



# Emergency Response Planning Template for Public Drinking Water Systems



Rural Community  
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Southeast Rural  
Community Assistance  
Project, Inc.



*Produced for the Rural Community Assistance Partnership (RCAP) National Network  
by Rural Community Assistance Corporation, Western RCAP  
RCAP Safety and Security Education Program*

# 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	<a href="http://www.rcap.org">www.rcap.org</a>
Western RCAP	916/447-2854	<a href="http://www.rcac.org">www.rcac.org</a>
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Northeast RCAP	800/488-1969	<a href="http://www.rcapsolutions.org">www.rcapsolutions.org</a>
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This material is based upon work supported in part under a grant by the Rural Utilities Service, United States Department of Agriculture. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Rural Utilities Service. Additional funding provided by U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and revised by RCAC (August 2005) based on materials developed by the Washington State Department of Health, Training and Outreach Section, Division of Drinking Water.

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This publication is being distributed under the auspices of Rural Community Assistance Partnership.



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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

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



## 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 3. Events that Cause Emergencies**

The events listed below may cause water system emergencies. They are arranged from highest to lowest probable risk.

#### **Events that cause emergencies**

<b>Type of Event</b>	<b>Probability or Risk (High-Med-Low)</b>	<b>Comments</b>



## Section 4. Emergency Notification

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

<b>Emergency Notification List</b>				
<b>Organization or Department</b>	<b>Name &amp; Position</b>	<b>Telephone</b>	<b>Night or Cell Phone</b>	<b>Email</b>
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				

<b>Priority Customers</b>				
<b>Organization or Department</b>	<b>Name &amp; Position</b>	<b>Telephone</b>	<b>Night or Cell Phone</b>	<b>Email</b>
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

<b>Who is Responsible:</b>	
<b>Procedures:</b>	

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

<b>Who is Responsible:</b>	
<b>Procedures:</b>	

Contact service and repair contractors

<b>Who is Responsible:</b>	
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<b>Procedures:</b>	
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**Contact neighboring water systems, if necessary**

<b>Who is Responsible:</b>	
<b>Procedures:</b>	

**Procedures for issuing a health advisory**

<b>Who is Responsible:</b>	
<b>Procedures:</b>	

**Other procedures as necessary**

<b>Who is Responsible:</b>	
<b>Procedures:</b>	



## 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

<b>Assessment</b>	
<b>Immediate Actions</b>	
<b>Notifications</b>	
<b>Follow-up Actions</b>	

### B. Distribution line break

<b>Assessment</b>	
<b>Immediate Actions</b>	
<b>Notifications</b>	
<b>Follow-up Actions</b>	

**C. Chlorine treatment equipment failure**

<b>Assessment</b>	
<b>Immediate Actions</b>	
<b>Notifications</b>	
<b>Follow-up Actions</b>	

**D. Treatment equipment**

<b>Assessment</b>	
<b>Immediate Actions</b>	
<b>Notifications</b>	
<b>Follow-up Actions</b>	

**E. Source pump failure**

<b>Assessment</b>	
<b>Immediate Actions</b>	
<b>Notifications</b>	
<b>Follow-up Actions</b>	

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

<b>Assessment</b>	
<b>Immediate Actions</b>	
<b>Notifications</b>	
<b>Follow-up Actions</b>	

**G. Chemical contamination**

<b>Assessment</b>	
<b>Immediate Actions</b>	
<b>Notifications</b>	
<b>Follow-up Actions</b>	

**H. Vandalism or terrorist attack**

<b>Assessment</b>	
<b>Immediate Actions</b>	
<b>Notifications</b>	
<b>Follow-up Actions</b>	

**I. Reduction or loss of water in the well**

<b>Assessment</b>	
<b>Immediate Actions</b>	
<b>Notifications</b>	
<b>Follow-up Actions</b>	

**J. Drought**

<b>Assessment</b>	
<b>Immediate Actions</b>	
<b>Notifications</b>	
<b>Follow-up Actions</b>	

**K. Flood**

<b>Assessment</b>	
<b>Immediate Actions</b>	
<b>Notifications</b>	
<b>Follow-up Actions</b>	



**L. Earthquake**

<b>Assessment</b>	
<b>Immediate Actions</b>	
<b>Notifications</b>	
<b>Follow-up Actions</b>	

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

<b>Assessment</b>	
<b>Immediate Actions</b>	
<b>Notifications</b>	
<b>Follow-up Actions</b>	

**N. Electronic equipment failure**

<b>Assessment</b>	
<b>Immediate Actions</b>	
<b>Notifications</b>	
<b>Follow-up Actions</b>	

**O. Cyber attack**

<b>Assessment</b>	
<b>Immediate Actions</b>	
<b>Notifications</b>	
<b>Follow-up Actions</b>	

**P. Other**

<b>Assessment</b>	
<b>Immediate Actions</b>	
<b>Notifications</b>	
<b>Follow-up Actions</b>	



## 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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