



COMMUNITY WATER SYSTEM EMERGENCY PLAN GUIDANCE BULLETIN : ALTERNATE WATER

The Drinking Water & Groundwater Bureau (DWGB) requires community water systems (CWSs) to submit and maintain an updated emergency plan (EP) per [Env-Dw 503.21](#). EPs are due every six years, but they should be reviewed annually and updated as necessary. Please review this guidance document with these considerations in mind as you update your EP. A copy of your water system's EP is due to DWGB by March 31, 2021.

ALTERNATE SOURCES

In 2020 New Hampshire experienced hot and dry conditions that caused moderate to severe drought in many areas of the state. Additionally, groundwater levels continued to fall and could not keep up with demand. In order to meet the basic water supply needs of the state's communities, residents were urged to eliminate outdoor water use for lawn watering in areas experiencing moderate or severe drought and practice other conservation measures.

When experiencing drought conditions and decreasing groundwater levels, water systems may need to activate an alternate water source. This could mean obtaining water from an outside source, or modifying your current treatment capabilities to meet your basic water needs.

Besides implementing water use restrictions, other ways to cope with drought could include receiving bulk water, distributing bottled water, interconnecting with an adjacent system, or activating an emergency water supply sources for emergency wells. If none of these options are feasible, you should at least include any future plans to address this issue in your EP so you're able to manage a drought or other emergencies that may deplete your water supply.

Drought Links

- [US Drought Monitor](#)
- [Drought.gov](#)
- [NHDES Drought Management Program](#)
- [Drought Guidance for Municipalities](#)
- [Drought Guidance for Community Water Systems](#)
- [Municipal and Village District Lawn Watering Restrictions](#)
- [EPA Guidance Planning for an Emergency Drinking Water Supply](#)

BULK WATER

Although NHDES does not encourage this method of supplying water as a long term solution, trucked water may be the only viable alternative in some situations.

- [NHDES Fact Sheet Emergency Bulk Water for Public Water Systems](#)
- [Guidelines for Emergency Bulk Water Supply](#)

Bulk Water Rules

To ensure that water obtained from bulk water deliveries meets the same water quality standards that are required of a state-regulated PWS, NHDES has rules in place to address the approved methods of

obtaining, transporting, sanitizing and delivering bulk water. As stated in the Bulk Water rules ([Env-Dw 304 Emergency Bulk Water for Public Water Supplies](#)), DWGB must be notified of bulk water deliveries within two business days using the [Bulk Water Notification Form](#). PWS operators should be familiar with the rules ahead of time to ensure a safe delivery and note that failure to comply with the rules may result in a violation.

- Bulk Water Rules: [Env-Dw 304 Emergency Bulk Water for Public Water Supplies](#)
- [Bulk Water Notification Form](#)

Bulk Water Haulers & Providers

NHDES DWGB maintains a list of bulk water haulers and providers who confirmed they are able to comply with the bulk water rules listed in *Env-Dw 304 Emergency Bulk Water for Public Water Systems*. You may use other providers not on this list, as long as they meet the requirements of Env-Dw 304. This list of providers is occasionally updated, however, ultimately it is your responsibility to have the most current information for these companies.

- [NHDES Bulk Water Haulers and Providers](#) – last updated June 2020

Disclaimer: This list of vendors does not constitute an endorsement of business products or services by the NHDES, nor is the list exhaustive. NHDES is publishing a list of vendors in an effort to further public awareness of vendors identified as possible contacts for purchase of bulk water for drinking water purposes. Bulk water haulers interested in being on this list may contact NHDES at (603) 271-2513.

Contact Bulk Water Provider Ahead of Time

Even if a bulk water provider is listed on our website, you should still contact the company ahead of time to make prior arrangements to receive bulk water. It is recommended that you contact the bulk water company directly to establish a working knowledge of your bulk water hauler(s) procedure to obtain, transfer, and provide bulk water prior to use of their services. There will be many different scenarios, depending on the system requirements, availability of potable emergency water sources and limitations (regional and seasonal) on the water hauling providers. You don't want to find out that it is not feasible to receive bulk water during an emergency. Preparing written agreements with the bulk water haulers that you contacted and including them in your plan may also be useful.

Include Bulk Water in your Emergency Plan (EP)

Env-Dw 503.21 requires a CWS to address alternative water sources in your EP. If your system is able to receive bulk water, your plan should include details regarding bulk water deliveries such as contact information for one or two providers, who will be onsite during delivery, whether any special equipment is needed, and who fills out and submits the [Bulk Water Notification Form](#) to the NHDES DWGB which is required to be submitted within two business days of a delivery per Env-Dw 304.

BOTTLED WATER

For some systems where bulk water is not a viable option, such as large systems with high demand or systems that don't have an atmospheric storage tank, it may be necessary to obtain and distribute bottled water. Your EP should include details such as quantities needed, who will be responsible for picking it up, plans for distribution, etc.

INTERCONNECTIONS

If you have another water system nearby, is it possible to connect? If yes, have you discussed the feasibility of connecting to that system? If yes, include date and contact person and be sure to list them on your notification list. Attach a general description of how you would make the connection and include any mutual aid agreements.

NEW SOURCE / REACTIVATION

A system may need to activate an alternate source of drinking water as rapidly as possible to avoid interrupting service to its customers. Simply turning on a pump in an unused well or connecting a new or inactive well to the water system can potentially threaten public health if measures are not taken to verify that the quality of water served to customers is safe to drink. For this reason, DWGB has developed guidelines for the activation of emergency water supply sources for emergency wells and interim emergency wells which are listed at the link below. **Before any unapproved source is used, it needs to be approved by DWGB.**

- [NHDES Fact Sheet Emergency Water Supply Wells for Public Water Systems](#)
- [EPA Document Planning for an Emergency Drinking Water Supply](#)

CONTACT INFORMATION

A copy of your water system's EP is due to NHDES DWGB by March 31, 2021. We appreciate your efforts in maintaining your EP!

How to Submit your EP

By Email (preferred): stephanie.nistico@des.nh.gov

By Mail: Stephanie Nistico

NHDES Drinking Water & Groundwater Bureau
29 Hazen Drive, PO Box 95
Concord, NH 03302-0095

For more information on emergency planning please contact stephanie.nistico@des.nh.gov at (603) 271-0867.