

BE DISASTER RESILIENT AND READY

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Water utilities today face unprecedented threats to the security and resilience of their systems from natural disasters. New York is home to hundreds of community water systems, a majority of which are small or rural systems serving a population of 3,301-49,999. In New York, drinking water services can be disrupted by floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, blizzards, and ice storms which can impact people, property, and critical infrastructure. In these instances, rural water systems serve as a critical lifeline for public health and the community at large. While any natural disaster can be overwhelming, you can take steps to prepare your utility and community in advance.

AMERICA'S WATER INFRASTRUCTURE ACT - SECTION 2013 REQUIREMENTS

One of the first steps is to conduct a detailed assessment of your risks. If you have not completed or updated your risk assessment already, you may be required to do so under the America's Water Infrastructure Act (AWIA). Section 2013 of the Act requires Community (drinking) Water Systems (CWSs) serving more than 3,300 people to develop or update a Risk and Resilience Assessment (RA) and Emergency Response Plan (ERP). The law includes the components that the RAs and ERPs must address and establishes deadlines by which water systems must send a certification of completion to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA).

The certification deadlines are based on system population size reflected in the Safe Drinking Water Information System (SDWIS) as of the law's date of enactment on October 23, 2018. Systems serving a population 100,000 or greater were required to certify completion of the Risk and Resilience Assessment no later than March 31, 2020. Systems serving population sizes of 50,000 to 99,999 must certify completion no later than December 31, 2020, and systems serving populations of 3,301 to 49,999 must certify no later than June 30, 2021.

Within six months of certifying completion of the Risk and Resilience Assessment, water systems must also certify completion of the ERP. AWIA requires systems to consider factors such as monitoring practices, financial systems, chemical storage, and operations and maintenance in their RAs. For the ERP, AWIA requires utilities to include items such as strategies and resources to improve resilience and procedures to lessen the impact of malevolent acts or natural hazards. See the following webpage for more information and details about AWIA - <https://www.epa.gov/waterresilience/americas-water-infrastructure-act-risk-assessments-and-emergency-response-plans>

AWIA COMPLIANCE RESOURCES

The U.S. EPA has developed a suite of tools to help you comply

with AWIA. The first tool is the [Vulnerability Self-Assessment Tool \(VSAT\) Web 2.0](#). This Tool is a risk assessment application for water, wastewater, and combined utilities of all sizes. Using VSAT Web 2.0, water systems in New York can assess their vulnerabilities to both man-made and natural hazards and evaluate potential improvement opportunities to enhance their security and resilience. See <https://www.epa.gov/waterriskassessment/conduct-drinking-water-or-wastewater-utility-risk-assessment>. Small CWSs serving greater than 3,300 but less than 50,000 people can conduct a RA using the Small System Risk and Resilience Assessment Checklist - <https://www.epa.gov/waterresilience/small-system-risk-and-resilience-assessment-checklist>. CWSs serving 3,300 or fewer people are not required to conduct risk and resilience assessments under AWIA. EPA recommends, however, that very small CWSs use the checklist or other guidance to learn how to conduct risk and resilience assessments and address threats from malevolent acts and natural hazards that threaten safe drinking water.

A second resource developed to help CWSs conduct a RA is the [Baseline Information on Malevolent Acts for Community Water Systems](#). This document assists CWSs in identifying the types of malevolent acts that could impact them and assist with estimating the threat likelihood of such acts. <https://www.epa.gov/waterriskassessment/baseline-information-malevolent-acts-community-water-systems>

The U.S. EPA also developed a resource to help CWSs comply with the AWIA ERP requirement. The [ERP Template and Instructions](#) describe strategies, resources, plans, and procedures utilities can use to prepare for and respond to an incident, natural or man-made, that could disrupt essential water services. The resource features a blank ERP template that can be easily accessed and modified by utility personnel to meet their own water system needs.

<https://www.epa.gov/waterutilityresponse/develop-or-update-drinking-water-utility-emergency-response-plan>

OTHER RESOURCES

After completing an RA and ERP, utilities can further explore how to lower risks and increase efficiency of response with U.S. EPA's tools and resources. The [Hazard Mitigation Guide for Natural Disasters](#) provides examples of mitigation projects for flooding as well as for other disaster scenarios that New York water utilities might face and includes information on eligibility for funding such as federal grants or loans. The [Water Utility Response On-The-Go \(Response OTG\) Application](#) is an interactive tool allowing you to respond in real time from the field, track severe weather, contact response partners, identify actions to take and inform incident command. You can learn more about both tools at: <https://www.epa.gov/waterutilityresponse>. >>>

The U.S. EPA provides regular updates on water security and resilience resources that will help water systems meet their requirements to comply with AWIA. To learn more, visit www.epa.gov/waterresilience or join the *What's Going On* newsletter email list by contacting WSD-outreach@epa.gov. With the help of the additional free water resilience resources, you can continue working toward providing safe and reliable services to customers during emergencies. 💧💧

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