

# 15 Easy Ways to Make Your Utility Better Prepared for Emergencies

- 1. Purchase** a public safety radio scanner to serve as an early warning system for incidents and traffic accidents that may affect your utility's operations. LOW COST
- 2. Determine** if your community utilizes an emergency alert system (e.g., Health and Homeland Security Network-HHAN) and register. FREE
- 3. Sign up** for the Government Emergency Telecommunications and Wireless Priority Services at <http://gets.ncs.gov/> and <http://wps.ncs.gov/>. LOW COST
- 4. Join** the Virginia Water and Wastewater Agency Response Network (VA WARN) at [www.vawarn.org](http://www.vawarn.org). FREE
- 5. Subscribe** to Miss Utility of Virginia at [www.missutilityofvirginia.com/](http://www.missutilityofvirginia.com/). LOW COST
- 6. Join** the Water Information Sharing and Analysis Center (WaterISAC) at [www.waterisac.org](http://www.waterisac.org). LOW COST
- 7. Subscribe** to the U.S. Geological Survey's Water Alert service to automatically receive daily or hourly updates about current conditions in select source waters at <http://water.usgs.gov/wateralert/>. FREE
- 8. Instruct** all your personnel to become certified in ICS-100.PWb, Introduction to the Incident Command System for Public Works Personnel and IS-700.a, National Incident Command System (NIMS), An Introduction at <http://training.fema.gov/IS/NIMS.asp>. FREE
- 9. Determine** your minimum generator requirements for an extended power outage and hardwire your junction boxes to receive generators- use the emergency generator form at [www.epa.gov/region1/eco/drinkwater/](http://www.epa.gov/region1/eco/drinkwater/). LOW COST
- 10. Review** your Emergency Response Plan (ERP) with your local emergency management director or coordinator- be sure to talk about the location of your critical infrastructure, the timing and routes of your chemical deliveries, and your alternate drinking water plans. FREE
- 11. Determine** what resources are available through your local or county emergency management agency (e.g., water buffalos, generators, reverse 911) and include a resource request checklist in your Emergency Response Plan. FREE
- 12. Get** your utility added to your 911 dispatch center's call down list. FREE
- 13. Develop** a schedule for the submission of updated contact information to your local emergency management director or coordinator- do it with the annual update of your Emergency Response Plan. FREE
- 14. Determine** if your jurisdiction has a first responder credentialing program and get credentialed- just ask your local emergency management director or coordinator. FREE
- 15. Conduct** or host a multiagency tabletop exercise at your utility with local first responders - get to know them before a disaster strikes! LOW COST

The Virginia Department of Health sponsored a regional tabletop exercise series designed to bring together water and wastewater utilities with local first responders. At the exercises, participants discussed their actions, roles, and responsibilities to a simulated hazardous material spill. Based on these discussions, the following is a list of fast, easy, and free or inexpensive steps you can take to increase emergency preparedness at your utility.



## Want to know and do more?

Check out [www.vdh.state.va.us/drinkingwater/Owners/planningtools.htm](http://www.vdh.state.va.us/drinkingwater/Owners/planningtools.htm) and <http://water.epa.gov/infrastructure/watersecurity/index.cfm>.

**VDH** VIRGINIA  
DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH  
*Protecting You and Your Environment*

# Water Sector Initial Incident Response

- Investigate and verify** any alarms, sensors, and/or customer complaints
- Conduct** a size-up or site characterization
- Take** corrective or protective action(s)
- Notify** supervisor(s) of the incident
- Establish or join** incident command
- Establish** incident objectives that address:
  - Life safety
  - Incident stabilization
  - Preservation of property and the environment
- Document** actions using agency forms or ICS Form 214 (Unit Log)
- Call** 911/local dispatch regarding recent accidents or incidents that may have an impact on your utility
- Call** 911 if you suspect vandalism or tampering
- Call** neighboring water and wastewater utilities to see if they are experiencing similar issues
- Call** wastewater pretreatment customers
- Notify** VDH, local government, critical customers, emergency management, response partners, and downstream users
- Determine** the need for additional resources such as personnel, equipment, and materials
- Prepare** advisories and public notifications
- Determine** the method of public notification
- Prepare** to address the media
- Confer** with local health officials
- Confer** with public safety officials regarding water pressure and quality
- Update or establish** utility website to address public concerns
- Conduct** an after action review and update plans and procedures

## Contacts:

Police: \_\_\_\_\_

Fire: \_\_\_\_\_

EMA: \_\_\_\_\_

Health: \_\_\_\_\_

VDH Region: \_\_\_\_\_

Electric Utility: \_\_\_\_\_

Lab: \_\_\_\_\_

## Organizations That Can Help:

Your Local Emergency Management Agency (EMA)

[www.vaemergency.com/regions/index.cfm](http://www.vaemergency.com/regions/index.cfm)

Virginia WARN

[www.vawarn.org](http://www.vawarn.org) • 757-363-1760

Virginia Rural Water Association

[www.vrwa.org](http://www.vrwa.org) • 540-261-7178

Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project

[www.southeastrcap.org](http://www.southeastrcap.org) • 866-928-3731

VDH Office of Drinking Water

[www.vdh.virginia.gov/drinkingwater/contacts](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/drinkingwater/contacts) • 804-864-7500

Wireless Information System for Emergency Responders (WISER)

<http://wiser.nlm.nih.gov/>

CHEMTREC

[www.chemtrec.com/](http://www.chemtrec.com/) • 800-262-8200

**DISCLAIMER:** VDH does not endorse the organizations sponsoring linked web sites and does not endorse the views expressed or the products/services they offer.