



MassDEP / Drinking Water Program

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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.



Kinara Photo by: [Aaron Lowe/Laney Tower](#)

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

2024-12-13

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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>

Attention Public Water Suppliers: New Round Posted for the Drinking Water Supply Protection Grant Program

Mass. Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

Drinking Water Supply Protection Grant Program

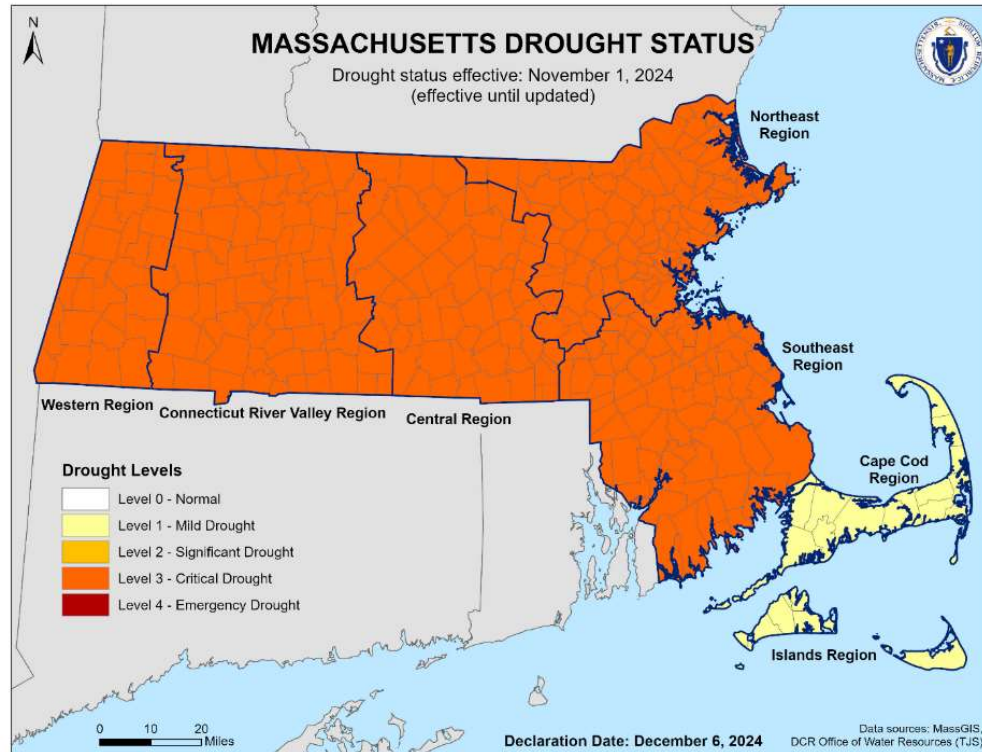
Deadline: Friday, March 7, 2025 at 3:00 pm

The Drinking Water Supply Protection Grant Program provides financial assistance for the purchase of land in existing Mass. Department of Environmental Protection approved drinking water supply protection areas, or land in estimated protection areas of identified and planned future water supply wells or reservoirs. Grants of up to \$350,000 are available this grant round. A virtual information session will be held Monday, January 13, 2025 at 1:00 pm via MS Teams. Email vanessa.farny@mass.gov to receive the link.

Applications must be submitted online. For additional information and to apply, click [here](#).

Critical Drought Across Massachusetts

On November 19, 2024, Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) declared Level 3 – Critical Drought across most regions in Massachusetts. **On December 6, 2024, EEA updated its drought declaration for the Cape Cod and Islands Regions to a Level 1 – Mild Drought.** The rest of the state is still in a Level 3 – Critical Drought. These drought conditions were caused by over a month of very little rainfall and devastating wildfires and brushfires across the state.



Level 1 (“Mild Drought”) and Level 3 (“Critical Drought”) drought declarations require detailed monitoring of drought conditions, continued coordination among state and federal agencies to communicate the implementation of water use restrictions, declaration of bans on open burning, engagement with municipalities including local Boards of Health, and 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 dashboard can be accessed at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-drought-resources>.
- 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 most recent Drought Alert flyer is posted at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/drought-tips-tools-resources#drought-alerts>.
- The Drought Management in Massachusetts webpage includes several recommendations for residents, businesses, and communities during Level 1 and Level 3 droughts related to water conservation and fire prevention. These tips can be found at <https://www.mass.gov/guides/drought-management-in-massachusetts>.
- The Water Resources Toolkit offers many examples of outreach materials for communities to use related to droughts. These resources can be downloaded at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/water-resources-toolkit-library-of-outreach-materials>.
- Utilities are encouraged to develop a Drought Management Plan to identify preparedness, monitoring, response, and outreach procedures related to droughts. The Drought Management Plan guidance can be found at <https://www.mass.gov/doc/massachusetts-drought-management-plan/download>.
- Information for private well owners can be found at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/information-for-private-well-owners-during-a-drought>.
- Previous issues of In the Main (11/15/2024 and 11/27/2024) include additional resources related to drought preparedness and response resources. Previous issues of In the Main can be found at <https://www.mass.gov/lists/communication-to-public-water-suppliers>.

New Upcoming Funding Opportunity from EEA: Drought Resiliency and Water Efficiency Grant Program

The Drought Resiliency and Water Efficiency Grant Program aims to fund projects to promote climate resiliency, specifically by helping communities and public water suppliers reduce indoor and outdoor water use, improve water loss control programs, and increase drought resiliency.

To review the Notice of Intent and the presentation from the Q and A session about this exciting opportunity, visit: <https://www.mass.gov/eea-funding-opportunity-for-a-new-grant-program>.

Request for Survey Responses: MassDEP/DWP and UMass Internship Program

MassDEP Drinking Water Program, in partnership with the University of Massachusetts – Amherst (UMass), is in the beginning stages of developing a Water Professional Partnership (WPP) Internship Program. The purpose of the internship program is to connect Public Water Systems with interns who are interested in a drinking water-related career. MassDEP and UMass are able to match and pay for a limited number of internships each year. Internships can cover a wide range of activities, such as operations, technical, laboratory, and communications.

In this phase of the program's development, MassDEP and UMass are collecting information from Public Water Systems about their interest and capability to host an intern. The purpose of collecting this information is to have a comprehensive list of systems that we can contact if we have an intern who may be a good fit for a specific system. **It is important to note that an interest in hosting an intern does not guarantee an intern from the WPP in a given year.** If you may be interested in partnering with the WPP Internship Program to host an intern, please fill out this

survey to document details about your system: <https://forms.office.com/g/UqhdFggXq7>. MassDEP and UMass will follow up with you if we need additional information about your ability to host an intern.

If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact program.director-dwp@mass.gov,
Subject: DEP/UMass Internship Program.

AWIA Compliance Round 2: Deadlines in the New Year!

Article Highlight: Risk and Resiliency Assessments

Deadlines for submitting certification that your Public Water System has updated its Risk and Resiliency Assessment (RRA) and Emergency Response Plan (ERP) are fast approaching. **Community Public Water Systems serving a population of over 100,000 must certify updates to their RRA by March 31, 2025 – about 3 months away!**

Community Water System size (by population served as of March 31, 2024)	Certify Risk & Resilience Assessment (RRA) by:	Certify Emergency Response Plan (ERP) within 6 months of RRA, but no later than:
≥ 100,000	March 31, 2025	September 30, 2025
50,000 – 99,999	December 31, 2025	June 30, 2026
3,300 – 49,999	June 30, 2026	December 30, 2026

The American Water Infrastructure Act (AWIA) was first passed in 2018 and requires community water systems to certify that they have prepared and updated their Risk and Resilience Assessments (RRAs) and Emergency Response Plans (ERPs). Community water systems are required to recertify to EPA that their RRAs and ERPs are up to date every five years. With changes from the past five years including supply chain issues, cybersecurity concerns, and increased funding opportunities, public water systems may have a lot to update in their RRAs and ERPs.

A comprehensive list of requirements, resources, FAQs, fact sheets, training recordings, and guidance for preparing and certifying updates to your RRAs and ERPs with the EPA can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/waterresilience/awia-section-2013>.

What is a Risk and Resiliency Assessment?

A **Risk and Resiliency Assessment (RRA)** is an assessment of a water system's assets and the risks to and resilience of those assets to malevolent acts and natural hazards. RRAs include an evaluation of the capital and operational needs for a system's risk and resilience management. RRAs include an assessment of items such as, but not limited to:

1. the risk to the system from malevolent acts and natural hazards;
2. the resilience of the pipes and constructed conveyances, physical barriers, source water, water collection and intake, pretreatment, treatment, storage and distribution facilities, electronic, computer, or other automated systems (including the security of such systems) which are utilized by the system;
3. the monitoring practices of the system;
4. the financial infrastructure of the system;
5. the use, storage, or handling of various chemicals by the system; and
6. the operation and maintenance of the system.

EPA encourages PWSs to consider adding to, or bolstering, existing sections of their RRAs and ERPs based on the latest knowledge of emerging and ongoing threats to the water sector such as cybersecurity, supply chain issues, and climate change.

How do I certify my RRA and ERP?

Public Water Systems can certify updates to their RRA and ERP by filling out the RRA/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 RRA/ERP Certification Statements via electronic submission. Guidance for submitting your RRA/ERP and downloading the Certification Statement documents can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/waterresilience/how-certify-your-risk-and-resilience-assessment-or-emergency-response-plan>. **Do not submit your updated RRA and ERP, as those documents may contain sensitive information about your system.**

Need some help updating your RRA? Consider using the Vulnerability Self-Assessment Tool

The **Vulnerability Self-Assessment Tool - Web Enabled (VSAT Web) 3.0** is a user-friendly tool that can help drinking water and wastewater utilities of all sizes to conduct a risk and resilience assessment. With this tool, PWS can identify the highest risks to critical operations in their system and find the most cost-effective measures to reduce those risks. The assessment conducted in the VSAT Web tool is not stored in the tool and is not visible to EPA. You can learn more about the VSAT Web tool at <https://www.epa.gov/waterresilience/vulnerability-self-assessment-tool-conduct-drinking-water-or-wastewater-utility>.

RRA Support for Small Systems

EPA developed a RRA Checklist for small water and wastewater systems serving a population fewer than 50,000. The guidance checklist was updated in July 2024 to incorporate items related to cybersecurity and accidental contamination. Information about the checklist can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/waterresilience/small-system-risk-and-resilience-assessment-checklist>.

Note that small community PWS serving a population between 3,300-49,999 are required to certify updates to their RRAs and ERPs. While small community PWS serving a population under 3,300 are not required to certify updates to their RRAs/ERPs, it is still strongly recommended in order to help PWS plan and protect their systems from disasters. Resources for community PWS serving a population under 3,300, including a CEU program for developing and updating RRAs/ERPs, can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/waterresilience/resources-promote-rras-and-erps-cws-serve-less-3301-non-cws-and-wastewater-systems>.

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: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/guidelines-for-public-water-systems-chapter-12-emergency-response-planning-o/download>
- MassDEP *In the Main*, March 7, 2024 - “Planning Ahead for Round 2 of AWIA Compliance in 2025/2026”: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/in-the-main-drinking-water-program-updates-03-07-2024/download>
- MassDEP *In the Main*, September 6, 2024 – “AWIA Compliance Round 2: Tips for Preparing Your RRAs and ERPs”: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/in-the-main-drinking-water-program-updates-09-06-2024/download>

EPA Drinking Water and Wastewater Resilience: <https://www.epa.gov/waterresilience>

- EPA Water Resilience - AWIA Section 2013: <https://www.epa.gov/waterresilience/awia-section-2013>
- EPA How to Certify Your RRA or ERP: <https://www.epa.gov/waterresilience/how-certify-your-risk-and-resilience-assessment-or-emergency-response-plan>
- CISA Water and Wastewater Cybersecurity: <https://www.cisa.gov/water>
- AWWA Resources and Tools - Risk & Resilience: <https://www.awwa.org/Resources-Tools/Resource-Topics/Risk-Resilience>
- AWWA Resources and Tools - Cybersecurity: <https://www.awwa.org/Resources-Tools/Resource-Topics/Risk-Resilience/Cybersecurity-Guidance>

LCRR Information

Thank you to all Massachusetts Public Water Systems!

MassDEP DWP would like to thank our Massachusetts PWSs and their staff for continuing to do exemplary work and demonstrate their commitment to protecting drinking water. As we continue to review Service Line Inventories, our PWS continue to work quickly and patiently to ensure accurate Service Line Inventory Submissions. We appreciate the patience our PWS have as reviews continue on, and please note that if your PWS has not received feedback regarding your inventory yet, MassDEP DWP is still working through reviewing inventories. You will receive feedback from us upon the review of your inventory, regardless of whether further action or resubmission is required, or the submission is considered acceptable.

Please Share your Lead and Copper Program Information with your Local Municipal Leaders

Your municipal leaders are important in helping you to implement critical updates that are vital to ensuring the health and safety of your community. The steps outlined in the LCRR will significantly reduce the risks of lead exposure through drinking water, and your ongoing efforts to meet these requirements are essential in protecting the public health of Massachusetts residents.

Public drinking water systems are vital to the health, safety, and economies of our communities. The individuals managing and operating public drinking water systems face significant challenges as they try to provide their customers with safe drinking water. Drinking Water Capacity Development supports the ability of systems to meet these challenges now and in the foreseeable future by planning and improving their technical, managerial, and financial operations. Your municipal leaders are key assets in a PWS capacity development.

Consumer Notices were required to be distributed by November 15, 2024! Remember to submit your Consumer Notice Certification Forms!

All PWS with Galvanized Requiring Replacement (GRR), Lead Status Unknown (UNKs), or Lead Service Lines (LSLs) were required to send out Consumer Notices (CNs) to each consumer served by these three types of service lines. This was required by November 15, 2024.

If you have not sent out your consumer notices yet, you are in violation of the federal LCRR requirement and MassDEP will refer your PWS to EPA for compliance and enforcement action. For PWS that have not sent out consumer notices, and were required to, please do so **as soon as possible**.

PWS are required to certify to MassDEP that they have distributed all required consumer notices, using the [LCRR SLI Consumer Notices Certification Form](#), which is available on the [Lead and Copper Forms and Templates webpage](#): <https://www.mass.gov/lists/lead-copper-forms-and-templates>. **PWS must certify the distribution of these notices by July 1st, 2025, though MassDEP encourages all PWS to submit the certification form right after sending out your notices, before you forget.**

Helpful Resources to Answering Consumer Questions Regarding Consumer Notices

Are Your Consumers looking for a Massachusetts certified laboratory to analyze their residential drinking water samples? If so, and your PWS does not offer testing, make sure to direct consumers to the [MassDEP How to Find a Certified Laboratory For Water Testing](#) webpage, which includes a spreadsheet listing all certified laboratories that offer analytical services to residential customers: <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/find-a-certified-laboratory-for-water-testing>.

The last two *In the Main* Newsletter Issues offered articles on the following topics:

- [Sharing Helpful Drinking Water Tips with Consumers to Reduce Lead Exposure \(11/27/2024\)](#)
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- [MassDEP/DWP Process for Consumer Notice Language Translation Requests \(11/27/2024\)](#)
- [Are You Unsure on How to Handle Customer-Requested Lead Water Samples? \(11/15/2024\)](#)

All previous issues of the ITM can be found on [the Communications to Public Water Suppliers](#) webpage and downloaded to keep on hand here: <https://www.mass.gov/lists/communication-to-public-water-suppliers>.

MassDEP SLI Resources for the Public

MassDEP expects many consumers to have questions or concerns following the distribution of Consumer Notices and as news outlets share more information about the Lead and Copper Rule Revisions (LCRR) and the Lead and Copper Rule Improvements (LCRI).

Due to this, MassDEP has created a [LCRR Consumer's Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#) webpage regarding the LCRR, service line inventories (SLIs), and consumer notices: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/consumers-frequently-asked-questions-about-the-lcrr-service-line-inventory>. The Consumer FAQ webpage is also showcased on the MassDEP [main LCRR webpage](#), under the new *Information for Consumers* section.

MassDEP has also created an ArcGIS map which will host all SLI files submitted to MassDEP! The Map is now live and available for all to view. As SLIs that are reviewed and determined to be error free, they will be available to the public through this map! MassDEP is still in the process of reviewing SLIs, so you may not see yours uploaded just yet!

PWS should note PWS must still retain their own method of public accessibility for the foreseeable future, to ensure they meet LCRR requirements.

The link to the Map is available on the LCRR webpage, under the [Information for Massachusetts Consumers](#) section: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/lead-and-copper-rule-revisions#information-for-massachusetts-consumers/>.

PWS are encouraged to share this webpage with their consumers if they have any questions or include it on your Lead in Drinking Water related webpages for consumers to find.

Are you prepared for 24-hour Tier I Public Notice for Lead?

As of **October 16, 2024**, any PWS that exceeds the 90th percentile lead action level of 15 parts per billion must now notify all affected consumers within **24-hours** of the exceedance. This is called a **Tier 1 Public Notice**. This is a new requirement that must be met in addition to issuing routine Public Education materials.

Each PWS must plan, well in advance, to quickly respond with a public notice within 24-hours of exceeding the lead action level. At a minimum, each PWS should have a draft copy of a Tier 1 Notice ready in their Emergency Response Plan in case they have to provide notice within 24-hours.

For more information on 24-hour Tier 1 Public Notice, see our [Public Notification Forms and Templates](#), available on the Public Notification Forms and Templates webpage: <https://www.mass.gov/lists/public-notification-forms-and-templates>

Getting Ready for the LCRI

Are You Ready for the Service Line Inventory Non-Lead Validations?

Accurate service line inventories are essential to ensure replacement of all lead and galvanized requiring replacement (GRR) service lines. To increase the accuracy of inventories, the final Lead and Copper Rule Improvements (LCRI) requires all water systems to validate a subset of non-lead service lines in their inventory. The validation tests the reliability of certain methods, techniques, and alternative sources of information used to identify

non-lead service lines in the inventory; facilitates action to remedy inventory discrepancies; and provides systems, States, and consumers with additional confidence in the accuracy of the inventory.

Under the LCRI, starting November 1, 2027, **PWS should identify a validation pool** consisting of all non-lead service lines in the inventory excluding those that are identified by:

1. Records that indicate the service line was installed after the federal lead ban became enforceable or the compliance date of a State or local lead ban, whichever is earlier.
2. Visual inspection of the pipe exterior at a minimum of two points.

Non-lead lines identified by exclusively using other records such as tie cards, operational knowledge, etc., or other verification methods such as statistical analysis/predictive modeling must be included in the validation pool. The total number of required validations is dependent on the PWSs total number of non-lead services lines and vary system to system. Once the PWS has identified the validation pool, it must randomly select non-lead service lines for conducting visual inspections at a minimum of two points along the service line exterior. See the [EPA LCRI Validation guidance](https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2024-10/final_lcric_fact-sheet_validation.pdf) for more information: https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2024-10/final_lcric_fact-sheet_validation.pdf

For systems on a 10-year mandatory replacement schedule and systems that have reported only non-lead lines in their inventories, validation must be completed by December 31, 2034, and the validation results are due to the State by January 30, 2035. States will establish a validation deadline for water systems conducting mandatory service line replacement on a shortened deadline. For systems on a deferred deadline, States will establish a deadline no later than three years prior to the deadline for completing mandatory service line replacement.

The process of validation may involve significant work and may require identifying and applying for funding to complete the validation process. **MassDEP recommends that PWS begin work on validation efforts as soon as possible, provided that the validation methodologies are at least as stringent as the LCRI requirement.** PWS that follow this method can then submit a waiver request after the LCRI goes into effect in 2027. **As these validations are required under the LCRI, funding will be available for PWS to assist with this process through the [SRF Program](#).**

For more information on these requirements, please review [EPA's validation guidance](https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2024-10/final_lcric_fact-sheet_validation.pdf) here: https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2024-10/final_lcric_fact-sheet_validation.pdf. **PWS MUST review this guidance before beginning any validation efforts, to ensure your methods are as stringent as the LCRI. Please contact MassDEP DWP prior to beginning the validation process if you have any questions, to ensure you meet the LCRI requirements. PWS may reach out to MassDEP DWP at program.director-dwp@mass.gov, subject: LCRI Validation Requirements.**

More Information on the LCRI

The EPA has published the Lead and Copper Rule Improvements in the federal register. This rule has a compliance date of November 1, 2027. PWS must continue to follow their usual LCR required tasks, and the additional 3 requirements under the LCRR (SLI, Tier 1 24 Hour Public Notices, and annual SLI Material CNs) until this compliance date.

The LCRI will continue to build upon the LCRR by incorporating additional measures to further protect public health.

The EPA has a [webpage](https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/lead-and-copper-rule-improvements) dedicated to the LCRI, available here: <https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/lead-and-copper-rule-improvements>

The full LCRI is available for review in the [federal register](https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/10/30/2024-23549/national-primary-drinking-water-regulations-forlead-and-copper-improvements-lcri): <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/10/30/2024-23549/national-primary-drinking-water-regulations-forlead-and-copper-improvements-lcri>

EPA has also released a variety of [LCRI Supporting Materials](https://www.epa.gov/dwreginfo/lead-and-copper-rule-improvements-supporting-materials), including fact sheets and technical documents:

EPA has also hosted two LCRI webinars, one which focused on the general population, and one webinar for water systems. Materials for these webinars are available on the [EPA LCRI Webpage](https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/lead-and-copper-rule-improvements#webinars): <https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/lead-and-copper-rule-improvements#webinars>

MassDEP DWP will release more information and trainings regarding the LCRI in 2025.

Ipswich River Grant Program for Addressing Water Supply and PFAS

New grant available for Public Water Suppliers in the Ipswich River Basin

The goals of this grant are to address: (1) the persistent drinking water quantity challenges faced by the Ipswich River Basin; and (2) the continued prevalence and harmfulness of PFAS in drinking water in the Ipswich River Basin. This grant program is designed to provide feasibility studies, infrastructure design, water chemistry analyses and other activities needed to identify and advance water supply solutions for communities withdrawing water from the Ipswich River Basin. Applications are due 1/10/25. [Water Management Act Grant Programs for Public Water Suppliers | Mass.gov](#)

Lead in Schools and Childcare Facilities Drinking Water Update

Water-Smart Informational Webinar – Tuesday, December 17, 10-11 AM

MassDEP and the University of Massachusetts Amherst are hosting a free informational webinar about our Water-Smart Program on December 17th at 10-11 AM Please encourage schools or childcares that may benefit to Register here: <https://attendee.gototraining.com/r/1765536841722378497>

Water-Smart Program Update

Water-Smart (formally known as the Expanded Assistance Program) provides free analysis of lead drinking water samples and technical assistance to eligible public and private 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 and the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust.

Currently, 1,059 schools and EECFs are participating in the program and 680 (64%) of participating facilities are within environmental justice communities. To date, 915 schools and EECFs have completed testing. Of facilities that have tested and received results, 621 (68%) 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 https://script.google.com/macros/s/AKfycbyr_U8wEMrA-Q2XifkK4l58x4GDtYrltvpKIKUAhSxpww9pSZtA/exec

PFAS Update

EPA Finalizes Stricter Approval Process for New PFAS

In December 2024, EPA finalized amendments to the regulations that govern the Agency's [review of new chemicals under the Toxic Substances Control Act \(TSCA\)](#). The final rule ensures that new PFAS and other persistent, bioaccumulative, and toxic chemicals are always subject to the full, robust safety review process prior to manufacture by eliminating their eligibility for a low volume exemption or low release and exposure exemption.

For more information regarding EPA's actions to address PFAS, see: <https://www.epa.gov/pfas>

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 many assessment levels are there in the Massachusetts Drought Management Plan?

- A. 2
- B. 3
- C. 5
- D. 7

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 pdirector-dwp@mass.gov, Subject DWP Trivia.

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/info-details/board-of-certification-of-operators-of-drinking-water-supply-facilities-approved-education-courses-to-sit-for-examination>

Some Newly Added Trainings on the Calendar

Funding and Financing Strategies for Integrated Hazard Mitigation and Water Resource Plans

Monday, December 16; 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. ET; webinar

In light of increasing development and ever-changing future conditions, increasingly stressed infrastructure, and growing financial pressures, integrating hazard mitigation and water quality-focused resource management is becoming more and more important to the success of water systems and other public-serving entities. While finance and budgeting are often considered a last step in developing a project or program, incorporating a financing strategy early on in any planning process can help ensure long-term project success. In this webinar, we will provide strategies for incorporating funding and financial strategies into integrated plans and explore various solutions for how local communities can pay for water resource projects. [Register here](#).

Ask Me Anything! State Revolving Fund (SRF) Technical Assistance & Open Office Hours

Monday, December 16; 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. ET; webinar

Ask Me Anything SRF Office Hours will expand your knowledge and enhance your ability to navigate the SRFs. These sessions are tailored for state agencies, utility operators, and stakeholders who support water infrastructure projects. Each session will feature a specific theme, providing clarity, strategies, and practical insights for preparing and managing an SRF funded project. Participants can attend all sessions or select those that best meet their needs. Submit your questions in advance or bring them to the session for real-time support from our experts. [Register here](#).

Resilience: Is Capacity Development a Key Piece for Small Water Systems?

Tuesday, December 17, 2024; 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. ET; webinar

The purpose of this free webinar is to highlight the critical role that Capacity Development plays in the resilience of community water systems. The presentation discusses the importance of promoting capacity development and the main concepts related to this effort. In addition, experiences are shared with the impact on the communities in the technical, administrative, and financial areas, from their daily operations as well as in times of urgent need, like after natural disasters. [Register here](#).

Getting Grant Ready Webinar Series for Tribes | Developing a Budget and Budget Narrative

Tuesday, December 17, 2024; 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. ET; webinar

This webinar will provide guidance on developing a budget that accurately reflects your project needs and creating a clear budget narrative that aligns with those needs. Participants will learn how to justify allowable budget items and demonstrate fiscal responsibility in their proposals. [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/eisIsdQnXqE>
- **Environmental Finance Center Network**
For a complete list of trainings webinars and in-person trainings please go to:
<https://efcnetwork.org/training-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:

<https://www.rcapsolutions.org/events/>

- **AWWA**


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

<https://www.awwa.org/event-calendar/>

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**

To subscribe to the *In The Main* Newsletter, send a blank email to join-dep-dwp-subscribers@listserv.state.ma.us.

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, send a blank email to join-dep-dwp-subscribers@listserv.state.ma.us. 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!

2024-12-13

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

For additional information and alerts see [Cybersecurity Resource Hub for MA Public Water Systems \(PWS\)](#). The purpose of this hub is to provide resources for public water systems (PWS) to improve cybersecurity defenses, mitigate cyber-attack risks, and enhance overall resiliency and compliance.



Cybersecurity Tips: Biweekly Spotlight/ Reminders

MassDEP DWP Recommended Actions for PWS

- 1) **Conduct Cybersecurity Assessments for Your PWS:** Periodically assess systems to identify and address vulnerabilities.
- 2) **Develop an Incident Response Plan:** Establish and test protocols for responding to cybersecurity incidents.
- 3) **Train Staff:** Provide regular cybersecurity training to employees so they can recognize and respond to threats
- 4) **Think Before You Click, Recognize, and Report Phishing:** If a link looks a little off, think before you click. It could be an attempt to get sensitive information or install malware.
- 5) **Update Your Software:** Don't delay- If you see a software update notification, act promptly. Better yet, turn on automatic updates.
- 6) **Use Strong Passwords:** Make sure it's long – at least 15 random characters, and avoid using common or easily guessable passwords, such as simple keyboard patterns or slightly modified words, when creating your passwords. Don't share your password with anyone or use the same or similar password for multiple accounts.
- 7) **Enable Multi-Factor Authentication:** You need more than a password to protect your online accounts, and enabling MFA makes you significantly less likely to get hacked.



Stay Vigilant: Online Shopping Threats to Avoid This Holiday Season!!

- For insights into avoiding these threats, check out this article [Warning: Online shopping threats to avoid this Black Friday and Cyber Monday | Malwarebytes](#) . Stay secure while navigating the holiday season!!

Incident Reporting:

- CISA's 24/7 Operations Center at Report@cisa.gov or (888) 282-0870 .
- FBI via your local [FBI field office](#) or the FBI's 24/7 CyWatch at 855-292-3937 or cywatch@ic.fbi.gov.
- Contact the EPA Water Infrastructure and Cyber Resilience Division at watercyberta@epa.gov to voluntarily provide situational awareness.

Additionally, WaterISAC can be notified by emailing analyst@waterisac.org, calling 866-H2O-ISAC, or using the [online incident reporting form](#) .

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

EPA FREE CYBERSECURITY ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

Register for a free assessment with simple steps by using the following link:

<https://www.epa.gov/waterresilience/forms/epas-water-sector-cybersecurity-evaluation-program>.

CISA Free In-Person Cybersecurity Assessments for Selected PWS in Massachusetts

Do you want a cybersecurity assessment from the federal Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)? If you are interested, please let us know at your earliest convenience at program.director-dwp@mass.gov. Subject: CISA Cybersecurity Assessments. PWS will be chosen based on criteria such as PWS type, size, and particularly the timing of their sanitary surveys.



Important Reminder: Sanitary Surveys and Cybersecurity

Is your PWS scheduled for a sanitary survey in 2025? If your PWS is scheduled for a sanitary survey in 2025 **MassDEP/DWP will inspect your cybersecurity assessment findings and plans during the upcoming sanitary survey**

cycle. Any findings will be incorporated in a separate action plan and your PWS will receive technical assistance to assist you to address the findings. Please remember all cybersecurity information is considered as sensitive information and must be kept confidential.

- For details, please refer to the important notice, which was sent on December 28, 2023, to PWS, reminding them of their 2024 sanitary surveys and cybersecurity program assessment report/review: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/important-notice-your-pws-2024-sanitary-surveys-and-cybersecurity-programassessment-report-inspection-reminder/download>
- If you have any questions on this information, you may also contact the Drinking Water Program at program.director-dwp@mass.gov.

NEW Critical Infrastructure Security Updates:

Novel phishing campaign uses corrupted Word documents to evade security

- There is a new technique going around wherein the attackers will create a typical phishing campaign that may include a QR code they want you to scan or perhaps they direct you to a fake phone number then it is business as usual.
- The twist here is they purposefully corrupt the document by injecting malformed data. This apparent corruption triggers Microsoft's repair / revert document function.
- Since the document arrives 'corrupted' it passes through most email security software / scanners or filters. Then, the reverted document is malicious in nature.
- To avoid this when you receive a document (Trusted source or not), and you see a dialogue that claims the document 'needs repair' do NOT allow it to repair, close it and alert the person that sent it such that they can send a proper one or better yet call them and confirm it was them. [Full article.](#)

MITRE Shares 2024's Top 25 Most Dangerous Software Weaknesses

- MITRE has prepared a list of the top 25 software weaknesses bad actors are leveraging. Many of these are simply bugs that have not been patched. Either the manufacturer has not released said patch to repair it yet or perhaps I.T. / End User does not know to do so.
- Some examples include bugs wherein the attacker knows that doing a certain series of events will create something known as a 'dangling pointer' or 'zombie objects' that are running at high privilege and can be manipulated by the attacker to point to other areas in memory that otherwise would not have access to or perhaps execute code of their own. One method involves finding out the memory address of a harmless text field that programmer forgot to set a length limit on and pasting entire programs / binary attack code into them. [Full article](#)

Operational Resilience – CISA's Ten Steps of Resilient Power for Critical Infrastructure Facilities and Sites to Ensure Continuity of Business and Operations (Source WaterISAC)

- Earlier this year, CISA published the Ten Steps to Resilient Power guide to help emergency and business continuity managers implement the Resilient Power Best Practices for Critical Facilities and Sites.
- With power outages due to extreme weather on the rise, utilities are encouraged to consider their energy needs to ensure they are prepared for various contingencies. [Full article.](#)

Cyber Resilience – Steps for Successful Vulnerability Management (Source WaterISAC)

- Organizations that lack proper vulnerability management are significantly more likely to experience a breach.
- According to Verizon's 2023 Data Breach Investigations Report, 60% of breaches involved vulnerabilities for which a patch was available but not applied. Proper patch management can reduce the chances of your utility experiencing a breach by more than half. [Full article](#)



Enroll Today !! Self-Paced Course on Basic Cybersecurity Measures for Water and Wastewater Systems in Massachusetts (Massachusetts Board of Certification Approved for 1 TCH)

- Participants will learn about water sector threats, basic cybersecurity measures, incident response, system resilience, and valuable resources, with the goal of fostering a culture of cybersecurity within their organizations.
- **Enroll Here Free:** <https://classes.wateroperator.org/courses/cybersecurity>

Upcoming Trainings

SANS Webinar: 2024 SANS ICS Water Cybersecurity Survey

Thursday, January 23, 2025; 1:00 p.m. ET; webinar

This webcast will dive into the key findings of a critical survey assessing the safety and security challenges in the water and wastewater utility sector. With a focus on Industrial Control Systems (ICS), SCADA, and Distributed Control Systems (DCS) used in water treatment and distribution, this webinar will explore emerging trends, highlight survey results, and share best practices to strengthen security measures. Don't miss this opportunity to gain valuable insights tailored to the unique needs of water and wastewater organizations. [Register now](#).

Supply Chain Reminders

Tools and Resources:

- [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.

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.

Answer: C