



# Emergency Response Planning Template for Public Drinking Water Systems



Rural Community  
Assistance Corporation  
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Southeast Rural  
Community Assistance  
Project, Inc.



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# 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>
Southeast RCAP	866/928-3731	<a href="http://www.southeastrcap.org">www.southeastrcap.org</a>
Great Lakes RCAP	800/775-9767	<a href="http://www.gllrcap.org">www.gllrcap.org</a>
Southern RCAP	479/443-2700	<a href="http://www.crg.org">www.crg.org</a>
Northeast RCAP	800/488-1969	<a href="http://www.rcapsolutions.org">www.rcapsolutions.org</a>
Midwest RCAP	952/758-4334	<a href="http://www.map-inc.org">www.map-inc.org</a>

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For additional copies of this publication, call 888/321-7227 or visit RCAP's web site at [www.rcap.org](http://www.rcap.org).

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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, **do not** submit it to USDA/RD and 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>



### The requirement for an emergency response plan

The United States Department of Agriculture, Rural Development (USDA/RD) is requiring that all systems that receive USDA/RD funding must complete a Security Vulnerability Assessment (SVA) and Emergency Response Plan (ERP). In addition to the USDA/RD requirements, the preparation of a SVA and ERP will help improve the management of the water system and will increase the system's ability to respond to emergencies.

This guidance document can be used to help meet the requirement for developing an emergency response program for a water system serving 3,300 population or fewer. Other methods or formats can also be used to meet the emergency response program requirement.



## 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



## 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 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)				
Primacy Agency 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				



<b>State, Federal or Tribal 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>
<b>State or Tribal Police</b>				
<b>Regulatory Agency State/Federal/Tribal</b>				
<b>Authorized Testing Laboratory</b>				

<b>Service / Repair Notifications</b>				
<b>Organization or Department</b>	<b>Name &amp; Position</b>	<b>Telephone</b>	<b>Night or Cell Phone</b>	<b>Email</b>
<b>Electric Utility Co.</b>				
<b>Electrician</b>				
<b>Gas/Propane Supplier</b>				
<b>Water Testing Lab.</b>				
<b>Sewer Utility Co.</b>				
<b>Telephone Co.</b>				
<b>Plumber</b>				
<b>Pump Supplier</b>				
<b>“Call Before You Dig”</b>				
<b>Rental Equipment Supplier</b>				
<b>Chlorine Supplier</b>				
<b>Well Drilling Co.</b>				
<b>Pipe Supplier</b>				

### 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>	
<b>Procedures:</b>	

**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>	

### G.B. Distribution line break

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

| **D.C.** Chlorine treatment equipment failure

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

| **E.D.** Treatment equipment

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

| **F.E.** Source pump failure

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

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

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

**H.G. Chemical contamination**

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

**H.H. Vandalism or terrorist attack**

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

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

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

| **K.J.** Drought

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

| **L.K.** Flood

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



**M.L. Earthquake**

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

**N.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>	

**O.N. Electronic equipment failure**

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

| **P.O.** Cyber attack

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

| **Q.P.** Other

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

| **Q.**



## 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:

<b>Name/Title</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>



## Section 10. Certificate of Completion

I certify to the United States Department of Agriculture, Rural Development (USDA/RD) that this community water system has completed an Emergency Response Plan (ERP) that incorporates the results of the Security Vulnerability Assessment (SVA) completed for the system.

I certify that this document was prepared under my direction or supervision. I am aware that there are significant penalties for submitting false information (Safe Drinking Water Act (42U.S.C. 300f et seq.).

**Mail the completed certificate only (do not send your SVA or ERP) to the appropriate USDA Rural Development office.**

**Public Water System ID Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**System Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Print Name of Person Authorized to Sign this Certification on behalf of the System:**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Fax:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Received Technical Assistance from the following:

- Rural Community Assistance Partnership  
(CRG, Great Lakes RCAP/WSOS, MAP, RCAC, RCAP Solutions, Southeast RCAP)
- Rural Water Association

### Completing the following:

- Security Vulnerability Assessment
- Emergency Response Plan

**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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