Emergency Response and Planning Guidance for Water Systems

Drinking Water Services (DWS) has emergency response plan requirements (OAR 333-061-0064) for all Community and Non-transient, Non-community (NTNC) water systems in Oregon. Under the rules, all Community and NTNC water systems serving 3,300 people or less are required to develop and maintain an emergency response plan (ERP) than can be accessed by water system staff during emergencies. These rules have been updated to align with America's Water Infrastructure Act (AWIA) which requires community water systems serving more than 3,300 people to conduct a risk and resilience assessment (RRA) and develop and maintain an ERP based on the findings from the RRA.

When does this rule go into effect?
January 1, 2022

When does the ERP need to be updated and certified?
Water systems are not required to certify to DWS that their plans are complete and should not send documents with critical information to DWS. These documents must be made available for review during the water system's sanitary survey.

For community water systems serving more than 3,300 people, both the RRA and ERP should be updated at least every 5 years after the initial due dates under AWIA. Additionally, these systems must submit a certification of completion to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Rule requirements:
All Community and NTNC water systems must have the plan accessible to all staff to use during emergencies, staff must be trained in the use of the ERP.

Community and NTNC water systems w/ populations 3,300 or less: the ERP must include procedures for reasonably anticipated emergencies.
- Plan for physical security measures
- If computer networks or automated control systems operate or monitor processes at the water system, cybersecurity measures must be implemented, including but not limited to:
    - Establishing a password policy based on current cybersecurity standards,
    - creating a software update plan,
    - monitoring for suspicious activity, and
    - installing and updating anti-virus or anti-malware software.
- Procedures:
    - Isolating all parts of system,
    - emergency disinfection,
    - issuing boil or DND advisories,
    - loss of electrical power,
    - loss of pressure,
    - disruption/failure of disinfection or other treatment systems,
    - detection of E. coli bacteria or other contaminants exceeding the MCL, and

- coordinating with local emergency management agency in the event the system is overwhelmed and cannot respond to emergency.

Community Water Systems w/ population over 3,300:
- The risk and resilience assessment and emergency response plan must be updated at least every 5 years.
- The risk and resilience assessments must include:
    - Natural and man-made risks to the water system,
    - resilience of water system infrastructure such as water sources, intake, pre-treatment or treatment facilities, storage and distribution systems, electronic and other automated systems used by the water system.
    - water quality monitoring practices,
    - financial infrastructure such as business continuity or rate setting,
    - the use, storage, or handling of any chemicals, and
    - the operations and maintenance of the water system.
- The emergency response plan must incorporate findings of the risk and resilience assessment as well as:
    - Strategies and resources to improve water system resiliency, including physical and cyber-security of the system.
    - Identify actions, plans, procedures, and equipment to be implemented and utilized during an emergency, such as:
        - Descriptions for isolating parts of the water system (if applicable),
        - Emergency disinfection procedures, process for issuing water advisories and process for responding to a waterborne disease outbreak.
        - Make provisions for auxiliary power supply and redundant equipment for critical components.
        - Develop plans for water rationing and emergency provision of water.
    - Response procedures for events involving high risk contaminant sources/activities identified in the [DEQ Source Water Assessment](#) for the following areas.
        - One-year time-of-travel for wells or zone 1 in springs for groundwater sources with delineated drinking water source area.
        - Within 500 ft radius of a groundwater well, spring, infiltration gallery without a delineated drinking water source area.
        - Eight-hour time-of-travel (or area within eight-hour time-of-travel) that captures high-risk sources based on sensitive area info for surface water sources.
- Communications:
    - Identify customers serving vulnerable populations (hospitals, medical, childcare, elder-care facilities),
    - develop and maintain emergency contacts list,
    - identify decision-making authorities and responsibilities for water system staff, and
    - procedure for notification of agencies, water users and local media during emergency situations.
    - Coordinate with local emergency management agencies or committees when preparing or revising the emergency response plan.

For additional resources, contact Chantal Wikstrom, DWS Emergency Response and Preparedness Coordinator, at 971-666-8512 or by email at chantal.t.wikstrom@oha.oregon.gov.