

# Emergency Water Supply Planning for Public Water Systems

Maine CDC Drinking Water Program • 11 SHS, Augusta, ME 04330 • (207) 287-2070 • [www.medwp.com](http://www.medwp.com)

## Are You Prepared?

As a PWS, you need to have a plan to supply safe water in the event your water system loses the capability to do so. You need to know how long you can sustain providing this water (logistically and economically), and at what point resources will become exhausted. At some point, you may need to contact the local emergency director, who may call upon the county emergency management director, who in turn, may ask for assistance from the Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA). Knowing the limitations and strengths of your PWS and the role others may play will enable innovative approaches that may be required in a time of limited resources, such as a major storm event, power outage, or flooding.



## Are Your Consumers Prepared?

Consumers have an important responsibility to be prepared and able to sustain themselves for **72 hours or longer**. This time frame allows for you, as a PWS, to gather the resources to get up and running, utilize emergency connections, arrange for bulk haul, or other methods. Each family, business, and school needs to understand that water priorities for fire suppression and sanitary needs are as necessary as drinking water safety. PWS's have an active role in notifying consumers when there is a water emergency. PWS must inform and educate consumers about what to do when a drinking water order is necessary, such as a boil water order or do not drink order.

## Your Roles

The role of a PWS is to produce water for fire suppression, safe drinking water, and water for sanitary purposes. You must know what your plan of action will be when your water source, supply or pressure loss exceeds resources of the PWS. Businesses, schools, and residential consumers all need to have individual considerations. Critical consumers (hospitals, clinics, elder care, area shelters) are going to need extra attention and planning. Coordination with the local emergency director and the county director are critical at this point in the planning process. While you may be able to serve the immediate safe drinking water needs for some of the population, some critical customers are going to need more, such as sanitary needs and hygiene planning. Planning in the early stages will allow for coordinated resources and sharing.

## Drinking Water Program Resources

The Maine Drinking Water Program (DWP) has numerous resources to contribute. Professional staff are always available for coordinating boil water orders and assisting with the timing and logistics of water sampling. The DWP actively and continually promotes WARN and endorses familiarity and training of the Incident Command System. The DWP can provide risk communication messages. ***Maintaining the protection of public health is a priority.***

# Developing Your Action Plan for an Emergency Water Supply

The following are Key Questions for developing a plan of action to address the need for an alternative or **emergency water supply**. The cost and logistics of the answers below may help define a strong plan of action that would sustain meeting the drinking water needs of consumers while the PWS makes repairs necessary to provide pressure for fire suppression and volume for sanitary needs. Every day of lost production is a day of lost revenue. While the goal is providing safe drinking water to consumers, the resources of the PWS at this time need to be focused on getting the system back into production. Communication, planning and strong collaboration will enhance this process.

## Estimated time frame

3 days, 10 days 15 days and 20 days. Anything longer (in most cases) needs large scale planning. State resources, MEMA, and the National Guard would be utilized if the population, scale, and length warranted it

## Estimated quantity of water needed

An estimated quantity needs to be known. For emergency supplies, one gallon per person per day is an accepted measure.

## Local Source

- Are there holding tanks? How long would they last if rationed?
- Can the supply come from a local source?
- Is there another well that is accessible?
- Are there still functioning portions of the system that can be used?
- Are there areas that can be re-routed?
- Can system pressures and water quality parameters be met?

## Neighboring Water Utilities

- Is there an emergency interconnection established?
- Is an emergency interconnection possible (vs. the costs of transporting it in)?
- Are supplies accessible (NSF standard 61 pipes and valves)?
- Can system pressures and water quality parameters be met?
- Can WARN be a resource at this time?

## Prepackaged Water: Bottled Water



- Who can supply it?
- How fast can you get it?
- Where can you stage it?
- What are the logistics for distribution?
- How long will this last?
- What will it cost?

## Bulk Water Haul

- Who is the closest utility to obtain finished water from?
- Who is the closest bulk water hauler?
- How fast can they deliver?
- How is this going to be distributed?
- What will it take in man hours and labor to operate this set up?
- What will it cost?



Paul R. LePage, Governor

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