Ten Steps to Maintain Critical Wastewater Services and Protect Public Health in an Emergency

1. Plan now for worst-case scenarios.
2. Identify and prioritize key personnel.
3. Establish communication protocols.
4. Develop emergency procedures.
5. Stockpile important supplies.
6. Train staff in emergency procedures.
7. Test systems and procedures regularly.
8. Conduct disaster drills.
10. Adapt and improve as needed.
Have you taken these Ten Steps to Maintain Critical Wastewater Services and Protect Public Health in an Emergency?

1. Make an emergency contact list.
2. Inspect your facilities daily.
3. Make security and preparedness everyone’s job.
4. Limit and control access to facilities.
5. Establish relationships with emergency personnel and neighboring facilities.
6. Practice safe chemical handling and usage.
7. Secure your records and maps.
8. Assess threats and identify vulnerabilities.
9. Have an emergency response plan.
10. Teach the community to stay safe.

Ten Step Pocket Card

Make an emergency contact list that includes all essential contacts.
- Post by each telephone and distribute to all staff
- Review and update the list quarterly, and as conditions change
- Include contacts needed to inform your community of emergencies

Inspect your facilities daily.
- Inspect treatment facilities (e.g., lift/pump stations, outfalls, chemical storage areas, fences, etc.)
- Use a security checklist to log results
- Take immediate action to address vulnerabilities

Make security and preparedness everyone’s job.
- Leaders must set a good example toward security
- Make all staff accountable for their security actions
- Report problems immediately
- Implement a plan to communicate regularly with employees, emergency responders, and customers about security issues
- Have plans to increase security when risks are elevated

Limit and control access to facilities.
- Routinely lock all doors and gates
- Remove keys and lock vehicles
- Limit key access to essential personnel
- Keep track of who has keys

Establish relationships with emergency personnel and neighboring facilities.
- Involve emergency personnel in your emergency planning (e.g., fire, police, hospitals, etc.)
- Establish mutual aid agreements with neighboring facilities.
- Educate staff, elected officials, and community members about how they can protect their wastewater system

Practice safe chemical handling and usage.
- Control chemical deliveries and be aware of delivery dates
- Store chemicals safely and securely
- Dispose of chemicals properly

Secure your records and maps.
- Update and organize critical information
- Control access to records and maps
- Backup computer files regularly
- Install updated virus protection and firewall on computers
- Secure deeds, titles, reports, etc., with copies or protection from fire and water damage

Assess threats and identify vulnerabilities.
- Prioritize key threats and vulnerabilities
- Harden facilities that are vulnerable to security threats and natural disasters
- Take appropriate steps to prevent, detect, delay, and deter intruders
- Consider security and emergency preparedness when making system changes
- Review security priorities annually

Have an emergency response plan for your wastewater system.
- Know key steps to take in an emergency
- Identify sources of backup equipment and assistance
- Train staff on the plan, and test it with emergency personnel and neighboring facilities
- Practice, practice, practice
- Update the plan annually

Educate staff, elected officials, and community members about how they can protect their wastewater system.
- Do not place hazardous material or objects in collection systems
- Consider security and emergency preparedness when making system changes
- Harden facilities that are vulnerable to security threats and natural disasters
- Practice safe chemical handling and usage
- Have plans to increase security when risks are elevated

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) encourages all wastewater systems to conduct a vulnerability assessment and take appropriate steps to improve security and emergency preparedness. Carrying out these ten steps is a good start.

More information about improving security and emergency preparedness is available on EPA’s website, www.epa.gov/safewater, or by calling the National Environmental Services Center at 1-800-624-8301.

Additional cards available from the National Environmental Services Center.

1-800-624-8301