



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

## In the Main Newsletter – 08/11/2026

**Address:** 100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900, Boston, MA 02114

**Phone:** 617-292-5770 | **Email:** [Program.Director-DWP@mass.gov](mailto:Program.Director-DWP@mass.gov)

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.



*Wingaersheek Beach, Gloucester, Photo by: [Gabrielm199](#)*

|                                                                                                                                       |          |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| <b>1. Important Cybersecurity Alert .....</b>                                                                                         | <b>2</b> |
| <b>2. Operator Training Opportunity in Fall 2026 - Bristol Community College Basic Treatment and Basic Distribution Courses .....</b> | <b>2</b> |
| <b>3. AWIA Round 2 Compliance for PWS Serving 3,301-50,000 .....</b>                                                                  | <b>3</b> |
| <b>4. Drought Conditions Improve Across Massachusetts .....</b>                                                                       | <b>4</b> |
| <b>5. Small System Big Responsibility: Why TNC Public Water Systems Matter .....</b>                                                  | <b>6</b> |
| <b>6. Water Smart .....</b>                                                                                                           | <b>7</b> |
| <b>7. Drinking Water Trivia! .....</b>                                                                                                | <b>7</b> |
| <b>8. Training Calendar .....</b>                                                                                                     | <b>8</b> |
| <b>9. Cybersecurity, Emergency Preparedness, and You!.....</b>                                                                        | <b>9</b> |



Are you looking for past issues or topics in our *In the Main* newsletter?

Use the search function in the Statehouse Archives Website.

10. Supply Chain Reminders ..... 10

11. How To Subscribe to the In The Main Newsletter ..... 11

12. Drinking Water Trivia! Answer ..... 11

1. Important Cybersecurity Alert

 Cybersecurity in the News Actions for Water and Wastewater Operations Staff, IT / OT Support and Integrators

The recent spate of water and wastewater cybersecurity breaches across the country highlights the need to review your systems and possibly make changes to reduce your risk.

Please read Item 10 in this issue for more information on the subject.

2. Operator Training Opportunity in Fall 2026 - Bristol Community College Basic Treatment and Basic Distribution Courses

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](mailto:Robert.Rak@bristolcc.edu), or Drinking Water Program at [program.director-dwp@mass.gov](mailto: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.

## 3. AWIA Round 2 Compliance for PWS Serving 3,301-50,000

The final deadline for AWIA Round 2 Compliance is at the end of the calendar year. Thank you to the Community PWS that have complied with AWIA's RRA and ERP certifications thus far!

Community PWS serving a population between 3,301 and 50,000 are required to certify to EPA updates to their Emergency Response Plans (ERPs) by **December 31, 2026**. These Community PWS are also required to submit an updated ERP Compliance Checklist to MassDEP/DWP.

### How do I certify my ERP to EPA?

PWS can certify updates to their ERP by filling out the ERP Certification Statement and uploading the signed document using one of three methods:

1. Electronic submission
2. Email
3. Regular mail

EPA strongly recommends submitting ERP Certification Statements via electronic submission. Guidance for submitting your ERP and downloading the Certification Statement documents can be found at [the EPA: How to Certify Your Risk and Resilience Assessment or Emergency Response Plan Webpage](#). **Do not submit your updated ERP to EPA or to MassDEP as those documents may contain sensitive information about your system.**

## How do I submit ERP Compliance Checklists to MassDEP/DWP?

DWP requires PWS to submit an ERP Compliance Checklist whenever there are substantive changes to a PWS's ERP. PWS should submit an updated ERP Compliance Checklist once they have made updates to their ERP. PWS can submit their updated checklists to the Program Director at [program.director-dwp@mass.gov](mailto:program.director-dwp@mass.gov), Subject: ERP Compliance Checklist for AWIA Round 2. **Reminder: PWS should NOT submit their full ERP documents to DWP as those documents contain sensitive information about their system.**

## Where to get EPA's Guidance for Completing and Submitting Your ERP

A comprehensive list of requirements, resources, FAQs, fact sheets, training recordings, and guidance for updating your ERP can be found at [EPA's AWIA Section 2013 webpage](#). You can review the status of your RRA/ERP Certification with EPA at [Safe Drinking Water Act \(SDWA\) Section 1433 Public Certification Data](#). EPA's Guidance for submitting your ERP certification and downloading the necessary [Certification Statement documents](#). For EPA assistance regarding ERP certification, please contact EPA's Drinking Water Resilience hotline at [dwresilience@epa.gov](mailto:dwresilience@epa.gov).

## EPA Reminder Letters

On July 17, 2027, EPA sent the following letters to Community PWS regarding their RRA and ERP certification deadlines.

1. To Community PWS serving between 3,301-50,000 who did **not** certify updates to their RRA by the deadline of June 30, 2026, reminding them to submit their RRA certification AND to submit their ERP certification by the deadline of December 31, 2026.
2. To Community PWS serving between 3,301-50,000 who certified updates to their RRA by the deadline of June 30, 2026, reminding them of the ERP certification deadline of December 31, 2026.

## Where can I find more information about this topic?

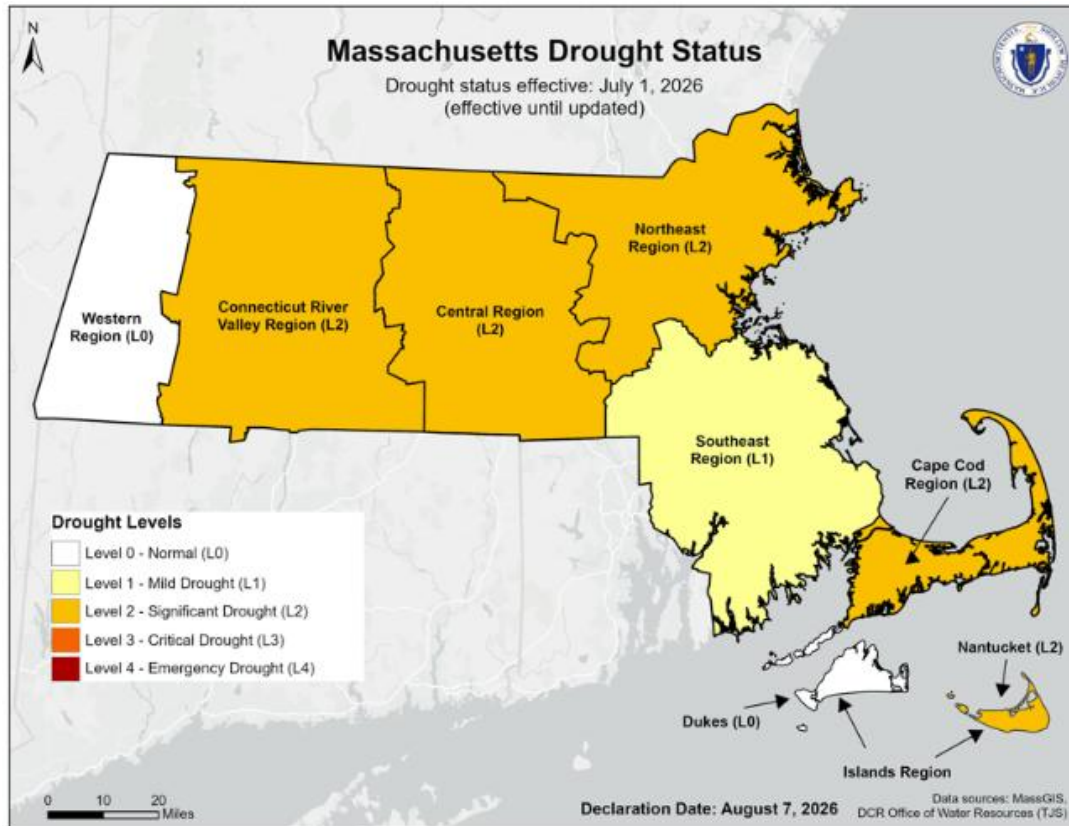
Use the following resources to learn more about RRAs, ERPs, AWIA, and more.

- [MassDEP Guidelines for Public Water Systems, Chapter 12 – Emergency Response Planning Requirements](#)
- [MassDEP Guidelines for Public Water Systems, Appendix O – Handbook for Water Supply Emergencies](#)
- Previous [MassDEP In the Main newsletters](#)
- [EPA Drinking Water and Wastewater Resilience Webpage](#)
- [EPA Water Resilience - AWIA Section 2013 Webpage](#)
- [EPA How to Certify Your RRA or ERP Webpage](#)

## 4. Drought Conditions Improve Across Massachusetts

On August 7, 2026, the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) declared the Western Region and Dukes County (part of the Islands Region) have returned to normal conditions after above-average rainfall in July. The Southeast Region improved to a Level 1 – Mild Drought. The Northeast Region also improved to a Level 2 – Significant Drought. All other regions remain at Level 2 – Significant Drought as announced on July 9, 2026. The above-average rainfall in July was a welcome relief across the state,

but it will take much more precipitation to recover from two years of dry conditions. The most recent drought declaration can be read on the [Massachusetts Drought Status webpage](#).



Drought declarations require detailed monitoring of drought conditions; continued coordination among state and federal agencies to advance the implementation of water use restrictions; and engagement with municipalities, including local Boards of Health, to provide technical outreach and assistance to water suppliers and affected municipalities.

Below is a list of resources for communities to use related to drought outreach and education, water conservation, and drought status monitoring.

- The [Massachusetts Drought Dashboard](#) provides regularly updated maps monitoring drought conditions across the state.
- The [Drought Alert Flyer](#) provides information about current drought conditions and how communities across the state can help promote water conservation, fire prevention, and drought preparedness.
- The [Drought Management in Massachusetts webpage](#) includes several recommendations for residents, businesses, and communities during each level of drought (Level 1, Level 2, Level 3, and Level 4) related to water conservation and fire prevention.
- The [Water Resources Toolkit](#) offers many examples of outreach materials for communities to use related to droughts.
- Utilities are encouraged to develop a [Drought Management Plan](#) to identify preparedness, monitoring, response, and outreach procedures related to droughts.
- Information for private well owners can be found at the webpage [Information for Private Well Owners During a Drought](#)

- [Previous issues of In the Main](#) include additional resources related to drought preparedness and response resources.

## 5. Small System Big Responsibility: Why TNC Public Water Systems Matter

When people think of a public water system, they may picture a large municipal utility supplying drinking water to thousands of homes and businesses. But public water systems come in many sizes. Some serve communities year-round, while others provide drinking water to people for only a few hours, days, or months at a time.

Transient Non-Community (TNC) public water systems are an important part of this drinking water network. These systems serve at least 25 people per day for at least 60 days of the year but generally do not serve the same people on a regular basis. TNC systems can be found at places such as restaurants, campgrounds, recreational facilities, gas stations, and other businesses or establishments that operate their own water supply.

Although a TNC system may serve fewer people than a large municipal system, the water it provides still has an important impact on public health. Visitors and customers often have no way of knowing where a facility's drinking water comes from or whether there is a potential water quality problem. They rely on the water provided for drinking, preparing food, washing hands, and other everyday uses.

### Protecting Water at the Source

Many TNC systems rely on wells. Groundwater can provide high-quality drinking water, but wells can also be vulnerable to contamination if they are not properly located, constructed, maintained, and protected.

Potential sources of contamination can include septic systems, fertilizers, fuel and chemical storage, animal waste, flooding, and activities occurring near the well. Regular monitoring and proper maintenance can help identify problems before they pose a greater risk to the people using the water. MassDEP's [Wellhead Protection Tips for Small PWS](#) can provide a further information about protecting wells from contamination.

### Monitoring Makes a Difference

Routine drinking water sampling is one of the most important responsibilities of a TNC public water system. Testing helps confirm that the water meets applicable drinking water standards and can provide an early warning when conditions change.

An issue with a well may not always be obvious. Water can look, smell, and taste normal while still containing contaminants. Required monitoring provides information that system owners, operators, and regulators can use to identify potential concerns and determine whether additional action is needed.

## Every Drop Counts

A person may only visit a TNC system once, stopping for a meal, spending a weekend at a campground, or visiting a recreational facility but they should still be able to expect that the drinking water provided to them is safe.

That is why even relatively small public water systems have an important responsibility. Proper operation, regular monitoring, good recordkeeping, and protecting the water source all contribute to the same goal shared by every public water system: providing safe and reliable drinking water to the public.

Small systems may serve people for only a short time, but the role they play in protecting public health is significant.

## 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, 1,365 schools and EECFs are participating in the program and 1,191 (87%) of participating facilities are within economically disadvantaged communities. To date, 1,289 schools and EECFs have completed testing. Of facilities that have tested and received results, 842 (65%) 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](mailto: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 does high humidity affect the body?

- A. You don't need to consume as much water
- B. Your body sweats less
- C. The moisture makes it easier to regulate your core temperature
- D. You don't feel thirsty despite your body losing water

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](mailto: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

#### Exploring the Latest Issues in Potable Reuse

Wednesday, August 12, 2026; 1:00 – 2:30 pm ET; webinar

Stay ahead of emerging trends in potable water reuse with this focused webinar featuring key insights from the Potable Water Reuse Report, a quarterly publication covering the latest developments in the field. Explore updates in direct potable reuse regulations, pathogen crediting, onsite reuse considerations, and other issues shaping utility and engineering decisions. This webinar is designed for professionals seeking a clear, current understanding of the issues driving potable reuse today and how they may impact future planning and decision-making. \$75-member, \$120-nonmember [Register for the webinar: Exploring the Latest Issues in Potable Reuse](#)

#### EFCN Webinar: Preparing for a Federal Grant – A Small Community Case Study

Tuesday, August 18, 2026; 1:00 – 2:00 pm ET; webinar

Large federal grants can be transformative, but small communities often have limited staff and resources to manage complex funding opportunities. This webinar will highlight how one small community is preparing for a major federal grant project by building partnerships, leveraging technical assistance, and coordinating with key stakeholders. Through this case study, participants will gain practical strategies to strengthen local capacity, prepare for project implementation, and position their communities for long-term success. [Register for the webinar: Preparing for a Federal Grant – A Small Community Case Study](#)

#### Connecting Water Conservation and Resource Management for Stronger Utilities

Wednesday, August 19, 2026; 1:00 – 2:30 pm ET; webinar

Modeled after two successful Arizona Water Chapter workshops hosted in Arizona, this webinar provides an opportunity for professionals focused on either water resource management or conservation and demand management. The event will examine shared touchpoints and clarify what each discipline needs to work effectively together. Attendees will learn how utility-level water conservation programs interface with broader water resource management objectives, while addressing common misalignments between these areas. Participants will analyze structural disconnects, examine integration points across planning horizons, and gain methodologies and collaborative practices that strengthen institutional capacity to support long-term water sustainability. \$75-member, \$120-nonmember [Register for the webinar: Connecting Water Conservation and Resource Management for Stronger Utilities](#)

## 9. Cybersecurity, Emergency Preparedness, and You!

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



### Biweekly Spotlight

#### Important Cyber Alert!!

#### **Cybersecurity in the News Actions for Water and Wastewater Operations Staff, IT / OT Support and Integrators**

The recent spate of water and wastewater cybersecurity breaches across the country highlights the need to review your systems and possibly make changes to reduce your risk. Share this information with your technical staff (IT / OT Support, and Integrators).

**If you use cellular modems and they are directly connected to PLCs (Programmable Logic Controller) or a SCADA HMI, do the following:**

#### **Immediate Actions**

1. Make sure the PLC or HMI has a long random password
2. If the PLC has a RUN / REMOTE option, keep it in the RUN position using the physical switch or the LCD keypad

#### **Near Term Actions**

3. Consider moving your cellular modem service to a telecommunication vendor's private cellular network
4. Use a firewall, VPN or other approach to isolate your SCADA devices from the Internet

#### **All Water and Wastewater Systems**

#### **Near Term Actions**

5. Make sure your inventory of OT and IT devices and software is current
6. Make a sketch of how the devices and software communicate with each other and where they interact with remote access and the outside world
7. Document how you would manually run your system if you lost both your PLCs and SCADA HMI

### Additional Guidance on This Alert:

- Owners, operators, and integrators of Rockwell Automation MicroLogix 1400 PLCs should see Rockwell Automation's [IMPORTANT NOTICE: Restoring Access to a MicroLogix™ 1400 Controller When the Password Is Unknown](#) for guidance addressing this activity.
- Review [Secure connectivity principles for Operational Technology \(OT\)](#) and make sure your team is putting best practices into place.
- FBI [Public Service Announcement \(PSA\)- Malicious Cyber Actors Targeting Water and Wastewater Sector Internet- Facing Programmable Logic Controllers, Causing Operational Disruptions](#)
- CISA Alert- [CISA Urges Water and Wastewater Systems Sector to Protect OT Against Activity Targeting PLCs](#)

### 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](#).
- To report a cyber incident, contact CISA's 24/7 Operations Center ([contact@cisa.dhs.gov](mailto:contact@cisa.dhs.gov)), or call 1-844-Say-CISA (1-844-729-2472). Please see [Reporting a Cyber Incident](#) for more details or contact [FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center \(IC3\)](#) or your [local FBI field office](#).

## 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 on 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: D

High humidity stops sweat from evaporating and traps body heat, so you continue to lose fluid trying to regulate your core temperature. Your body sweats faster than it can signal thirst, accelerating dehydration.