



PLANS, PLANS AND MORE PLANS

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I've always understood the need for all those plans we're all supposed to have, but with the events of this past year, you know what I'm talking about, Covid, I now see the urgency for having those plans. Whether Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's), Sampling Plans, or Staffing Plans, these plans help to ensure continuity of operations, or more simply put, our water and wastewater utilities and facilities will continue to function unabated and without skipping a beat, during a crisis.

One of the most important plans to have is an Emergency Staffing Plan. This plan differs from a regular staffing plan, in that it identifies the minimum number and qualifications of staff, outside of your normal operating staff, that would be required in order to keep the facility operating safely and within permit for the short term during an emergency. The plan should outline the minimum number of hours that would be required daily to perform basic operational duties such as compliance testing (daily, weekly, monthly) as well as basic process control (sludge wasting, filter backwashing, etc.). It should also include a listing of emergency staff and their contact information. If your municipality isn't already a member of NYWARN, the New York Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network, you should consider joining. They can be a great resource in an emergency and can help with coordinating emergency staffing. To find out more visit <https://www.nywarn.org>.

A Basic Standard Operating Plan (BSOP) is essential and goes hand in hand with the Emergency Staffing Plan. While certified/qualified operators may be available to assist you during an emergency, they don't know your facility and its idiosyncrasies. What is your procedure for wasting sludge? What valves do you open? Close? What switch do you turn on? A simple, step by step BSOP that outlines the procedure(s) will help those emergency staffers carry out the essential tasks, ensuring the facilities continue to operate properly and within permit.

If you have noticed, I've used the words "emergency" and "basic" in both of the afore mentioned plans. These plans are emergency plans, designed to address emergency situations, not normal, day to day operations. Emergency plans should not be confused with, nor used to develop, normal operation plans.

For consistency purposes, it's important that all staff, normal operating staff as well as emergency staff, collect samples from the same location with the same frequency and perform any tests the same way. For this reason, a sampling plan is essential. It outlines the exact locations for sample collection, proper sampling

methods, appropriate containers, and frequency of sampling. In addition, it should also outline procedures for in-house testing (pH, settleable solids, etc.).

While the "normal" forms of the plans are already required in one shape or form, Covid has shown us the need to have emergency versions of these plans. If you would like assistance in developing these plans, please don't hesitate to contact us. I hope we never have to use them, but better safe than sorry. Stay safe. Stay well. Cheers. 💧💧

