



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

In the Main Newsletter – 09/22/2026

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

Phone: 617-292-5770 | **Email:** 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.



Alford Street Bridge, between Charlestown and Everett, photo by [4300streetcar](#)

This In the Main Newsletter has these topics of interest:

1. Drought Conditions Improve in Massachusetts	2
2. AWIA Round 2 Deadline – Three Months Away.....	3
3. Upcoming Free Webinars with MassDEP and UMass Amherst	4
4. Water Smart	4
5. Drinking Water Trivia!	6
6. Training Calendar	6
7. Cybersecurity, Emergency Preparedness, and You!.....	9
8. Supply Chain Reminders	11
9. How To Subscribe to the In The Main Newsletter	11

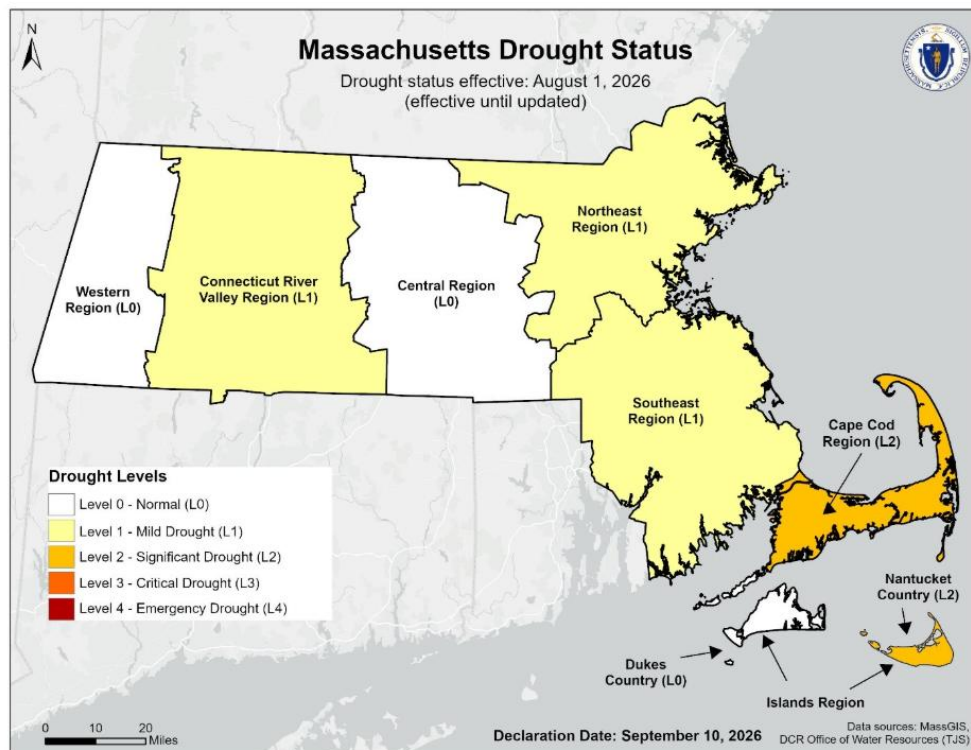


Are you looking for past issues or topics in our *In the Main* newsletter?

Use the search function in the Statehouse Archives Website.

1. Drought Conditions Improve in Massachusetts

On Thursday, September 10, 2026, the Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) office declared that drought conditions in the Central Region have returned to normal conditions. The Connecticut River Valley and Northeast Regions have improved to a Level 1 – Mild Drought. The Western Region and Dukes County remain at normal conditions. The Cape Cod Region and Nantucket County remain at a Level 2 – Significant Drought, and the Southeast Region remains at a Level 1 – Mild Drought. 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.
- MassDEP Drinking Water Program created a flyer about [Water Distribution System Flushing During Droughts](#) that water systems can share with their residents.

2. AWIA Round 2 Deadline – Three Months Away

The final deadline for AWIA Round 2 Compliance is at the end of the calendar year – just over three months away! 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, 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.

Upcoming EPA Webinars about ERP

EPA is hosting several webinars to help water systems update their ERPs.

- Wednesday, September 30: Using Local Mutual Aid Networks in Your ERP
- Wednesday, October 14: Natural Hazard Technical Assistance for Updating Your ERP
- Tuesday, November 17: Emergency Drinking Water Supply Planning

To learn more about each webinar and register, see the "Training Calendar" section of this newsletter.

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](#)

3. Upcoming Free Webinars with MassDEP and UMass Amherst

MassDEP, in partnership with UMass Amherst, is providing several free webinars for public water system operators and personnel. Upcoming webinars include the following:

- Preparing for UCMR6: An Overview for Public Water Systems
- [MassDEP Water-Smart Pilot Program for PWS: Preparing for the LCRI with Schools/Childcare Facilities](#)
- Supply Chain Chemical Cooperatives (Eastern MA Chemical Cooperative)
- 1/2-Day Water Operations Overview for VSS/D1/T1 Certified Drinking Water Operators

To learn more about each webinar and register, see the "Training Calendar" section of this newsletter.

4. 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, 1,387 schools and EECFs are participating in the program and 1,209 (87%) of participating

facilities are within economically disadvantaged communities. To date, 1,280 schools and EECFs have completed testing. Of facilities that have tested and received results, 853 (67%) 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](#).

Upcoming Training: Water-Smart Pilot Program for PWS

An informational webinar will be held Wednesday, September 23rd from 11:00 AM-12:00 PM to provide Community Public Water Systems (PWS) with an overview of the Lead and Copper Rule Improvements (LCRI) requirements related to schools and childcare facilities.

The session will cover key LCRI requirements for PWS, including the upcoming requirement to offer lead testing to eligible primary schools and childcare facilities beginning November 1, 2027. Attendees will also learn about the Water-Smart Pilot Program for PWS which provides an opportunity to get ahead of these requirements through the existing Water-Smart program. Free lead testing, outreach materials, sampling plans, and technical support from MassDEP and UMass Amherst are available through the Pilot Program. Participants will also be eligible for 1 TCH.

[Click here to register for the webinar](#)

Fall Seminar Planning

We are currently planning our Fall Water-Smart Seminar! The purpose of this seminar is to raise awareness about the Water-Smart Program and the free services available to schools and licensed childcare facilities. Like our previous seminars, we plan to host the event at a public location, such as a town library, school, or community center. We are currently planning to hold the seminar in early November in Fall River.

If you are a licensed childcare provider or school in or near the Fall River area and would be interested in supporting this event, we would love to hear from you. We are also looking to partner with local organizations that work with schools or licensed childcare facilities to help promote the seminar.

If you know of an organization that may be interested in partnering with the Water-Smart Program, please feel free to share our information or put us in contact at program.director-dwp@mass.gov.

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.”

5. 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.

What is the maximum amount of bottled water the TSA allows in carry-on luggage?

- A. 2.5 ounces
- B. 3.4 ounces
- C. 12 ounces
- D. 1 liter

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.

6. 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

RI | Capital Improvement Plan Workshop

Wednesday, September 23, 2026 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. EDT; webinar

This training will introduce utility workers to the different components of a CIP, and provide practice in developing those sections. The SWEFC training includes activities for utility workers to practice practical skills used to evaluate their system assets, prioritize asset improvement activities and begin crafting a CIP around those assets, and demonstrations of the tools the SWEFC utilizes. Creating a useful CIP takes effort on the part of the system, but the result is increased resource efficiency and a road-map for the future. [Please Register for the webinar: RI | Capital Improvement Plan Workshop](#)

Integrating Asset Management into Master Planning

Wednesday, September 23, 2026 1:00 – 2:30 p.m. EDT; webinar

Asset management and master planning are often developed in parallel, but when fully integrated, they can create a more strategic and cost-effective framework for utilities. This webinar explores how utilities

are aligning planning and asset strategies to better prioritize investments, optimize limited resources, and support long-term decision-making. Through real-world utility examples, presenters share practical approaches for integration. \$75-member, \$120-nonmember [Please register for the webinar: Integrating Asset Management into Master Planning](#)

Effective Utility Management for Wastewater Systems

Thursday, October 1, 2026 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. EDT; webinar

Effective Utility Management (EUM) for Water and Wastewater Systems is a nationally recognized framework that optimizes utility operations, governance, and financial sustainability. Wastewater systems often lack the structured planning needed to prevent public health risks, compliance violations, and severe budget shortfalls. Mastering EUM principles empowers operators and managers to build practical strategic plans, prioritize resources, and demonstrate continuous improvement to state regulators. Presenter: Greg Pearson, Water/WW Systems Trainer, Great Lakes Environmental Infrastructure Center. [Please Register for the webinar: Effective Utility Management for Wastewater Systems](#)

MassDEP Drinking Water Program and UMass Amherst: Preparing for UCMR6: An Overview for Public Water Systems

Wednesday, September 30, 2026 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. EDT; Webinar

MassDEP Drinking Water Program and UMass Amherst are hosting an important **free** training related to the Emerging Contaminants in Small or Disadvantaged Communities (EC-SDC) Grant. This webinar will provide a comprehensive overview of EPA's newly proposed Sixth Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR 6), including the drinking water regulatory landscape, the 30 contaminants of concern, and required sampling and analytical methods. Attendees will gain an understanding of the proposed monitoring timeline and key compliance obligations, to help public water systems and other water professionals prepare ahead of the rule's required compliance. This webinar will also go over available technical support and a brief summary of the Emerging Contaminants in Small or Disadvantaged Communities (EC-SDC) Grant Program. There will be an open forum/Q&A session at the end of the training. The training portion of this webinar will be recorded and available on the MassDEP YouTube channel for later viewing. We strongly encourage all interested PWS personnel, including operators, and authorized representatives to attend. **Certified operators can earn 1 TCH by participating in the training.** Registration is required and each attendee must register individually. [Please register for the webinar: Preparing for UCMR 6: An Overview for Public Water Systems](#)

EPA Webinar: Using Local Mutual Aid Networks in Your ERP

Wednesday September 30, 2026 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. EDT; Webinar

Water and Wastewater Agency Response Networks (WARNs), the intrastate mutual aid and assistance networks of “utilities helping utilities,” can be leveraged by CWSs to build resilience. In this webinar, EPA will provide examples of how CWSs can use WARNs and include them in their ERPs. [Register for the webinar: Using Local Mutual Aid Networks in Your ERP](#)

MassDEP/UMass Webinar: Supply Chain Chemical Cooperatives (Eastern MA Chemical Cooperative)

Wednesday, October 7, 2026; 10:00 – 11:00 am ET; webinar

This one-hour informational session will focus on how public water systems (PWS) can work together through a chemical cooperative to address supply chain challenges. The session will review how PWS can collaborate to obtain competitive pricing, streamline and consolidate the administrative work involved in sourcing chemicals from manufacturers, and improve the reliability of their chemical supply. The presentation will highlight how a cooperative approach can increase resilience to supply chain disruptions by helping PWS identify alternative chemical suppliers and respond effectively to shortages or other disruptions to the supply chain. Participants can receive 1 TCH for successful completion of the webinar. [Register for the webinar: Supply Chain Chemical Cooperatives \(Eastern MA Chemical Cooperative\)](#)

MassDEP/UMass Webinar: 1/2-Day Water Operations Overview for VSS/D1/T1 Certified Drinking Water Operators

Thursday, October 8, 2026; 8:30 – 12:00 pm ET; webinar

This free, virtual introductory training is for individuals interested in becoming a Very Small System (VSS), Distribution (D1), or Treatment (T1) Drinking Water Operator. The course is designed for individuals who are new to the field, as well as current operators looking to strengthen their knowledge and prepare for certification. Topics will include water quality sampling, wells and source protection, water distribution pipes, storage tanks, hydrants, valves, meters, water treatment, Massachusetts drinking water regulations, and other essential operator responsibilities. The session is a starting point to help operators pass the VSS, D1, and T1 certification exams; operators who want additional exam preparation may want to consider signing up for a full VSS/T1/D1 training. Participants can receive 3 TCHs for successful completion of the webinar. [Register for the webinar: 1/2-Day Water Operations Overview for VSS/D1/T1 Certified Drinking Water Operators](#)

EPA Webinar: Natural Hazard Technical Assistance for Updating your Emergency Response Plan

Monday, October 14, 2026; 1:00 – 2:30 pm ET; webinar

Join EPA's Strengthening Water Infrastructure for Tomorrow (SWIFT) initiative for a free webinar on updating your emergency response plan (ERP) for natural hazards. The webinar will highlight how to use available data resources, online tools, templates, and free technical assistance to address natural hazard threats in ERPs. Section 1433 of the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA), revised by America's Water Infrastructure Act (AWIA) section 2013, requires community water systems (CWS) serving over 3,300 people to prepare (or revise) and certify ERPs to the EPA every five years. Recertification deadlines have been occurring throughout 2025 and 2026. The final ERP recertification deadline, for systems serving 3,301 to 49,999 people, is December 31, 2026. CWSs that serve less than 3,301 people, non-CWSs, wastewater utilities, and stormwater utilities are not required to certify completion of an ERP to EPA. However, because natural disasters and malevolent acts also affect these utilities, EPA encourages them to develop ERPs to plan for potential disruptions. [Register for the webinar: Natural Hazard Technical Assistance for Updating your Emergency Response Plan](#)

EPA Webinar: Emergency Drinking Water Supply Planning

Tuesday November 17th, 2026 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. EDT; Webinar

Under SDWA section 1433, ERPs must address the supply of drinking water provided to communities and individuals, including planning alternative water supplies in the event of a disruption. In this webinar, EPA will cover the basics of planning for an Emergency Drinking Water Supply to include in your ERP.

[Register for the webinar: Emergency Drinking Water Supply Planning](#)

EPA Webinar: Water Sector Utility Case Studies for Building Resilience to Natural Hazards

Wednesday December 9th, 2026 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. EDT; Webinar

EPA's Strengthening Water Infrastructure for Tomorrow (SWIFT) technical assistance is tailored to meet the needs of each utility request, from building risk and resilience assessments, to updating emergency response plans, to quantifying the potential reductions in risk that specific resilience projects can deliver. Learn how water sector utilities are benefitting from SWIFT technical assistance. Hear directly from utility representatives across the country that have engaged in the process to build system resilience to various natural hazards. [Register for the webinar: Water Sector Utility Case Studies for Building Resilience to Natural Hazards](#)

EPA Webinar: Building Winter Weather Resilience for Water Sector Utilities

Wednesday January 13th, 2027 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. EDT; Webinar

Ready for the winter season? EPA's Strengthening Water Infrastructure for Tomorrow (SWIFT) experts can provide customized technical assistance to help your utility build resilience to winter weather hazards through risk-informed project planning and investment. Review this winter's seasonal outlook, learn about the SWIFT technical assistance experience, and explore tools that can help your utility better understand and assess system impacts and identify resilient solutions. [Register for the webinar: Building Winter Weather Resilience for Water Sector Utilities](#)

7. Cybersecurity, Emergency Preparedness, and You!

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



Biweekly Spotlight

Trust, but verify: How can you spot-check your SCADA defenses?

We know not everyone is a cybersecurity expert and that you may rely on integrators and vendors to do the heavy cyber-lifting. In some cases, even these third parties rely on still others for cyber expertise. It is a fast and ever-changing body of knowledge. Further, networks can change over time. Devices reach 'End of life' or 'EOL' and stop receiving critical updates that may expose you to a cyber-attack. Many integrators / vendors are not really 'boots on the ground' as they only come out if needed / quarterly in some cases, even with remote service technology there are still blind spots.

Ultimately, your system is YOUR system and not a third parties. Third parties are concerned with all of their clients and cannot focus on just one. This is why any materials like asset lists and network maps should be available to you at your facility even if you cannot reach your integrator. We like to say: You cannot protect what you don't know you have.

The good news is there are resources available to help educate you, give you visibility and help better protect your system. Here are two examples of great resources you can leverage:

Toolkit found on The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) website: [Water and Wastewater Cybersecurity | CISA](#)

- [No-Cost Cyber Vulnerability Scanning for Water Utilities](#)

Use this tool to get a weekly report updating you on potential attack vectors / weaknesses. This one will email you details on potential risks you have / exposures visible from the web. It is CRITICAL you provide all IP addresses for both the local SCADA network and remote sites (If, for example they use cellular modems and you don't provide that IP CISA will be blind to that for this scan).

- [EPA Water Resilience Cybersecurity Health Check](#)

EPA's help desk is available 24/7 and responds to water cyber inquiries within two days. The help desk provides guidance to help prevent, detect, respond to and recover from cyber incidents.

- [EPA No-Cost Cybersecurity Assessment Service](#)

EPA conducts no-cost cyber assessment for drinking water and wastewater utilities using EPA's Cybersecurity Checklist derived from CISA's CPGs. Utilities receive a summary report and a Risk Management Plan to help prioritize cybersecurity efforts. This will highlight potential gaps in your SCADA / IT networks and allow you to take proper pro-active action.

DEP:DWP's Cyber Security Resource Hub (Our One Stop Shop!): [Cybersecurity Resource Hub for MA Public Water Systems \(PWS\)](#)

Resources for PWS to improve cybersecurity defenses, mitigate cyber-attack risks, and enhance overall resiliency and compliance. All in one easy to navigate place.

- [News Flash/ Alerts](#)

Current trending cyber risks to PWS and related news

- [Cyber Security Assessment Guidance: Does your system require one?](#)

Guidance on regulatory requirements related to cyber assessments

- [Free Cyber Assessment Resources](#)

FREE self-service and guided assessment options

- [Cyber Incident Plan Template](#)

Designed to help PWS create a basic cybersecurity incident response plan (IRP) or to help think of ways that may improve your current plan

- Funding and Grants

See if your PWS is eligible for funding, such as our [Public Water Suppliers Cybersecurity Improvements Grant Program](#)

- Additional resources

Report Cyber Incidents, Cyber Awareness Posters and Flyers, Trainings & Emergency Response Planning Guidance and tools

Whether we like it or not Cybersecurity is all of our concern for the foreseeable future. We are here to guide and support you as we navigate this together, protecting our water and the public trust. We can't prevent 100% of cyber-breaches, but we can make it harder and harder for bad actors to succeed.

Stay vigilant.

8. Supply Chain Reminders

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](#).

9. 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](#).

10. Drinking Water Trivia! Answer

Answer: B

Containers filled with more than 3.4 ounces are not allowed and must be emptied. You can refill the bottle at a water station after passing through security checkpoints. Exceptions can be made for medical needs or child nourishment.