

# RISK AND RESILIENCE ASSESSMENTS AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLANS:

## NEW REQUIREMENTS FOR DRINKING WATER UTILITIES

Section 2013 of America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018 (AWIA) requires community water systems<sup>1</sup> that serve more than 3,300 people to complete a risk and resilience assessment and develop an emergency response plan.

### RISK AND RESILIENCE ASSESSMENT

Your utility must conduct a risk and resilience assessment and submit certification of its completion to the U.S. EPA by the following dates:

Important  
Dates

- March 31, 2020 if serving  $\geq 100,000$  people.
- December 31, 2020 if serving 50,000 to 99,999 people.
- June 30, 2021 if serving 3,301 to 49,999 people.

### EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

Your utility must develop or update an emergency response plan and certify completion to the U.S. EPA **no later than six months** after risk and resilience assessment certification. Each utility deadline is unique; however, the dates below are the due dates for utilities who submit a risk and resilience assessment certification by the final due date according to the population served.

- September 30, 2020 if serving  $\geq 100,000$  people.
- June 30, 2021 if serving 50,000 to 99,999 people.
- December 30, 2021 if serving 3,301 to 49,999 people.

Recertification

**Every five years**, your utility must review the risk and resilience assessment and submit a recertification to the U.S. EPA that the assessment has been reviewed and, if necessary, revised.

**Within six months** of submitting the recertification for the risk and resilience assessment, your utility must certify it has reviewed and, if necessary, revised, its emergency response plan.

Visit the U.S. EPA website to find more information on guidance for developing a risk and resilience assessment at <https://www.epa.gov/waterriskassessment/conduct-drinking-water-or-wastewater-utility-risk-assessment>.

Visit the U.S. EPA website for guidance on developing an Emergency Response Plan at <https://www.epa.gov/waterutilityresponse/develop-or-update-drinking-water-or-wastewater-utility-emergency-response-plan>.

### TOOLS OR METHODS

- AWIA does not require the use of any standards, methods or tools for the risk and resilience assessment or emergency response plan. Your utility is responsible for ensuring that the risk and resilience assessment and emergency response plan address all the criteria in AWIA Section 2013(a) and (b), respectively. The U.S. EPA recommends the use of standards, including AWWA J100-10 Risk and Resilience Management of Water and Wastewater Systems, along with tools from the U.S. EPA and other organizations, to facilitate sound risk and resilience assessments and emergency response plans.

<sup>1</sup> Section 2013 of AWIA applies to community water systems. Community water systems are drinking water utilities that consistently serve at least 25 people or 15 service connections year-round.

Still have questions about the new AWIA requirements?  
Contact the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) at [dwresilience@epa.gov](mailto:dwresilience@epa.gov).

Office of Water (4608T)  
EPA-817-F-19-004  
May 2019



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### I need more information about risk and resilience assessments and emergency response plans:

Risk and resilience assessments evaluate the vulnerabilities, threats and consequences from potential hazards.

#### What does a risk and resilience assessment include?

- Natural hazards and malevolent acts (i.e., all hazards).
- Resilience of water facility infrastructure (including pipes, physical barriers, water sources and collection, treatment, storage and distribution, and electronic, computer and other automated systems).
- Monitoring practices.
- Financial systems (e.g., billing systems).
- Chemical storage and handling.
- Operation and maintenance.

#### Who should I work with when creating my emergency response plan?

- Utilities must coordinate the risk and resilience assessments, as well as the emergency response plans with local emergency planning committees.

For more information, see [www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill](http://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill).

### I need more information on the certification process:

#### What do I need to submit to the U.S. EPA?

- Each utility must submit a certification of your risk and resilience assessment and emergency response plan. Each submission must include: utility name, date and a statement that the utility has completed, reviewed or revised the assessment. The U.S. EPA has developed an optional certification template that can be used for email or mail certification. The optional certification form will be available in August 2019.

#### Who can certify my risk and resilience assessment and emergency response plan?

- Risk and resilience assessments and emergency response plans can be self-certified by the utility.

#### How do I submit my certification?

- Three options will be provided for submittal: regular mail, email and a user-friendly secure online portal. The online submission portal will provide drinking water systems with a receipt of submittal. The U.S. EPA recommends using this method. The certification system will be available in August 2019.

#### What does an emergency response plan include?

- Strategies and resources to improve resilience, including physical security and cybersecurity.
- Plans and procedures for responding to a natural hazard or malevolent act that threatens safe drinking water.
- Actions and equipment to lessen the impact of a malevolent act or natural hazard, including alternative water sources, relocating intakes and flood protection barriers.
- Strategies to detect malevolent acts or natural hazards that threaten the system.

#### When can I submit the initial certification?

- Utilities should wait to submit the initial certification to the U.S. EPA until the U.S. EPA publishes *Baseline Information on Malevolent Acts Relevant to Community Water Systems*, which is required under AWIA by August 2019.

#### Do I need to submit my certification to my state or local government?

- No. Section 2013 of AWIA does not require utilities to submit the certification to state or local governments.

#### How long do I need to keep a copy of my risk and resilience assessment and emergency response plan?

- Utilities need to keep a copy of both documents for five years after certification.

#### What if I do not have a copy of my most recent risk and resilience assessment?

- The U.S. EPA intends to destroy vulnerability assessments (VAs) submitted in response to the Bioterrorism Act of 2002, but if utilities would like to have their VA and certification documents mailed to them, contact [WSD-Outreach@epa.gov](mailto:WSD-Outreach@epa.gov), and on utility letterhead, include the utility name, PWSID, address and point of contact as an attachment to the email.

## RESOURCES & TOOLS

#### Conducting a Risk and Resilience Assessment

- The U.S. EPA's Risk and Resilience Baseline Threat Document (available August 2019).
- The U.S. EPA's [Vulnerability Self-Assessment](#).

#### The U.S. EPA Website

- <https://www.epa.gov/waterresilience/americas-water-infrastructure-act-2018-risk-assessments-and-emergency-response-plans>.

#### Developing an Emergency Response Plan

- [Emergency Response Plan Guidance](#).
- The U.S. EPA's [Emergency Response Webpage](#).
- [Local Emergency Planning Committees](#).

Still have questions about the new AWIA requirements?  
Contact the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) at [dwresilience@epa.gov](mailto:dwresilience@epa.gov).

Office of Water (4608T)  
EPA-817-F-19-004  
May 2019