



Community Water System Preparation for Winter

Guidance to help you plan for winter and the continued impacts of COVID-19. **Reminder:** Community water system emergency plans are due to the NHDES Drinking Water & Groundwater Bureau (DWGB) by March 31, 2021.

Announcements

On December 8th NHDES launched our [new website](#)! The content is the same but the format has changed for the better. This new and improved website has been in the works for over a year and is designed to be more user friendly. To help get acclimated to the new site, NHDES put together a series of [website tutorials](#) including a Full Tour, Getting to OneStop, Searching the Site, Using the Document Library and more.

Planning for the Future

Winter means more cold weather and power outages. As we continue to navigate the pandemic, be sure to also prepare for the continued impacts of COVID-19.

- ◆ Stock up on supplies including chemical inventory and PPE. If your utility is in need of PPE, there are masks available for drinking water and wastewater staff in a coordination effort by EPA and FEMA. [Click here to complete your mask order.](#)
- ◆ The state is only in possession of masks at this time. If you are in need of other PPE, please contact your local Emergency Management Director (EMD).
- ◆ Anticipate increased weather disruptions and absenteeism due to COVID-19 and flu season.
- ◆ The Covid-19 pandemic has given an unprecedented opportunity to cyber attackers to hack and break down an organizations' IT infrastructure. Recently there was a cyber incident on SolarWind software platform. If you suspect your infrastructure has been compromised, please contact the CISA Cyber Liaison (cyberliaison@cisa.dhs.gov) immediately. Be aware of cyberattacks and try to reduce your risks. [View EPA's incident action checklists on cybersecurity.](#)
- ◆ Drinking water utilities across the U.S. have experienced and are anticipated to experience revenue and cost impacts associated with the national, state, and local response to the COVID-19 crisis: [AWWA Financial Impacts of COVID-19.](#)

New Hampshire COVID-19 Vaccination Planning

New Hampshire is committed to a safe and effective [vaccine](#) that will protect against COVID-19. The vaccine will be distributed in a phased approach and the initial allocation will be used to vaccinate at-risk health workers, residents of long-term care facilities, and first responders during [Phase 1a](#). For more information about subsequent phases please review the [New Hampshire COVID-19 Vaccine Allocation for All Phases](#).

In mid-December the first New Hampshire COVID-19 vaccine was administered to an ICU nurse in Manchester. Now that there is an authorized and recommended vaccine to prevent COVID-19 in the U.S., [here are 8 things you need to know](#) about the new COVID-19 Vaccination Program and [what to expect after getting a vaccine](#). Contact your local health officials for more information on getting vaccinated.

COVID-19 Vaccination Resources

- ◆ [NHDHHS COVID-19 webpage](#)
- ◆ [CDC General COVID-19 Vaccine Information](#)

Update your Emergency Plan

With the March 31 deadline fast approaching, now is a good time to update your community water system emergency plan (EP) to make sure it has updated contacts, includes an all-hazards approach, and addresses essential staff and critical functions to keep utilities running smoothly. Consider adding “lessons learned” from COVID-19 by:

- ◆ Keeping your staff and customers safe by maintaining enough PPE and practicing good hygiene.
- ◆ Contacting backup operators if you have staff shortages.
- ◆ Maintaining chemical inventory to treat the water.
- ◆ Activating alternate water source.
- ◆ Evaluating your critical infrastructure and prioritizing this equipment if and when it needs replacement.

Your EP should include arrangements to receive alternate water such as through bulk water deliveries. Please remember that NHDES DWGB must be notified within two business days after emergency bulk water is delivered to customers. [Click here to access the bulk water notification form](#). It may be helpful to print out and include in your EP for quick reference.

If a disaster strikes and you need assistance from a neighboring town or utility, you should have a mutual aid agreement in place. Mutual aid is a written agreement of one utility helping another during an emergency. It’s important to arrange mutual aid agreements ahead of time and add this information in your EP.

Mutual aid can be a written agreement of two communities helping another during an emergency by sharing resources, staff, equipment, etc., or a mutual aid membership through the [New Hampshire Public Works Mutual Aid Program](#) (NHPWMA).

EP Resources

- ◆ [EPA Incident Action Checklists](#): “rip & run” style checklists for [power outages](#), [flooding](#), [pandemics](#) and more
- ◆ [NHDES emergency planning template](#) *updated version coming soon*
- ◆ [EPA emergency planning template](#)
- ◆ [Continuity of Operations template](#)

How to Submit your EP

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

By Mail: Stephanie Nistico

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