliance inspections starting in July. Alternative types of inspections may also be considered including off-site record reviews.

## 2020 DMR-QA Study

DMR-QA Study 40 has been initiated with a modified schedule for the study milestone deadlines. Participants are encouraged to visit the [DMR-QA](#) website to view the study packet.

## NPDES/State Surface Water Discharge Permitting

EPA and NHDES are continuing in their efforts to issue NPDES and State Surface Water Discharge Permits. Site visits and permit consultations with permittees are being conducted by phone, in lieu of site visits. EPA and NHDES will reach out to you if your permit is being worked on. NPDES permits are still being put on Public Notice for comment. The public comment period continues to be the typical 30 days.

EPA will consider requests for extension of the public comment period due to the COVID-19. The public comment period is extended only when EPA makes a determination to do so, and it is published on the EPA website (<https://www.epa.gov/npdes-permits/new-hampshire-npdes-permits>).

## Operators & Operator Certification

It is important at this time, as always, to have NH certified Operators responsible for the safety and operation of public wastewater systems in NH. If a certified Operator-In-Responsible-Charge or a Back-up Operator-In-Responsible-Charge becomes no longer able to serve a NH WWTF, it is important for the certified individual to notify their management and NHDES as soon as possible. This communicates the status of operations at the individual WWTF and also allows NHDES to better track impacts to operator availability on a statewide level.

### Modified Staff Schedules to Reduce Exposure

Many wastewater treatment facilities are modifying schedules to reduce exposure while still maintaining operational coverage. Wastewater treatment facilities are intentionally reducing staffing levels to a minimum in a proactive effort to reduce the potential for COVID-19 related impacts. SCADA and remote monitoring, where available, are proving valuable in supporting operations while helping to allow WWTF staff to observe public health related distancing guidance.

### Backup Operators

If a WWTF needs additional operational support, the Granite State Rural Water Association is maintaining a list of backup operators, on their website:

<http://www.granitestatewater.org/News.asp>

If additional hands are needed, other individuals can perform basic work at NH WWTFs provided that work is under the direction of a NH Operator certified at the proper grade level of the WWTF. However, only certified operators can make wastewater process decisions.

NH regulations do provide for reciprocity for wastewater operators from other states. Operators from other states may apply for NH reciprocity provided they meet the NH education and experience requirements (detailed in [Env-Wq 304](#)) for the certification grade level sought. Please contact Richard "Dick" Emberley at (603) 271-2940 or [Richard.Emberley@des.nh.gov](mailto:Richard.Emberley@des.nh.gov) for more information.

NHDES will continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation and its impact on public wastewater systems and its workforce. For the two-year renewal cycle ending June 30, 2020, NHDES is expecting that Operators will have met all renewal requirements including meeting minimum CEU requirements. If you are up for renewal and you anticipate not being able to meet all requirements please contact Richard “Dick” Emberley at (603) 271-2940 or [Richard.Emberley@des.nh.gov](mailto:Richard.Emberley@des.nh.gov) to discuss. Time extensions may be granted on a case by case basis with valid justification.

### **Operator Training**

NHDES cancelled all of its sponsored wastewater courses through May 4<sup>th</sup>. NHDES started to host in person classes at the Franklin Training Center as of May 5<sup>th</sup> with limited participants and while ensuring proper social distancing. For updates on NHDES sponsored training go to: <https://www.des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wweb/optraining.htm>.

On-line training opportunities are still available from many sources, and NHDES emails out notices as it becomes aware of these opportunities. For free online water and wastewater courses go to: <http://ci23.actonsoftware.com/acton/rif/29254/s-02e1-2003/-/l-0006:7323f/q-00f7/showPreparedMessage?sid=TV2:HtUO07pOf>

### **Sludge Quality Certificates (SQC)**

Rescheduled spring SQC sampling inspections are currently underway. During these sampling events, the Residuals Management Section (RMS) request that proper social distancing is practiced while the inspection is occurring. All sampling requirements under [Env-Wq 809.07](#) remain in effect, and SQC permittees must still report exceedances upon occurrence. If you have any questions please contact Anthony Drouin at (603) 271-2818 or [Anthony.Drouin@des.nh.gov](mailto:Anthony.Drouin@des.nh.gov).

### **Land Application**

Governor Sununu has deemed agriculture, construction, and landscaping as essential businesses. RMS will work with residual managers to ensure proper and safe inspections are conducted during land application events. Land application notifications must still be met under [Env-Wq 803.04](#). If you have any questions please contact Judith Houston at (603) 271-7888 or [Judith.Houston@des.nh.gov](mailto:Judith.Houston@des.nh.gov).

### **Septage and Sludge Hauling**

Limited hauler inspections are currently being conducted. Sludge and septage hauler inspections including inspections of septage sites/facilities will resume in July. All permitting requirements remain in effect. As for septage receiving, please reach out to the RMS if your WWTF is to alter hours or operation for septage receiving. RMS will inform the septage haulers of any altered hours throughout the state. If you have any questions please contact Timothy Sweatt at (603) 568-1817 or [Timothy.Sweatt@des.nh.gov](mailto:Timothy.Sweatt@des.nh.gov).

### **Chemicals**

Check in with your chemical suppliers to see if any deliveries may be impacted, and what you can do to ensure you have enough supply through advance purchases. Also check in with other key suppliers for status on materials.

Notify Operations staff or your assigned NPDES inspector if you foresee any issues with obtaining any necessary chemicals required for proper operation of your WWTF to ensure effluent quality meets your NPDES permit limits. We need to know if your treatment process will be impacted due to shortages of chemical feed supplies.

## Essential/Critical Personnel

On Thursday, March 26, 2020, Governor Chris Sununu released Emergency Order #17, mandating the closure of all non-essential businesses and requiring Granite Staters to stay at home. Information regarding all NH Emergency Orders is available at <https://www.nh.gov/covid19/>.

Pursuant to Emergency Order #17, the State of New Hampshire has compiled a list of industry sectors that provide essential services and support to COVID-19 and the core missions of the State. Entities that fall under this guidance shall continue to operate with necessary staff to complete critical and essential functions. A list of designated “Essential Services” can be found at [https://www.nheconomy.com/NHEconomy/media/NH-Economy/Exhibit-A-to-Emergency-Order-17-List-of-Essential-Businesses\\_1.pdf](https://www.nheconomy.com/NHEconomy/media/NH-Economy/Exhibit-A-to-Emergency-Order-17-List-of-Essential-Businesses_1.pdf). Below is the essential services specific to Water, Wastewater and Public Works.

### Waste and Wastewater

Employees needed to operate and maintain public and private drinking water and wastewater/drainage infrastructure, including:

- Operational staff at water authorities
- Operational staff at community water systems
- Operational staff at wastewater treatment facilities
- Workers repairing water and wastewater conveyances or construction necessary to maintain critical operations at water and wastewater facilities, and workers performing required sampling or monitoring
- Operational staff for water distribution and testing
- Operational staff at wastewater collection facilities
- Operational staff and technical support for SCADA Control systems
- Chemical disinfectant suppliers for wastewater and personnel protection
- Workers that maintain digital systems infrastructure supporting water and wastewater operations
- Labs that provide analytical services to ensure public water systems are providing safe drinking water and to ensure wastewater effluent is properly treated to protect water quality
- Drinking water well drillers and pump installers
- Operational staff dealing with clogs in sanitary lines and sanitary sewer overflows

### Public Works

- Workers who support the operation, inspection, and maintenance of essential dams, locks and levees

- Workers who support the operation, inspection, and maintenance of essential public works facilities and operations, including roads and bridges, water and sewer main breaks, fleet maintenance personnel, construction of critical or strategic infrastructure, traffic signal maintenance, emergency location services for buried utilities, maintenance of digital systems infrastructure supporting public works operations, and other emergent issues
- Workers – including contracted vendors – involved in the construction of critical or strategic infrastructure including public works construction, airport operations, water, sewer, gas, electrical, nuclear, oil refining and other critical energy services, roads and highways, public transportation, solid waste collection and removal, municipal transfer stations, and internet, and telecommunications systems (including the provision of essential global, national, and local infrastructure for computing services)
- Workers such as plumbers, electricians, exterminators, inspectors and other service providers who provide services that are necessary to maintaining the safety, sanitation, and essential operation of residences, construction sites and projects, and needed facilities
- Support, such as road and line clearing and utility relocation, to ensure the availability of needed facilities, transportation, energy and communications
- Support to ensure the effective removal, storage, and disposal of residential and commercial solid waste and hazardous waste
- Licensed site clean-up professionals and other workers addressing hazardous spills, waste sites, and remediation
- Workers who support the operation, maintenance and public safety of state parks, forests, wildlife management areas, water supply protection lands, and other critical natural resources
- Workers who support storm clean-up operations (e.g., foresters)

The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) has released [Version 3.1 of the Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers list](#). Version 3.1 provides clarity around a range of positions needed to support the critical infrastructure functions laid out in the original guidance published on March 19 and Versions 2.0 and 3.0.

The Guide continues to be a resource for state and local decision makers and is in no way a binding document. Ultimately, all final decisions rest with state and local authorities, who must use their own judgment to balance public health and safety with the need to maintain critical infrastructure.

### **Credentials/Documentation of Essential Workers**

There is no specific document needed to prove you are essential. However, the WWEB does suggest making sure you have your ID and a company ID or business card.

EPA has provided a water and wastewater utility template that state, localities and water and wastewater utilities can use to provide documentation to workers that are considered essential: [https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2020-04/water\\_utility\\_template\\_covid19.docx](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2020-04/water_utility_template_covid19.docx)

## **Documenting & Tracking Expenses**

Have discussions regarding finances associated with the response and sustaining operations. Are appropriate staff able to make emergency purchases if needed? It is critical that this is established ahead

of time. **Documentation is important.** Remember to track ALL time and expenses related to your response to COVID-19. This information can be used as part of a post-incident investigation or if federal funds become available for assistance.

On Thursday, April 16, FEMA released the “Disaster Financial Management Guide” to support jurisdictions in establishing and implementing sound disaster financial management practices, which are critical for successful response and recovery. The guide takes an all-hazards approach and addresses a broad range of issues and contains concepts, principles and resources applicable to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic response environment. The guide identifies the capabilities and activities necessary to prepare and successfully implement disaster financial management while maintaining fiscal responsibility throughout response and recovery operations. This includes considerations and practices necessary to track, calculate and justify the costs of an emergency; support local reimbursement reconciliation; avoid de-obligation of grant funding; and effectively fund and implement recovery projects and priorities. The Guide and Fact Sheet are available at <https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/187126>

### **COVID-19 Federal Disaster Declaration-Public Assistance Program**

On April 3, 2020, President Donald Trump declared a statewide Major Disaster for the State of New Hampshire (DR 4516) due to the COVID-19 Pandemic (incident period from January 20, 2020 and ongoing). Federal funding is available to eligible government entities and certain private nonprofit organizations on a cost-sharing basis for emergency protective measures implemented in direct response to COVID-19. If your community/organization has incurred costs due to emergency protective measures taken in response to COVID-19, they may be eligible for cost reimbursement under the Public Assistance Program. If your community/organization is interested in applying for disaster assistance you should contact your local Emergency Management Director.

The [HSEM Resource Center COVID-19 Disaster Webpage](#) provides information related the COVID-19 Major Disaster Declaration (DR 4516) including presentations and recordings of Applicant Briefings. The webpage is updated regularly as information is released from FEMA.

Please contact your HSEM Field Representative (local governments) via their email address or the HSEM Public Assistance Staff (State agencies and Private Non-Profits) at [NHPA@dos.nh.gov](mailto:NHPA@dos.nh.gov) with questions that you may have about the Grants Portal or RPA submission process. If you are unsure who your HSEM Field Representative is (local governments), you may call 603-223-3663 for assistance.

An FAQ on the Public Assistance Program and a guidance document on eligible applicants under the Public Assistance Program is available at the links below.

- HSEM Public Assistance FAQs  
<https://prd.blogs.nh.gov/dos/hsem/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Public-Assistance-FAQ-COVID19.pdf>

- HSEM Eligible Applicants under Public Assistance Program  
<https://prd.blogs.nh.gov/dos/hsem/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Public-Assistance-Eligible-Applicants.pdf>

## CWSRF Funding

CWSRF is actively processing Loan Disbursements. Requests for disbursement should be submitted electronically to Nina Buckman at [Christina.Buckman@des.nh.gov](mailto:Christina.Buckman@des.nh.gov), with a customary copy to Kathie Bourret and Beth Malcolm, [Kathleen.Bourret@des.nh.gov](mailto:Kathleen.Bourret@des.nh.gov) and [Beth.Malcolm@des.nh.gov](mailto:Beth.Malcolm@des.nh.gov). As always, this approach enables us to process your requests most expeditiously.

The 2020 Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) Project Priority List process for funding proposals is going forward. Pre-Applications for the 2020 CWSRF round are available at: <https://www.des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wweb/grants.htm> and are due June 15, 2020.

## Construction Project Bids

Based on the current COVID-19 social distancing recommendations, NHDES discourages in-person pre-bid meetings and bid openings regardless of the number of participants. NH municipalities and engineering consultants are using alternative approaches to conventional meeting formats to minimize personal contact, as described below. DES recommends use of these alternative formats to the extent possible.

### Pre- Bid Meetings

- Conduct teleconference pre-bid meeting announced in the Advertisement for Bids in the contract documents, or with an invitation by addendum
- Distribute teleconference pre-bid meeting agenda at least one-day prior to meeting date
- Provide a walk-through video of the project areas as part of an addendum or issued with the meeting minutes
- If necessary, offer a one-time, in person walk-through of the project area(s) at a later prearranged date and time, with only general contractors. The walk-through should implement social distancing protocols

### Bid Openings

- Conduct prearranged teleconference bid opening or videotaped bid opening, with methodology announced in the Information to Bidders section of the contract documents, or provided as an invitation to all plan holders as part of the addendum process
- Involve at least two people to witness the bid opening, with proper social distancing protocols
- Post all bid results on the municipal website
- Post videotaped bid opening to municipal website, if applicable

### Public Meetings

Some municipalities, village districts and other water systems may not have been able to conduct their annual meetings. The Governor issued a memorandum on How to Conduct Emergency Meetings in Compliance with New Hampshire's Right-to-Know Law (RSA Chapter 91-A) in light of COVID-19 Concerns

and applicable Executive and Emergency Orders. This memorandum provides guidance on how to hold emergency meetings in light of Executive Order 2020-04 (declaring a State of Emergency) and Emergency Order #12 (temporarily modifying public access under RSA Chapter 91-A). It sets forth specific procedures that must be followed during the State of Emergency.

For more information, please see the [emergency meeting guidance checklist](#) and the right-to-know checklist at <https://www.des.nh.gov/covid19/documents/rtk-checklist.docx>.

EPA has also provided [guidance](#) on holding public hearings and meetings virtually during the COVID-19 National Emergency.

## Construction Safety

While NHDES is not in a position to endorse or recommend any specific guidance on worksite health and safety measures relative to COVID-19, we are providing this [guidance regarding safety at construction sites from NHDOT](#) for reference purposes.

## Emergency Plans & Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP)

If you haven't already, it is very important to take the time to review your Emergency Response Plan (ERP) with staff. Make sure your plan is updated to ensure continuity of operations in the event your utility is impacted.

Make contact with your local Emergency Management Director (EMD). Requests for assistance should be funneled through your local EMD.

A COOP is a document that ensures essential operations can be performed during manmade or natural disasters to provide essential services. Utilities can develop a COOP to be all-encompassing (i.e., all-hazards approach), or it can be specific to situations like a pandemic. Please see the documents below for COOP templates.

### EPA Pandemic Incident Action Checklist.

[https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2020-03/documents/pandemic\\_iac\\_final\\_032620\\_508\\_fillable.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2020-03/documents/pandemic_iac_final_032620_508_fillable.pdf)

### COOP Templates:

- NH Continuity of Operations Plan Template [https://prd.blogs.nh.gov/dos/hsem/?page\\_id=2783](https://prd.blogs.nh.gov/dos/hsem/?page_id=2783)
- National Rural Water Association Water System [Pandemic Template](#)
- Business Pandemic Influenza Planning [Checklist](#)

## Customer Outreach

If you haven't reached out to your customers yet about what's flushable and what is not flushable, it is not too late. See NHDES' recent public release "NHDES Reminds Residents Only Flush Human Waste and Toilet Paper - No toilet paper? Bag it. Don't flush it."

<https://www.des.nh.gov/media/pr/2020/20200324-flush.htm>

## WWEB Events

All WWEB training events through May 4<sup>th</sup> were either cancelled or postponed. NHDES resumed in person classes at the Franklin Training Center as of May 5<sup>th</sup> with limited participants and while ensuring proper social distancing. For updates on NHDES sponsored training go to:

<https://www.des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wweb/optraining.htm>.

- SRF Pre-Applications – Due June 15, 2020.

## Links to More Information

There are many resources available. Below are just a few that can assist with your preparations and response.

### **NH Department of Environmental Services COVID-19 website**

- [www.des.nh.gov](http://www.des.nh.gov)

### **NH Department of Health and Human Services COVID-19 website**

- <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/2019-ncov.htm>

### **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/water.html>

### **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Guidance on Coronavirus and Drinking Water and Wastewater**

- [www.epa.gov/coronavirus](http://www.epa.gov/coronavirus)
- <https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-drinking-water-and-wastewater>

### **Water Environmental Federation**

- <https://www.wef.org/news-hub/wef-news/the-water-professionals-guide-to-the-2019-novel-coronavirus/>

### **WaterISAC**

A membership organization and international security network created by and for the water & wastewater sector.

- <https://www.waterisac.org/>
- <https://www.waterisac.org/portal/business-continuity-planning-event-influenza-pandemic-reference-guide>
- COVID-19 Updates as of May 21, 2021 including information on reopening America:  
<https://www.waterisac.org/portal/coronavirus-pandemic-updated-may-21-2020>

### **Public Works Net (PW.Net)**

An electronic mailing list for open discussion among people who are associated with Public Works.

- To register go to: <https://t2.unh.edu/public-works-email-list>

### **NH Public Works Mutual Aid Program (NHPWMA)**

NHPWMA has members from all over the state. Assistance could include such assistance as sharing of water treatment chemicals. The membership list and how to join is available at <https://t2.unh.edu/ma/>  
The WWEB encourages you to join NHPWMA if you are not currently a member.

## **Partners**

Our NH partners are a great resource for technical assistance and guidance. Each of these organizations has a specific COVID-19 resource page.

### **NH Water Pollution Control Association**

Ken Conaty, President 603-485-7000

<https://www.nhwPCA.org/>  
[ken.hooksettWastewater@gmail.com](mailto:ken.hooksettWastewater@gmail.com)

Online Events/Training: <https://www.nhwPCA.org/>

### **Granite State Rural Water Association**

Jennifer Palmiotto, Executive Director 603-756-3670

<http://granitestatewater.org>  
[jpalmiotto@granitestatewater.org](mailto:jpalmiotto@granitestatewater.org)

Online Training: <http://www.granitestatewater.org/Training.asp>

### **Northeast Water & Wastewater Training Associates**

Greg Kidd, President 207-482-9136

<http://www.newwta.com/>  
[gkidd@gwi.net](mailto:gkidd@gwi.net)

Online Training: <http://www.newwta.com/NH%20Calendars/NH-Calendar.htm>

### **NEWEA**

Steve Clifton, NH Director 603-436-6192

<https://www.newea.org/>  
[sclifton@underwoodengineers.com](mailto:sclifton@underwoodengineers.com)

Online Events/Training: <https://www.newea.org/events/calendar/>

### **NEIWPCC**

Susan Sullivan, Executive Director 978-323-7929

<https://neiwpcc.org/>  
[ssullivan@neiwpcc.org](mailto:ssullivan@neiwpcc.org)

Online Training: <https://portal.neiwpcc.org/training-calendar.asp>