



MassDEP / Drinking Water Program

100 Cambridge Street – 9th Floor; Boston, MA 02114

Program.Director-DWP@mass.gov or 617-292-5770

In The Main - The Drinking Water Updates can be found online at:

mass.gov/lists/communication-to-public-water-suppliers or at the Statehouse Archives at:
<https://archives.lib.state.ma.us/handle/2452/826119> which has a searchable database.



Boston skyline from Nahant Beach, Photo by: Mary Beth LaRivee

This *In The Main* newsletter has these topics of interest

2023-11-30

1. REMINDER: Operator License Renewals Due Before December 31, 2023Two
2. LCRI Updates
3. Lead in Schools and Childcare Facilities Drinking Water Update
4. PFAS Update
5. Training Calendar
6. Cybersecurity, Emergency Preparedness, and You!
7. Supply Chain Reminders



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

Use the search function in the Statehouse Archives at:

<https://archives.lib.state.ma.us/handle/2452/826119>

REMINDER: Operator License Renewals Due Before December 31, 2023

This year is a renewal year for all certified operators in Massachusetts! Under the provisions of 236 CMR 4.07, operator licenses expire December 31 of every odd-numbered year. Operators seeking to renew their license(s) must submit a license renewal fee and certification that they have completed the required number of training contact hours (TCHs) for the highest-grade license they hold.

The Board of Certification of Operators of Drinking Water Supply Facilities (the Board) will be reviewing all license renewal applications. This coming year, the Board may perform some audits on license renewals to confirm the correct TCHs were obtained.

Information on how to renew an operator license on ePlace can be found on the page [Renew Your Board of Certification of Operators of Drinking Water Supply Facilities License](#). Additionally, operators can reference the [FAQ](#) page or contact the [Board](#) with any questions.

Resources for Finding Board-Approved Trainings

The [Information on Required Training for License Renewal](#) page includes information about the number of required TCHs for each license grade and other information about receiving and documenting TCHs.

Additionally, operators can use the following resources to find Board-approved trainings.

- Organizations with blanket approval for trainings:
 - [MA Water Works Association](#)
 - [MA Rural Water Association](#)
 - [New England Water Works Association](#)
 - [MA Water Resources Authority](#) (note: trainings for MWRA employees only)
 - [Western MA Waterworks Association](#)
- MassDEP [Training Calendars](#):
 - [Free trainings](#) and [fee-based trainings](#)
 - Note: Not all trainings listed have been Board-approved. Confirm approval with the training provider or the Board.

LCRI Updates

Today, the U.S Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced the proposed Lead and Copper Rule Improvements (LCRI).

Key provisions in the proposal include:

- **Achieving 100% Lead Pipe Replacement within 10 years.** The proposed LCRI would require the vast majority of water systems to replace lead services lines within 10 years.
- **Locating Legacy Lead Pipes.** Under the proposed LCRI, all water systems would be required to regularly update their inventories, create a publicly available service line replacement plan, and identify the materials of all service lines of unknown material.
- **Lowering the Lead Action Level.** EPA is proposing to lower the lead action level from 15 µg/L to 10 µg/L.
- **Strengthening Protections to Reduce Exposure.** Water systems with multiple lead action level exceedances would be required to conduct additional outreach to consumers and make filters certified to reduce lead available to all consumers.

For more information about the proposed rule, including a pre-publication version of the proposal, fact sheets, and directions for submitting comment and registering for the public hearing, visit the [proposed rule webpage](#).

To learn more about the proposed LCRI, please register to EPA's **Informational webinar for the public about EPA's Proposed Lead and Copper Rule Improvements (LCRI)** at [Public Webinar on EPA's Proposed LCRI Tickets, Wed, Dec 6, 2023 at 2:00 PM | Eventbrite](#).

Please remember that the compliance date for submission of the required service line inventory under the lead and copper rule revisions (LCRR) is **October 16, 2024**.

To ensure that PWS can comply with the lead service line inventory and replacement plans by October 16, 2024, the Drinking Water Program is encouraging PWS to submit their draft inventories by **April 1, 2024**. This would give PWS and the program time to review the inventories, make sure the inventories are as complete as possible and offer technical assistance, if needed, before the regulatory deadline.

Lead in Schools and Childcare Facilities Drinking Water Update

Expanded Assistance Program Update

The Expanded Assistance Program for Lead in Schools and Early Education and Care Facilities (EECF) Drinking Water provides free analysis of lead drinking water samples and technical assistance to schools and EECFs by assisting with sampling, results interpretation, and guidance on remediation actions. The program is funded by a grant from the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. MassDEP also worked with the Clean Water Trust to secure additional funding to expand assistance to private schools.

Currently, 756 schools and EECFs are participating in the program and 479 (63%) of participating facilities are within environmental justice communities. To date, 528 schools and EECFs have completed testing. Of facilities that have tested and received results, 358 (68%) had one or more lead detections.

Do you know of any schools or childcare facilities that could benefit from the Expanded Assistance Program? Please identify and encourage schools and childcares within your service area to participate in the program.

Eligible facilities may apply for assistance at https://script.google.com/macros/s/AKfycbyr_U8wEMrA-Q2XifkK4l58x4GDtYrItvpKIKUAhSxpwgpSZtA/exec

PFAS Update

PFAS at Schools and Childcare Facilities that are Public Water Suppliers

There are approximately 144 schools and childcare facilities in Massachusetts that are Public Water Suppliers (have their own well). 10% (15) of these had PFAS in their water at levels exceeding the Massachusetts PFAS6 Maximum Contaminant Level of 20 ppt. Below is a table of actions taken by these PWS to address PFAS.

Action Taken by PWS to address exceedance of PFAS6 MCL	Number of Schools and Childcare Facilities
Installed Treatment	8
Connected to Municipal Supply	2
New Well	1
Providing Bottled Water (while working on a permanent solution)	4
Total	15

Approximately 12 additional schools and childcare facilities will be impacted by the draft EPA MCLs for PFOS and PFOA if they become final. The proposed MCLs for PFOS and PFOA are 4 ppt. MassDEP will be assisting these additional PWS through the EPA [Emerging Contaminants - Small and Disadvantaged Communities Drinking Water Grant Program](#).

Looking for PWS testing data for PFAS?

PWS PFAS testing results are available to the public on the web in the [EEA data portal](#). Search under the chemical name: “PFAS6” or to see all the PFAS chemicals, search under the contaminant group “PFAS”.

Training Calendar

When you need training, please look at the training calendar located at:

<http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/water/drinking/drinking-water-training-class-schedules.html>.

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 page and view the approved education courses to sit for examination. Go to:

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/drinking-water-board-approved-education-courses-updated-september-2020/download>.

Some Newly Added Trainings on the Calendar

Operator Certification: Wastewater Disinfection

Tuesday, December 12, 2023; 12:00-1:00 p.m. ET; webinar

Join EFCN for this webinar series designed to help small wastewater system operators pass their certification exams. The series started with a 1-hour overview of study tips and test preparation techniques, and each subsequent 1-hour webinar focuses on a single topic typically found in Level 1 and Level 2 exams. Each session will include sample questions and a short Q and A period. This series can benefit new operators aiming for Level 1 and 2 certifications, as well as currently certified operators looking to pass higher-level tests. Session 20: Wastewater contains different types of microscopic pathogens and must be disinfected before being released back into the environment so it is not harmful to plant and animal life, as well as humans downstream who may consume the water. [Register here](#)

EPA: How to Prepare Your Utility for Disasters – A Webinar for Very Small Drinking Water Systems that Serve Under 3,301 People

Tuesday, December 12, 2023; 2:00-3:30 p.m. ET; webinar

Join the USEPA for a free webinar on how to prepare your utility for disasters. This webinar is targeted to very small drinking water systems serving under 3,301 customers who do NOT need to comply with AWIA for the purpose of providing these very small systems with information regarding how to create Risk and Resilience Assessments (RRA) and Emergency Response Plans (ERP) voluntarily. Attendees will see a demonstration on how to develop RRAs and ERPs using cybersecurity and wildfire scenarios, as well as be presented with 10 tips on how to prepare their utilities for disasters. [Register here](#)

- **MassDEP**

- [Previous Cybersecurity Trainings now on YouTube:](#)

- Basic Cybersecurity Measures for Water Utilities: <https://youtu.be/78v3eAyf1yE>
 - Ransomware Experiences, Defense, and Response: <https://youtu.be/eislsdQnXqE>

- **Environmental Finance Center Network**

- For a complete list of trainings webinars and in-person trainings please go to:

- <https://efcnetwork.org/upcoming-events/>

- **EPA**
For a complete list of trainings, webinars and in-person trainings, please go to: <https://www.epa.gov/dwreginfo/drinking-water-training>.
- **Mass Rural Water Association**
For a complete list of trainings, webinars and in-person trainings, please go to: <https://www.massrwa.org/p/14/Trainings—Events>.
- **MWWA**
For a complete list of trainings, webinars and in-person trainings, please go to: [MWWA Calendar](#)
- **NEWWA**
For a complete list of trainings, webinars and in-person trainings, please go to: https://communityhub.newwa.org/nc__upcomingevents.
- **Water ISAC**
For a complete list of trainings, webinars and in-person trainings, please go to: <https://www.waterisac.org/resources>.
- **RCAP Solutions**
For a complete list of trainings, webinars and in-person trainings, please go to: <http://www.rcapsolutions.org/community-resources-events/>.
- **AWWA**
For a complete list of trainings, webinars and in-person trainings, please go to: https://www.awwa.org/Events-Education/Events-Calendar?utm_term=AWWA+Connections+10-8-2021&utm_content=Connections+10-8-2021&utm_source=communications&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=connections.

Training Refresher

If you need a refresher on recently given trainings, you can review several training videos located at:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLJn2AKOcYr7lutGJB-UfDKtQPF_o_249m

or click here:  **YouTube**

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. You may also request to be unsubscribed by replying to this email.

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, go <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/safe-drinking-water-act-assessment-advisory-committee-section-70-committee>.

Cybersecurity, Emergency Preparedness, and You!

2023-11-30

PLEASE SHARE THIS CYBERSECURITY INFORMATION WITH YOUR SCADA & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY STAFF



Be Vigilant!



Report all incidents and anomalous activity to [CISA](#) and/or the FBI via your local [FBI field office](#) or the FBI's 24/7 CyWatch at 855-292-3937 or cywatch@ic.fbi.gov



Regularly review CISA'S [Shields Up](#) page.



[EPA FREE CYBERSECURITY ASSESSMENT PROGRAM: 65 PWS have already used this no cost opportunity.](#)

All PWS should have a baseline cybersecurity assessment. Take advantage of this opportunity and join the group of proactive PWS that have done so. Strengthen your PWS cybersecurity routine operations and register for the EPA Cybersecurity Assessment. Register with simple steps by using the following link: <https://www.epa.gov/waterresilience/forms/epas-water-sector-cybersecurity-evaluation-program>. For additional resources visit [EPA Cybersecurity for the Water Sector | US EPA](#).



[CISA Free In-Person Cybersecurity Assessments for Selected 20 PWS in Massachusetts: 11 PWS have already signed up.](#)

Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) in collaboration with MassDEP/ DWP is providing in-person cyber assessment to 20 pre-selected Public Water Systems (PWS) in Massachusetts. These PWS were chosen based on criteria such as PWS type, size, and particularly the timing of their sanitary surveys. If your PWS is among the pre-selected group and you haven't yet indicated your interest in this valuable opportunity, we urge you to do so at your earliest convenience. Your prompt response would be greatly appreciated. Please let us know at program.director-dwp@mass.gov. Subject: CISA Cybersecurity Assessments



Register Today- MassDEP /DWP Free Webinar on Cybersecurity Basics for Drinking Water Operators (1 TCH for MA Drinking Water Operators)

When - Wed, December 13, 2023

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM EDT

- This webinar will discuss basic cybersecurity for water utilities that enable them to better assess and understand existing cybersecurity issues/risks and identify resources.
- It will introduce participants to topics like passwords and multifactor authentication, patching and backups, awareness training, and assets identification remote access.
- This training will also cover existing regulations and requirements and more importantly free available resources for cybersecurity assessments.
- Registration Link: <https://attendee.gototraining.com/r/8028113172707317252>

NEW Critical Infrastructure Security Updates:



Alert: Exploitation of Unitronics PLCs Used in Water and Wastewater Systems

- Cybersecurity Infrastructure and Security Agency (CISA) has released a high-level alert regarding exploitation of Unitronics Programmable Logic Controllers (PLCs) at Water and Wastewater Systems. The alert contains important information on mitigation tactics that can be used to reduce the risk of an attack for users of this equipment.
- PWS are encouraged to check their environment for the affected Unitronics PLCs and address accordingly – including by disconnecting the PLC from the internet if remote access is not absolutely necessary.
- See the alert here <https://www.cisa.gov/news-events/alerts/2023/11/28/exploitation-unitronics-plcs-used-water-and-wastewater-systems>

Additionally, CISA is urging entities to:

- Change the Unitronics PLC default password – validate that the default password “1111” is not in use.

- Require multifactor authentication for all remote access to the OT network, including from the IT network and external networks.
- Disconnect the PLC from the open internet. If remote access is necessary, implement a Firewall/VPN in front of the PLC to control network access to the remote PLC. A VPN or gateway device can enable multifactor authentication for remote access even if the PLC does not support multifactor authentication. Unitronics also has a secure cellular based longhaul transport device that is secure to their cloud services.
- Back up the logic and configurations on any Unitronics PLCs to enable fast recovery. Become familiar with the process for factory resetting and deploying configurations to a device in the event of being hit by ransomware.
- If possible, utilize a TCP port that is different than the default port TCP 20256. Cyber actors are actively targeting TCP 20256 after identifying it through network probing as a port associated to Unitronics PLC. Once identified, they leverage scripts specific to PCOM/TCP to query and validate the system, allowing for further probing and connection. If available, use PCOM/TCP filters to parse out the packets.
- Update PLC/HMI to the latest version provided by Unitronics.

Incident Reporting

If your utility experiences any cyber incidents or suspicious activity, contact the FBI via your [local Field Office](#), Cyber Watch (CyWatch) at (855) 292-3937 or CyWatch@fbi.gov, or the [Internet Crime Complaint Center \(IC3\)](#). You can also contact CISA at report@cisa.gov or (888) 282-0870. Additionally, contact WaterISAC by emailing analyst@waterisac.org, calling 866-H2O-ISAC, or using the [online incident reporting form](#). (Source WaterISAC and CISA)

Are You Prepared to Prevent a Cyber Incident?? Have you completed a cybersecurity assessment for your PWS? If No, Sign Up For a Free [Cybersecurity Assessment Today at EPA's Water Sector Cybersecurity Evaluation Program | US EPA](#) and attend our upcoming training.

Daixin Team Ransomware Group Claims to Have Successfully Attacked Texas Water Utility

- The Daixin Team ransomware group added the North Texas Municipal Water District to the list of victims on its Tor leak site.
- The group claims to have stolen a large amount of sensitive data from the utility and is threatening to publish it if their demands are not met. [Read more](#).

Proofpoint Report Unveils Threat of MFA Fatigue Attacks

- A new Proofpoint report highlights MFA fatigue attacks, where users, bombarded by a continuous stream of MFA notifications, hastily approve requests out of frustration.
- Real-world examples include attacks on Uber, Cisco, and Microsoft by the Lapsus\$ threat actor and underscore the prevalence and impact of these tactics. [Full article](#)

Microsoft Uncovers Diamond Sleet's Supply Chain Attack with LambLoad Malware

- According to a new blog post by Microsoft, a North Korean-based threat actor dubbed Diamond Sleet has been observed distributing a malicious variant of a legitimate application installer developed by CyberLink Corp. to target customers in a supply chain attack.
- For its part, the trojanized file, which is hosted on CyberLink's update infrastructure, includes malicious code that is designed to download, decrypt, and load a second-stage payload. [Full article](#)

CISA ICS Vulnerability Advisories and Alerts, Updates, and Bulletins

- For Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency's (CISA) recent ICS vulnerability advisories, as well as alerts, updates, and bulletins, use the following link: <https://www.cisa.gov/news-events/cybersecurity-advisories>.

Upcoming Trainings



EPA Webinar: How to Prepare Your Utility for Disasters - For Very Small Drinking Water Systems that Serve Under 3,301 People

Tuesday, December 12, 2023; 2:00 - 3:30 p.m. ET; webinar

This webinar will demonstrate how to create a Risk and Resilience Assessment (RRA) and Emergency Response Plan (ERP) using fire and cybersecurity scenarios, provide information on a new opportunity where operators may be eligible to earn Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for creating an RRA and ERP, share 10 quick and easy tips on how to prepare your utility for disasters. This workshop is meant for very small drinking water systems (those that serve under 3,301 people and do not need to comply with America's Water Infrastructure Act). [Register now](#)

SANS Webinar: The Industrial (ICS/OT) Cyber Threat Landscape

Thursday, December 14, 2023; 7:15 p.m. ET; webinar

This webinar will give an introduction to ICS/OT followed by an in-depth discussion on the changes that are taking place in the industrial world such as digital transformation as a precursor to an in-depth discussion on the threats. The webinar will cover new adversary groups targeting industrial networks, the trends to watch, and make recommendations with a walkthrough of the SANS ICS five critical controls. [Register now](#)

MassDEP Cybersecurity Reminders:

- **Cybersecurity Continues to Be an Important Component of Providing Safe Drinking Water in Massachusetts**
- MassDEP posters with cybersecurity tips to help keep your systems secure <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/public-drinking-water-system-operations#cybersecurity->
- Public Water Systems may include cybersecurity planning in DWSRF Asset Management Grant applications <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/asset-management-planning-grant-program>
- Other Grants <https://www.epa.gov/waterresilience/cybersecurity-funding>

Supply Chain Reminders

PWSs are reminded to implement the steps identified by DWP at <https://www.mass.gov/doc/steps-to-prepare-your-public-water-system-for-supply-chain-disruptions/download> and keep MassDEP/DWP informed of all Supply Chain issues.

Resources:

- MassDEP poster on supply chain issues planning and response with steps to prepare PWS for supply chain disruptions. See/download the poster here <https://www.mass.gov/doc/steps-to-prepare-your-public-water-system-for-supply-chain-disruptions/download>
 - **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 be can also be useful for finding alternative chemical suppliers in the case of supply chain shortages.
 - Join [MassWARN](#).
-