



Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP)/Drinking Water Program (DWP)

In the Main Newsletter – 07/28/2026

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In The Main - The Drinking Water Updates can be found online at the [MassDEP Communication to Public Water Suppliers Website](#) or at the [Statehouse Archives](#) which has a searchable database.



Boston Harbor, no filter, photo by Eric Cheung

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1. Emergency Response for Hurricanes

Hurricane season in New England occurs between June and November, with peak hurricane season in August and September. Hurricanes and strong storms can cause flooding, power outages, and damage to critical infrastructure. MassDEP/DWP reminds public water systems of the resources available to reference for storm preparedness and emergency response, tips for preparing for emergency events, and the procedures for contacting MassDEP during and after a severe storm event.

Tips for Preparing for Emergencies

- Exercise Emergency Response Plans (ERPs) regularly to train staff on emergency procedures.
- Ensure personnel are aware of their roles during emergencies and have adequate personal protective equipment (PPE) and other equipment as needed.
- Fill or top-off all water storage.
- Prepare emergency vehicles, including topping off fuel tanks and ensuring vehicles and other equipment are accessible and in working order.
- Ensure that water treatment facilities have adequate chemical volumes for all chemicals.
- Ensure all communication equipment is in working order.

Resources

The following resources can be used to learn more about how water systems can properly prepare for and respond accordingly to hurricanes and related storm events.

- [MassDEP Storm Preparedness & Emergency Response Resources – Water Supply](#)
- [EPA Incident Action Checklist – Hurricane](#)
- [EPA Incident Action Checklist – Power Outages](#)
- [EPA Incident Action Checklist – Flooding](#)
- [MassDEP Public Drinking Water System Operations – Emergency Response & Public Notification](#)
- [MassDEP Emergency Response for Public Water Systems](#)
- [MassDEP Preparing for Extreme Weather Events and Response Guidance](#)
- [MassDEP Guidelines for Public Water Systems – Appendix O – Handbook for Water Supply Emergencies](#)
- [MA WARN](#)

Communication with MassDEP

During or after a storm event, if you suspect contamination from oil and/or other hazardous materials, contact both your local fire department and the MassDEP Emergency Response hotline at 1-888-304-1133.

In the event of an emergency during or after a storm event, water systems should contact MassDEP per the procedures listed in Appendix O of the Guidelines for Public Water Systems (Attachment C and D).

- During working hours (Monday – Friday between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM), contact your MassDEP Regional Office.
- Outside of working hours, on weekends, and on holidays, contact the MassDEP 24-hour Emergency Response hotline at 1-888-304-1133, followed by your MassDEP Regional Office.

Following a storm event, water systems have 30 days to file an Emergency Response Report with their MassDEP regional office. Refer to the [Emergency Response Reporting Guidance](#) page for more information about the report requirements, including the report template and an example report.

2. Water Treatment Testing Services for EC-SDC

Free Water Testing Services for Emerging Contaminants in Small or Disadvantaged PWS

MassDEP/ DWP's Emerging Contaminants in Small or Disadvantaged Communities (EC-SDC) Grant Program provides support to eligible public water systems to address emerging contaminant issues in their drinking water (including PFAS and Manganese). MassDEP/DWP has partnered with the University of Massachusetts Amherst (UMass) Drinking Water Assistance Center (DW-ASSIST) to provide pilot and/or bench scale testing of treatment to public water systems in support of their potential EC-SDC projects. Testing services are available on-site via use of the UMass Mobile Water Innovation Laboratory, or on campus at UMass laboratories. For more information, please visit the [EC-SDC website](#), Scroll down to 'Additional Resources' to find the 'Water Treatment Testing Services for EC-SDC (DW-ASSIST)' document. This document outlines some of the testing services UMass is able to provide to eligible PWS, including Jar Testing, Rapid Small Scale Column Testing, and Bench-Scale Pilot Testing; however, note that services will be available on a case-by-case basis, as determined by MassDEP and UMass. If you have any questions, please contact program.director-dwp@mass.gov AND copy drinkingwater@umass.edu, Subject "EC-SDC UMass Lab Services".

3. Pre-Registration Open for Bristol Community College Basic Treatment and Basic Distribution Courses – Fall 2026

MassDEP Drinking Water Program, in partnership with UMass Amherst and Bristol Community College is offering two FREE online self-paced prerequisite training classes in Fall 2026 (starting in September).

Basic Drinking Water Distribution is approximately 30-40 hours long and is designed to prepare students to take the D2 through D4 Drinking Water Distribution exams. Basic Drinking Water Treatment is approximately 40-50 hours long and is designed to prepare students to take the T2 Drinking Water Treatment exam. Both classes are approved by the Board of Certification of Operators of Drinking Water Supply Facilities and have a capacity of 25-30 students.

Course Descriptions

Basic Drinking Water Distribution: Topics include (but are not limited to) defining a public water system, proper operation, regulatory requirements, components, equipment and operation, water quality monitoring, storage facilities, cathodic protection, corrosion control, hydraulics, chemistry, formulas, flow, pressure, performance and transmission, cross connection, pumps, motors and operator ethics, safety and more.

Basic Drinking Water Treatment: Topics include (but are not limited to) the principles of hydrology associated with groundwater and surface water supply management, the hydrologic cycle, precipitation type and measurement, aquifer types and groundwater flow measurements, surface water flow measurements, and surface water and well sampling. Students will also study source water supplies and protection, regulations, physical and chemical treatment processes, operator ethics and safety.

Teaching Procedure

These classes are self-paced and online. The class will be taught on an eLearning platform, and all instructional content will be available on this platform. Additionally, textbooks will be provided for all students. Each week, there will be approximately 3 hours of lecture content and additional hours for reading the textbook and reviewing other required instructional material. The Basic Drinking Water Treatment class also has additional laboratory exercises each week. Students can earn Training Contact Hours (TCHs) upon successful completion of the class and will be eligible to sit for Drinking Water exams.

How to Apply

If you are interested in taking the Basic Distribution or Basic Treatment class, please complete the [Pre-Registration Questionnaire](#). Additional information on course requirements will be sent to you once the registration with Bristol Community College has been finalized. You can also send a letter or e-mail expressing your interest, and/or a resume to Robert Rak of Bristol Community College at Robert.Rak@bristolcc.edu, or Drinking Water Program at program.director-dwp@mass.gov Subject: Interested in Bristol Community College Basic Drinking Water [Distribution/Treatment] Class.

Minimum qualifications include, but are not limited to, an interest in a drinking water career, a high school diploma or GED (or close to completing), and 17 years or older. Interest emails from potential students will be reviewed and accepted in the order which they are received until all class spots are filled. There are approximately 25-30 available spots in each class. Registration and sign-up instructions will be sent after evaluating all inquiries.

4. Staying Cyber-Safe: Cybersecurity Awareness for Transient Non-Community (TNC) Public Water Systems

Even small public water systems can be targets of cyberattacks. Cyber incidents can cause more than just inconvenience — they can lead to service interruptions, data loss, or safety concerns. Taking simple steps to improve cybersecurity can make a big difference.

Five Practical Steps to Strengthen Cybersecurity

1. Use Strong Passwords and Multi-Factor Authentication

Use long, unique passwords (at least 12 characters) for any system that connects to your water operations or data reporting tools. Enable multi-factor authentication (MFA) whenever possible — this adds an extra layer of protection even if your password is compromised. Avoid sharing passwords among staff.

2. Keep Software and Equipment Updated

Outdated software and control equipment are common targets for attackers. Regularly update your computers, routers, and control software (including SCADA or remote access programs). If your system uses vendor-supplied equipment, check with the vendor for updates or security patches.

3. Limit Remote Access

Only allow remote access when it's absolutely necessary — and restrict it to trusted personnel. If you must have remote access, make sure to enable MFA and ensure it uses secure connections such as VPNs. Disable default usernames and change passwords immediately after setup.

4. Back Up Important Data

Maintain regular backups of your operational data and store at least one copy offline or in a secure, separate location. Backups can help your system recover quickly in the event of a cyberattack, power outage, or ransomware event.

5. Build a Culture of Awareness

Train all staff — even part-time or seasonal operators — to recognize phishing emails, suspicious links, and social engineering scams. Remind them never to share login information or plug unknown devices into computers used for water system operations.

Resources

- EPA Cybersecurity for Water and Wastewater Systems: <https://www.epa.gov/cyberwater/epa-cybersecurity-water-sector>
- MassDEP Drinking Water Program: For cybersecurity updates, alerts and up to date grant opportunities please visit [Cybersecurity Resource Hub for MA Public Water Systems \(PWS\)](#)
- For technical assistance or questions related to system security and resiliency, contact your regional Drinking Water Program office.

You don't need to be an IT expert to protect your system. Small, consistent actions, such as keeping software updated and using strong passwords can go a long way in preventing costly cyber incidents. Protecting your system means protecting your customers, your business, and your community.

5. LCR, LCRR, and LCRI Updates

What is considered a GRR Service Line?

A GRR service line is a service line where the private or downstream portion of the service line is a galvanized material, and the public or upstream portion of the service line:

- Is lead (This is classified as a Lead service line in the SLI, but the private portion is also GRR)
- Was lead, and the lead portion was replaced,
- Is unknown if it was ever lead,
- Is currently unknown, and therefore it may be lead.

See the figure below for a visual of these 4 GRR scenarios. This figure is included in the [MassDEP LCRR Service Line Identification Guidance](#) (page 13).

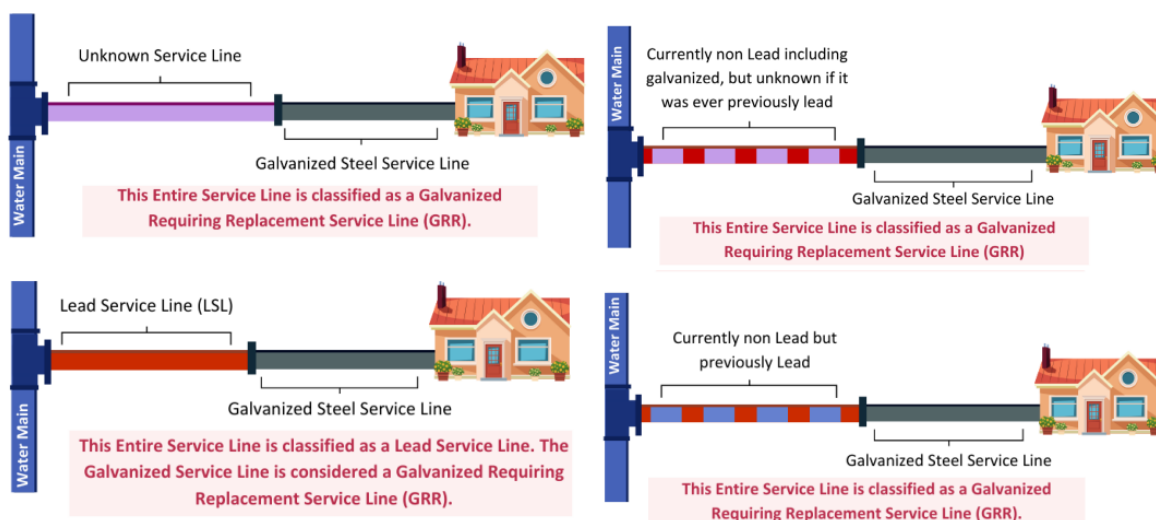


FIGURE 18 - GALVANIZED REQUIRING REPLACEMENT (GRR) SERVICE LINE ARRAYS

A GRR service line is only defined based on the private/downstream portion being galvanized, and the public/upstream portion meeting one of the above criteria. **Whether the connector is or was lead or is unknown does not classify a service line as GRR.**

Regarding Public/Upstream Galvanized Portions: As the main purpose of this definition is the impact of a lead service line upstream of a galvanized service line, if the public/upstream portion of a service line is galvanized, the service line cannot be classified as GRR based on a public/upstream galvanized portion alone, as there would be no lead service line upstream of that galvanized portion which is already upstream.

What is “Enough” to Determine a Galvanized Service Line is Not GRR?

To determine that a galvanized service line is not GRR, the PWS must be able to show that a service line, based on the information available, was never downstream of an LSL.

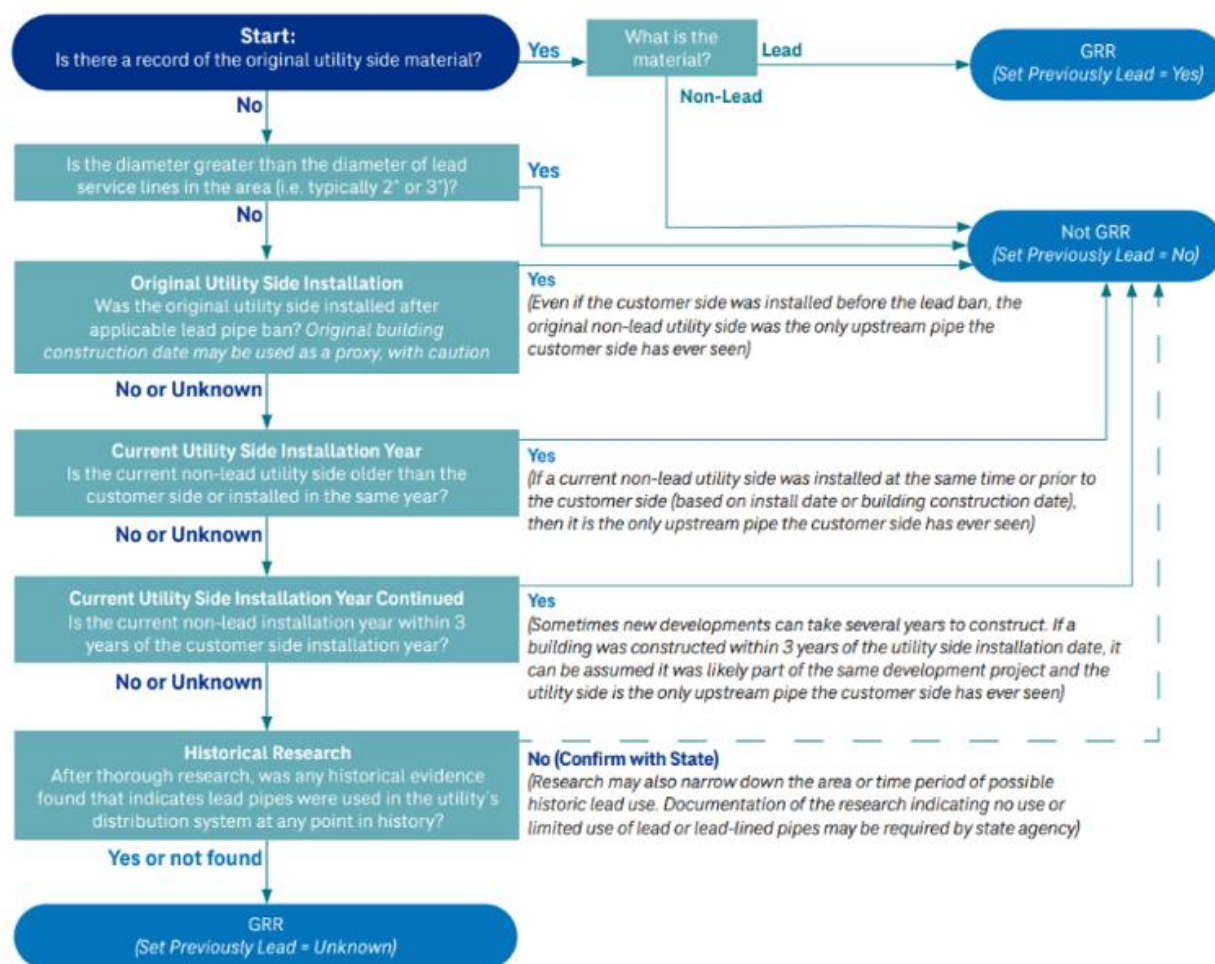
If a PWS can show that there never were LSLs in all or portions of the distribution system, then the galvanized service lines in all or those portions of the distribution system may be classified as non-lead service lines with MassDEP approval. Evidence that could be provided would be information such as

using (either alone or in tandem dependent on the PWS): operator/institutional knowledge, statistical analysis or predictive modeling, records of local laws/regulations/material standards where no lead was allowed or a non-lead material was required to be used for service line installation, and so on.

If your PWS may have information to reclassify some or all GRR service lines to Non-Lead and you're unsure whether this is sufficient, please provide this information to MassDEP for review. All information which is classifying multiple service lines as GRR (*i.e.*, it is not a 1 to 1 record for the service line) must be provided to MassDEP for review to approve the use of this method.

PWS can also use the decision tree provided in Appendix B (page 43) of the [AWWA Validating Non-Lead Service-Lines: A Practical Framework](#) as a guide to determining if a service line with a private/downstream galvanized portion may be classified as Non-Lead. Ensure that the options within this tree match your PWS's typical approach when applicable, and note that use of the Historical Research section, described as Evidence above, requires MassDEP approval.

GRR Decision Tree from AWWA Framework:



Service Line Inventory (SLI) Updated Summary Spreadsheet

The SLI Updated Summary Spreadsheet has been posted and is available here: [Service Line Inventory Summary Data-July 2026](#). This Summary Sheet contains the most up to date inventory totals MassDEP has for each MA PWS. As of 07/24/2026, MassDEP has received 210 updated SLIs which have completed SLI reviews since the last posting of this SLI Summary Sheet in March 2025. MA PWS have reduced the

total number of Lead Service Lines by 1,090 (3.80%) and Lead Status Unknown service lines by 40,085 (11.19%). See the full comparison of service line totals included in the table below.

Service Line Category	March 2025 Service Line Totals	July 2026 Service Line Totals
Lead Service Lines	28,709	27,619
Galvanized Requiring Replacement (GRR) Service Lines	11,421	13,299
Lead Status Unknown Service Lines	358,372	318,287
Non-Lead Service Lines	1,466,884	1,506,615
Total Service Lines	1,865,386	1,865,820

6. Water-Smart

Water-Smart Program Update

The Water-Smart program continues offering free analysis of lead drinking water samples and technical assistance to eligible public and private schools and early education and childcare facilities (EECFs). Currently, 1,360 schools and EECFs are participating in the program and 1,184 (87%) of participating facilities are within economically disadvantaged communities. To date, 1,256 schools and EECFs have completed testing. Of facilities that have tested and received results, 831 (66%) had one or more lead detections.

Do you know of any schools or childcare facilities that could benefit from the Water-Smart Program? Please identify and encourage schools and childcares within your service area to participate in the program. Eligible facilities may apply for assistance at: [Water-Smart Program Website](#).

Get Ahead with Lead Testing: Join the Water-Smart Pilot Program for Public Water Systems

MassDEP continues inviting all Community PWS to the *Water-Smart Pilot Program for PWS* – a forward-thinking initiative designed to help water systems stay ahead of upcoming federal regulations.

Participating in the Pilot Program allows PWS to get ahead on their November 1, 2027, [LCRI Testing Offering Requirements](#) by leveraging the pre-existing Water-Smart Program. The Pilot Program:

- Offers valuable free lead testing to schools and childcare centers now,
- Fulfills future federal requirements early,
- Build community trust, and
- Access expert technical support at no cost.

Don't wait for 2027—Be Proactive, get ahead today. For more information or to join the pilot program visit [Water-Smart \(Lead in School Drinking Water\) Pilot Program for Public Water Suppliers](#)

[Mass.gov](#), or email Program.Director-DWP@mass.gov with the subject line: “Pilot Program for PWS.”

7. Drinking Water Trivia!

Tickle your brain and test your knowledge on drinking water related information. In each issue, we will ask 1-3 questions and provide the answers somewhere else in the newsletter to encourage your sleuthing skills.

How can wildfire smoke affect drinking water quality?

- A. Transport toxins from fires to source water
- B. Remove oxygen from water
- C. Degrade water solubility
- D. Decrease water’s hydration capabilities

Note regarding the previous issue’s trivia question: John J. Carroll Water Treatment Plant is both the state of Massachusetts and the Massachusetts Water Resource Authority’s largest treatment plant. The William A. Brusch Water Treatment Facility is the MWRA’s second largest facility, but not the states. For example, the City of New Bedford’s Quittacas Water Treatment Plant has the capability of treating 45 million gallons per day.

Check out the other articles while looking for the answer. If you would like to send in a Trivia question or two, please email the question and answer to program.director-dwp@mass.gov, Subject DWP Trivia.

8. Training Calendar

When you need training, please look at the [MassDEP Training Calendar for Public Water System Operators](#) or refer to the resources on the webpage [Drinking Water Training](#).

Board of Certification Training Page and List of Approved Courses

You may also want to go to the [Board of Certification of Operators of Drinking Water Supply Facilities Operators Training Webpage](#) and view the approved education courses to sit for examination.

Some Newly Added Trainings on the Calendar

The Modern Leak Detection Ecosystem

Thursday, July 30, 2026; 1:00 – 2:00 pm ET; webinar

Learn how utilities can move beyond siloed, reactive solutions to implement a holistic and proactive approach to leak detection. Our expert panel will explore how traditional methods and advanced technologies like AI come together to drive measurable reductions in system-wide water loss. Our expert panelists will review the full lifecycle of leak detection, highlighting both the latest innovations and traditional practices at each stage. You’ll learn how each tool fits into an integrated strategy and how leading utilities are combining these technologies to proactively reduce real water loss and optimize system performance. Whether you’re launching a new leak detection program or looking to optimize a mature one, this session will deliver practical, actionable insights to strengthen your leak detection

capabilities and drive measurable, sustained reductions in real water loss. [Register for the webinar: The Modern Leak Detection Ecosystem](#)

Performance Guarantees in Collaborative Delivery: Managing Risk and Results

Wednesday, August 5, 2026; 1:00 – 2:00 pm ET; webinar

Defining and demonstrating project performance is an important component of quantifying collaborative project delivery success. This presentation will cover key recommendations for consideration in the development of project performance requirements and guarantees throughout the project process. Explore methods for quantifying and measuring performance, identify situations in which performance guarantees are appropriate, and examine the contractual mechanisms and limitations that influence how those guarantees are applied. Attendees will discover what options are available when performance requirements are not met, ensuring organizations understand the pathways for resolution and accountability. \$75-member, \$120-nonmember [Register for the webinar: Performance Guarantees in Collaborative Delivery: Managing Risk and Results](#)

EFCN Webinar: Connecting with Your Community: Bridging the Gap Between Operations and Communication

Thursday, August 6, 2026; 1:00 – 2:00 pm ET; webinar

Communication with community members can be challenging due to staff and time constraints and lack of resources; however, you can engage with your community about your utility in easy, efficient ways. Existing resources, basic understanding of communication techniques, and a little planning can strengthen your communication strategies. This session will build on the basis that an informed community will support the efforts of the utility to continue to provide the necessary service of clean, safe drinking water. [Register for the webinar: Connecting with Your Community: Bridging the Gap Between Operations and Communication](#)

9. Cybersecurity, Emergency Preparedness, and You!

For information and alerts see [Cybersecurity Resource Hub for MA Public Water Systems \(PWS\)](#)



Biweekly Spotlight

Updated Advisory - Stay Vigilant for Potential Targeted Cyber Activity Against U.S. Critical Infrastructure by Iranian-Affiliated Cyber Actors.

- This advisory was originally published on April 7, 2026, warning that Iranian-affiliated cyber actors are actively targeting internet-connected operational technology (OT) devices, including programmable logic controllers (PLCs). These actions disrupted PLCs across several U.S. critical infrastructure sectors through malicious project file interactions and manipulation of data on human machine interface (HMI) and supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) displays, resulting in operational disruption and financial loss.
- This update adds **new guidance on detecting malicious changes in reusable code modules exploited within Rockwell Automation PLC programs**. It also expands scope to include observed targeting of Schneider Electric, Siemens, and potentially other branded/manufactured

PLCs, emphasizing the importance of restricting direct internet access and providing best practices for secure deployment.

Key Actions

- Install PLCs consistent with manufacturers' guidelines and security best practices.
- Query available logs for the provided indicators of compromise (IOCs) and check available logs for suspicious traffic on the ports associated with OT devices, including 44818, 2222, 102, and 502, especially traffic originating from foreign hosting providers.
- For Rockwell Automation devices, place the physical mode switch on the controller into run position. If you suspect your organization was targeted, including against other branded PLC devices, contact the authoring agencies and PLC manufacturers for guidance.
- For a downloadable copy of July 22, 2026, IOCs, see:
[AA26-097A STIX XML](#) (July 2026) (29 KB)
[AA26-097A STIX JSON](#) (July 2026) (30 KB)
- For a downloadable copy of historical April 7, 2026, IOCs, see:
[AA26-097A STIX XML](#) (36 KB)
[AA26-097A STIX JSON](#) (12 KB)
- **Review/Download the advisory here** [Iranian-Affiliated Cyber Actors Exploit Programmable Logic Controllers Across US Critical Infrastructure | CISA](#)

Resources

- Free EPA **Cybersecurity assessment**/evaluation program: [EPA's Water Sector Cybersecurity Evaluation Program | US EPA](#)
- MassDEP DWP **Self-Paced Course on Basic Cybersecurity** Measures for Water and Wastewater Systems in Massachusetts (1 TCH). Enroll Here for Free: [Basic Cybersecurity Measures for Water and Wastewater Systems in Massachusetts](#)
- **Grants and Fundings:** The Drinking Water State Revolving Fund, in partnership with the MassDEP DWP, is offering grant funds of up to \$50,000 to small and disadvantaged community PWS. The goal of this grant is to support PWSs in improving their cybersecurity defense, mitigating the risks of cyber-attacks, and enhancing overall resiliency and compliance. Details: [Public Water Suppliers Cybersecurity Improvements Grant Program | Mass.gov](#).

10. Supply Chain Reminders

Several PWS have reported recent supply chain issues with fluoride. If your PWS experiences any supply chain issues, including the receipt of a Force Majeure letter from a chemical supplier, the MassDEP/DWP encourages you to report all supply chain issues to your MassDEP regional office Drinking Water Program contact and take the following steps:

- Review your PWS Emergency Response Plans (ERP) required by 310 CMR 22.04(13) and take planned actions identified for such an emergency. This should include any applicable work and conservation practices to extend the currently available supply.
- Implement the steps identified by DWP using the [Steps to Prepare Your PWS For Supply Chain Disruptions Flyer](#) and keep MassDEP/DWP informed of all Supply Chain issues.
- Check/Use [EPA Chemical Supplier and Manufacturer Locator Tool](#) : This tool allows water and wastewater utilities to search for suppliers and manufacturers across the U.S. that may be able to fulfill their chemical supply needs and increase resilience to supply chain disruptions. This tool can also be useful for finding alternative chemical suppliers in the case of supply chain shortages.
- Join [MaWARN](#).

11. How To Subscribe to the In The Main Newsletter

[Subscribe to the *In The Main* Newsletter here!](#)

MassDEP is sending this important drinking water information to all PWS responsible persons who are listed in the state database. If you are no longer the correct responsible person for the PWS please reply with the correct contact information. MassDEP needs one responsible contact person from each PWS. Operators, consultants, and others who are interested in Drinking Water Program updates are encouraged to request to be subscribed to this email list. To subscribe to the *In The Main Newsletter*, subscribe by completing the quick [ITM Newsletter Sign-Up Form](#). This MassDEP Program Director technical assistance email is funded by the Safe Drinking Water Act Assessment (Section 70) Program. The Assessment is paid by all consumers of public water in Massachusetts and is collected by public water systems. For more information about the Assessment Program, visit to the [Safe Drinking Water Act Assessment Advisory Committee \("Section 70" Committee\) Homepage](#).

12. Drinking Water Trivia! Answer

Answer: A.

Smoke contains gas and particles that can transport toxins away from the fires and settle into source water. This can affect water turbidity and create changes in water appearance, clarity, color or taste.