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Department of Environmental Protection

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MassDEP COVID-19 FAQs for Wastewater Service Providers

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This information is available in alternate format. Contact Michelle Waters-Ekanem, Director of Diversity/Civil Rights at 617-292-5751.

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MassDEP COVID-19 FAQs for Wastewater Service Providers

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Answers to questions that have been raised by wastewater operators. This list of questions and answers will be regularly updated. This document's latest questions and answers are highlighted in yellow.

Permit

Question (Permit1): Is there guidance from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on compliance and enforcement?

Answer: In a memorandum from Susan Parker Bodine, dated March 26, 2020 (<https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2020-03/documents/oecamemooncovid19implications.pdf>), the EPA describes its enforcement discretion policy for many of its programs. The guidance, which addresses routine monitoring and reporting requirements, applies to the NPDES program, which is administered jointly by EPA and MassDEP. In guidance specifically regarding the NPDES program, EPA states, "EPA will be looking for individuals/facilities to make every effort to comply with their NPDES permits but if, for reasons related to COVID-19, you are not able to sample or analyze samples required by permit, please submit your discharge monitoring reports through NetDMR using the No Data Indicator or NODI code of "3" - "Special Report Attached". When using the NODI code 3, a facility must provide an explanation in either the comment section of the DMR or in a separate attachment to the DMR. The Explanation should identify (sic) the specific reasons for the sampling/reporting delay. NODI code 3 will not appear as a violation in the public-facing Enforcement and Compliance History Online (ECHO)."

If you have concerns about a Groundwater Discharge Permit, please contact your MassDEP regional office.

Safety

Question (Safety1): If there is no response from regional staff, should I call the state emergency line?

Answer: Call the MassDEP 24-hour emergency line 888-304-1133.

Question (Safety2): Does MEMA arrange for personal protective equipment for this type of emergency?

Answer: MassDEP is not aware of a program currently operating to provide PPE for wastewater systems but has raised this with authorities., and we encourage work with your local emergency management authorities. Visit this page for more information:

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/guidance-for-requesting-personal-protective-equipment-ppe>.

Answer Update 5/11: MA WARN, several water and wastewater utilities, state and regional water and wastewater associations, MassDEP, and EPA Region 1, coordinated on a proposal to FEMA to secure a supply of reusable cloth masks to water supply and wastewater operations.

MassDEP published a survey for two weeks to identify which utilities need the cloth masks. If more masks become available, the survey will be re-published. Several water/wastewater utilities, MA WARN, and MassDEP are coordinating with other utilities on the distribution of the masks, which began arriving in Massachusetts last week.

Finally, EPA's Region 1 has been emphasizing to EPA headquarters and FEMA the importance of water and wastewater services and that these workers are essential.

Question (Safety3): We know MassDEP is strongly encouraging the continuation of discharge monitoring. When should an operator not enter a facility to monitor or inspect? What are best practices that the wastewater service providers should follow?

Answer: Careful implementation of best work practices should always be a priority for employees involved in wastewater management operations, including those at wastewater treatment facilities. This should include using the engineering and administrative controls, safe work practices, and PPE required for work tasks when handling untreated wastewater” (<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/controlprevention.html#solidwaste>). These should also be carefully applied when working in areas where splashing, aerosols, airborne particles or droplets of untreated sewage may be present.

Workers who handle human waste or sewage may be at increased risk of becoming ill from a number of waterborne diseases, potentially including SARS-CoV-2, the causative agent of COVID-19. Although the World Health Organization has indicated that “there is no evidence to date that COVID-19 virus has been transmitted via sewerage systems, with or without wastewater treatment” (<https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-drinking-water-and-wastewater>) emerging data indicates that active virus may be present in fecal matter from some infected individuals. Thus, in the current pandemic, with increased disease rates in the community, SARS-CoV-2 may be present in untreated sewage.

Best practices for protecting the health of workers at wastewater treatment facilities should be followed. Workers should wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), which includes protective outerwear, gloves, boots, goggles, a face shield, and a mask; they should perform hand hygiene frequently; and they should avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

The CDC “[Guidance for reducing health risks to workers handling human waste or sewage](https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/global/sanitation/workers_handlingwaste.html)” (https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/global/sanitation/workers_handlingwaste.html) provides additional information on Basic Hygiene Practices for Workers and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Note that while CDC calls for use of a “protective face mask or splash-proof face shield”, use of both is recommended to provide additional protection against potential splashes or other airborne droplets in areas where splashing, aerosols, airborne particles or droplets of untreated sewage may be present.

According to the CDC (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/faq.html>), “coronaviruses are susceptible to the same disinfection conditions in community and healthcare settings as other viruses, so current disinfection conditions in wastewater treatment facilities are expected to be sufficient. This includes conditions for practices such as oxidation with hypochlorite (i.e., chlorine bleach) and peracetic acid, as well as inactivation using UV irradiation.”

Question (Safety4): Any additional guidance for best practices?

Answer: OSHA 3990-03 2020: Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19
<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) developed this COVID-19 planning guidance based on traditional infection prevention and industrial hygiene practices. It focuses on the need for employers to implement engineering, administrative, and work practice controls and personal protective equipment (PPE), as well as considerations for doing so.

This guidance is intended for planning purposes. Employers and workers should use this planning guidance to help identify risk levels in workplace settings and to determine any appropriate control measures to implement. Additional guidance may be needed as COVID-19 outbreak conditions change, including as new information about the virus, its transmission, and impacts, becomes available.

Question (Safety5): What are the dangers of aeration and mixing? Does COVID aerosolize?

Answer: If present in untreated wastewater, it is possible that active viral particles could get into aerosols or airborne droplets if they are generated from wastewater treatment activities. The CDC and several other organizations have issued information on this issue and guidance for workers relating to SARS-CoV-2 in wastewater and sewage. The current CDC Information is found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/water.html>. This guidance, and the additional safety recommendation to use both a protective face mask AND splash-proof face shield as noted under Question 3, should be carefully followed in situations where exposures to aerosols and airborne droplets of untreated sewage may occur.

Information on the Aerosolization of COVID-19 (Aeration tanks, pumping, septic tanks) has also been published in the University of Minnesota – Water Resource Center (Wastewater and Coronavirus (COVID-19): What are the risks? Published 3/20/20 and can be found here: <https://septic.umn.edu/wastewater-and-covid19>. This publication includes work practice and PPE information.

Secondary treatment aeration processes would be the most likely to expose wastewater treatment facility staff to airborne pathogens. While, in some cases, these are enclosed processes where there is no exposure, in most cases, these are open-air tanks with coarse or fine bubble air diffusers at the bottom of the tank to create aerobic conditions in the tank. Paddle mixers (less frequent, but still present in some facilities) used for aeration will kick up more wet spray than the bottom-of-tank diffusers. Trickling filters, where the wastewater is sprayed over rock media, could also create airborne pathogens. Operations staff will normally need to monitor operations in these tanks by

collecting samples to measure suspended solids and to check dissolved oxygen levels (sometimes there are DO probes installed permanently in these tanks, but they would need occasional operation and maintenance [O&M]). As such, these would be intermittent, short-duration tasks. There may be a few plants with dissolved air floatation for sludge processing, but this process would not create the same risk – the biggest risk for airborne pathogens will be in the aeration process. Of course, PPE would minimize any risk (see Question (Safety11)).

While perhaps not presenting the same airborne risk, there are many other WWTP operations which may routinely expose staff to wastewater/solids, including sampling and analytical activities, process monitoring (e.g. sludge depth testing), equipment O&M. These would expose the operators to wastewater and wastewater residuals, so there could be a high risk of skin contact if they are not wearing appropriate PPE. Note that exposure to unbroken skin other than mucus membranes does not present any direct risk of infection but may increase the potential for secondary exposures attributable to hand-to face-contact or from secondary contamination of other surfaces.

Question(Safety6): Is smoking in wastewater treatment facilities a concern?

Answer: First, there are inherent hazards in smoking in some areas of wastewater treatment works, in that there can be both fire and explosion hazards from sewage gases and/or chemicals used (e.g. methanol), so smoking should be avoided if not prohibited in areas at and near the treatment works. With the onset of the Covid-19 concerns, there could be increased potential of contact through contact with wastewater and then contact with the face/mouth while smoking. MassDEP suggests following MassDPH, WHO, and CDC best protocols to avoid contact.

Question(Safety7): What about safety concerning septic systems and hauling?

Answer: Educate yourself and your staff about the virus, basic hygiene practices, proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and social distancing (both on and off the job – *to reduce community spread, do not go to work if you are sick*). Recommended PPE includes water-repellent gloves, goggles, rubber boots, and hand sanitizer (60% alcohol or greater). This basic PPE should be provided to all staff who are in the field or who potentially will come into contact with septage. Below are links to guidance on worker exposure and PPE. Please contact MassDEP with any questions.

- <https://www.wef.org/news-hub/wef-news/the-water-professionals-guide-to-the-2019-novel-coronavirus/>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/water.html>
- https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/global/sanitation/workers_handlingwaste.html
- <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/controlprevention.html>

Question(Safety8): A Board of Health Agent received a call from an electrician who wires aeration units on Innovative/Alternative (I/A) Title 5 systems. He is concerned that the blowers on these I/A systems may create aerosols from sewage and therefore spread Covid-19. Can MassDEP provide any information and guidance on this topic?

Answer: The aeration units for I/A systems are contained within the tanks underground. This would contain most of the aerosols that may be generated. Additionally, it is important to note that for operational purposes the aeration units of these systems should be set at a low enough rate that it

minimizes the potential creation of any aerosols. The Department is not considering any directive to shut these systems down. The Department does recommend maintaining a safe distance from any vents to these systems as a precaution.

Question (Safety9): Are there any plans for precautionary testing of critical water and wastewater employees in order to prevent spread of COVID-19 throughout our workforce? Also, is MassDEP considering issuing guidance for isolated operation of our Water Pollution Control Facilities while employees are infected. This could become an issue with smaller WPCFs.

Answer: MassDEP is not issuing guidance on the testing of operators. Facilities should work with a healthcare provider for any testing they believe is warranted. MassDEP is not issuing guidance for isolated operation if employees are infected. Facilities should work with their town or company and have an emergency plan in place. For any staffing changes, please notify the MassDEP Regional Office or your EPA facility contact. General guidance on testing is available on Mass.gov at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/frequently-asked-questions-about-covid-19#should-i-be-tested?>

Question(Safety10): I have always completed a walk-through of a customer's house as part of a Title V inspection. With the pandemic of Coronavirus, this is not possible. What should I do?

Answer: UPDATE 5/11: Answer: Although it is considered good practice to enter the premises to confirm the number of bedrooms for occupied homes and gather other information that might affect the performance of the system, as a temporary measure to facilitate Title 5 system inspections during social distancing associated with COVID-19, MassDEP advises that for occupied residential homes an inspector may be able to gather such information by other means. Inspectors can and should access all available information on line where feasible, such as Assessor's records, which typically will indicate the bedroom count. Additional information can also be gathered by directly contacting the Board of Health via phone or email and arranging for file copies of the property to be mailed or picked up. If either the inspector or homeowner has concerns about public health risk during the Covid-19 pandemic, an interior tour of the residence may be done by the homeowner over a video conferencing application that would allow the inspector to ask about and determine the presence of a garbage grinder, presence of water filtration unit, presence of sump pump, verify if laundry discharge is on a separate line, look for signs of sewage backup and verify number of bedrooms. Inspectors should make best efforts to meet the minimum requirements of the system inspection as stated in the Inspection Guidance at: <https://www.mass.gov/guides/guidance-for-the-inspection-of-on-site-sewage-disposal-systems#-minimum-requirements-for-an-inspection->.

MassDEP recommends that the inspector provide documentation on the Title 5 Inspection form of the sources of the information gathered. Documentation could include review of an interior plan of the building and/or the video walkthrough of the building by the current occupant. Any information that is not available should be noted on the form and the inspector should put a comment on the front of the inspection report stating, "Due to COVID-19 issues, the inspector did not enter the premises."

Question (Safety11): Are there any recommendations for minimizing risks of contracting COVID-19 from wastewater operations, particularly from those wastewater

treatment elements which may create more airborne risks, such as aeration tanks, weirs, flumes, sludge processing areas, and confined space areas which may be subject to turbulent flows?

Answer: Recognizing that personal protection equipment supplies may have been exhausted and are difficult to come by, which may limit some facilities ability to implement the safety recommendations noted under Question 3, MassDEP recommends that operational activities in areas where airborne exposure risks are higher be curtailed or modified to the extent feasible, but remain sufficient to retain adequate operating conditions in the plant. Modifications may include: relying on permanent dissolved oxygen (DO) probes in aeration tanks; reducing process control sampling temporarily; observing aeration tank conditions remotely where possible; collecting samples at locations with less risk of airborne pathogens (such as effluent channels from aeration tanks), where sampling is needed; using sampling poles to provide more remote sample collection, and avoiding downwind areas proximate to the aeration tanks at the treatment works. Always notify the appropriate MassDEP Regional Office or EPA contact of any changes to your operations and sampling processes.

Question (Safety12): Can operations and activities be modified to reduce exposure potential? For example, should sampling be conducted at different locations or at reduced frequencies and should there be operational changes during sampling to reduce aerosols?

Answer: Facilities could do all the suspended solids sampling from the effluent conduit from the aeration tanks, which would be subject to less agitation and hence, create fewer airborne pathogens. However, for dissolved oxygen, if they do not have DO probes, they would likely want to take a DO measurement near the tail end of the tank. They could reduce aeration to reduce the intensity of any airborne pathogen spray, but they would need to ensure that doing so would still retain the minimal DO concentration needed to support secondary treatment (generally > 2.0 mg/l). Facilities must notify the appropriate MassDEP Regional Office or EPA contact of any changes to their operations and sampling processes.

Question (Safety13): Should staff be trained in and follow CDC procedures for protecting against exposure to pathogens?

Answer: Licensed wastewater operators have already received training in personal protection and reducing the risk of exposure to pathogens given the nature of their work, so they should be fully aware of the needed safety measures. We have provided the links to OSHA, CDC, and Water Environment Federation (wastewater industry organization) guidelines in this document. MassDEP recommends that staff be reminded to carefully implement all safety measures (see Q3 and Q11).

Question (Safety14): Is there an aerosol hazard from Covid-19 working with wastewater samples in the laboratory, chiefly from agitating and pouring the sample?

Answer: Workers who handle human waste or sewage may be at increased risk of becoming ill from a number of diseases, potentially including SARS-CoV-2, the causative agent of COVID-19. This would include laboratory staff handling such materials. Although the World Health Organization has indicated that “there is no evidence to date that COVID-19 virus has been transmitted via sewerage systems, with or without wastewater treatment” (<https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-drinking-water-and-wastewater>), emerging data indicates that active virus may be present in fecal matter from some infected individuals. Thus, in the current pandemic, with increased disease

rates in the community, SARS-CoV-2 may be present in untreated sewage. Best practices for protecting the health of workers at wastewater treatment facilities, and laboratory staff, handling samples that may contain untreated wastewater should be followed.

Laboratory staff handling samples of untreated sewage should carefully follow all lab safety protocols. Among other requirements these protocols should include use of nitrile gloves, lab coats and eye protection; prompt decontamination of potentially contaminated surfaces; and, removal of all lab coats and other protective equipment before leaving the lab.

Laboratory procedures that may generate aerosols or airborne droplets of sewage that has not been effectively treated for pathogens should be conducted using appropriate Biological Safety Level 2 practices established by the CDC and use of a Class I or Class II biological safety cabinet, fume hood or other lab containment equipment.

OSHA Laboratory Safety Guidance and *OSHA Workplace COVID-19 Guidance* provide additional information.

Question(Safety15): Are current PPE for working with wastewater still considered adequate?

Answer: MassDEP recommends that all staff handling materials containing untreated sewage carefully follow all safety recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). These can be found at “Guidance for reducing health risks to workers handling human waste or sewage” (https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/global/sanitation/workers_handlingwaste.html). MassDEP recommends one additional safety step related to PPE. While CDC calls for use of a “protective face mask or splash-proof face shield”, **use of both is recommended** to provide additional protection against potential splashes or other airborne droplets in areas where splashing, aerosols, airborne particles or droplets of untreated sewage may be present. Careful implementation of best work practices should always be a priority for employees involved in wastewater management operations, including those at wastewater treatment facilities. This should include using the engineering and administrative controls, safe work practices, and PPE required for work tasks when handling untreated wastewater. (<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid19/controlprevention.html#solidwaste>).

Question (Safety16): I am reaching out to find out if MassDEP has had any discussions in-house or with any cities or towns on possibly making up a disinfectant solution which can be applied by a water tanker or something similar to areas such as streets. I understand MS4 and other rules which apply to the waters, streams and rivers would require a de-chlor treatment after application, but we are not living in normal times at this moment. Are there any thoughts or guidelines on if we were to think about doing this in special areas?

Answer: The EPA does not recommend use of fumigation or wide-area spraying to control COVID-19. In addition to the MS4 permit, outdoor spraying of disinfectant could be subject to the federal Pesticide General Permit (<https://www.epa.gov/npdes/pesticide-permitting-2016-pgp>) which covers spraying of chemical biocides that could get into waters of the U.S. Outdoor spraying might also be subject to the state’s pesticide requirements.

Question(Safety17): Have there been any COVID-19 cases traced back to a Wastewater Treatment facility?

Answer: MassDEP has not heard of any such cases.

Question (Safety18): If a worker at a wastewater facility tests positive, what is the quarantine procedure/protocol for the other employees at the facility? Will there be contact tracing? Who does it? Will the employer be notified if an employee tests positive? Facilities cannot afford to lose half their staff to quarantine.

Answer: Contact your local Board of Health right away for protocols for other employees and whether there will be contact tracing as well as guidance on other actions to be taken. We also refer you to the Commonwealth's "Non-Healthcare Essential Service Worker Exposure Guidance" at: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-state-of-emergency>.

Question (Safety 21): I am curious about the number of wastewater treatment professionals that have become ill with Covid-19 so far.

Answer: MassDEP has not been tracking this and has not conducted such a survey. MassDEP is aware of two facilities at which operators have become ill due to the coronavirus and five facilities that have had staff shortages due to COVID-19 related issues. Four of these have returned to full staffing.

Question (Safety 22): What have you heard about fraudulent Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) offers?

Answer: Due to the high demand for PPE, critical infrastructure sectors have experienced a number of fraudulent offers falsely promising PPE in order to capitalize on the coronavirus pandemic. The Federal Bureau of Investigation issued an industry alert to warn government and health care industry buyers of rapidly emerging fraud trends. The alert, along with some recommendations to protect yourselves, is here: <https://www.fbi.gov/news/pressrel/press-releases/fbi-warns-of-advance-fee-and-bec-schemes-related-to-procurement-of-ppe-and-other-supplies-during-covid-19-pandemic>

MassDEP highly recommends all utilities exercise due diligence with emailed or other types of PPE offers, and extreme caution when dealing with vendors with whom they are unfamiliar. Please continue to work with your local Emergency Management Director (EMD) for PPE needs. If you do not know your local EMD, you can find them here: <https://www.mass.gov/find-your-local-emergency-management-director-emd>.

Question (Safety 23): With a possible issuance of PPE by the federal government, we are hoping that both municipal wastewater systems and private wastewater systems will be eligible to receive supplies. Any clarification?

Answer: All wastewater utilities are eligible - both publicly and privately owned.

Question (Safety 24): We need gloves, in addition to masks.

Answer: MassDEP notes this need and will share this feedback with the Command Center. We recommend that you also continue to identify these needs to your local emergency management authorities.

Question (Safety 25): Have you heard anything about wastewater treatment operators being tested for the corona virus or antibodies?

Answer: There is no independent medical testing of wastewater treatment operator program. If there is a need for a medical test for the virus and you cannot get one through your Board of Health or your care provider, please let DEP know (kathleen.Baskin@mass.gov). MassDEP will work with the Command Center to determine what resources may be available.

Question (Safety 26): Can health information on individuals be shared? For example, a utility did an inspection at a customer's home then learned afterward the resident was ill. How broadly can this information be shared?

Answer: MassDEP has consulted with its liaison to the Command Center. Boards of Health cannot share this information beyond first responders and emergency personnel.

Inspections and Repairs

Question (Inspections/Repairs1): Are MassDEP staff performing on-site inspections? We are planning to start up a new pump station within the next 4 weeks, but MassDEP is required to perform an on-site inspection prior to startup.

Answer: MassDEP intends to arrange for and carry out any inspections needed to ensure protection of public health and the environment and which are necessary for systems to carry out their functions. Please continue to let MassDEP know if you will be needing an inspection.

Question(Inspections/Repairs2): Are collection system and pump station/wet well inspections still required to be done?

Answer: Yes. If there are facility-specific reasons why such inspections cannot be performed without endangering personnel or the public, please contact the appropriate DEP Regional Office.

Question (Inspections/Repairs3): Is there any guidance/recommendations regarding repair work (other than emergency work) within the collection systems?

Answer: Wastewater systems should discuss priority projects with their MassDEP regions. If immediate repairs are needed to retain the system in a functional condition, those actions should not be delayed.

Question(Inspection/Repair 4): Nantucket is experiencing severe erosions in areas near discharge beds. Would there be any kind of an update for potential time lines for a MassDEP site visit to the island if required?

Answer: If there is an important matter requiring an in-person site visit or inspection, MassDEP will send its staff into the field and do its best to establish protocols to keep its people safe. Communities

should work with their MassDEP regional contact. Send photos and any other pertinent information, if possible.

Question (Inspection/Repairs 5): What is the response to towns that need conservation commission approval for sewer work in a wetland / resource buffer. Should they appeal to DEP if the towns do not respond accordingly?

Answer: Wastewater management is an essential service. MassDEP has been in consultation with Commissions and with the Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions to help facilitate Commission business during this time. An Executive Order issued allows Conservation Commissions to operate remotely and hold meetings virtually. If there is a project with particular challenges, reach out to the MassDEP Regional Office Wetlands Staff or Wastewater staff who will see how they can assist by contacting the local Conservation Commission to help move things forward.

Question (Inspection/Repair 6): The Board of Health is trying to foster safer physical/social distancing and other precautionary measures for activities associated with septic assessment, design, and installation. For outdoor work such as soil testing and system installation, we have established guidelines for safe conduct of the work during this pandemic. However, concerns remain about maintaining appropriate distancing during in-home inspection/assessment efforts undertaken by septic engineers and Title 5 inspectors and the risks that would be posed for the homeowners and these professionals and septic design and Title 5 inspection professionals have asked us for protection on this.

The Board is aware of the methods by which septic repairs and replacements can be arranged to take place after property transfer (e.g., funds placed in escrow, other information at the mass.gov sources noted below). Such arrangements are typically supported by septic design evaluations having taken place before the property transfer, to help establish appropriate/realistic levels of funding and thus there is still pressure to have the interior inspections (to confirm bedroom counts, etc.).

Might MassDEP be able to identify any strategies, etc. to apply under these extraordinary circumstances of COVID-19, to help guide and ease the challenges that home sellers and buyers are facing? Could MassDEP provide guidance to address the uncertainties of septic cost and design to be addressed when setting up agreements pertaining to post-transfer septic system repairs/replacements?

Answer: Although it is considered good practice to enter the premises to confirm the number of bedrooms for occupied homes and gather other information that might affect the performance of the system, as a temporary measure to facilitate Title 5 system inspections during social distancing associated with COVID-19, MassDEP advises that for occupied residential homes an inspector may be able to gather such information by other means. Inspectors can and should access all available information on line where feasible, such as Assessor's records, which typically will indicate the bedroom count. Additional information can also be gathered by directly contacting the Board of Health via phone or email and arranging for file copies of the property to be mailed or picked up. If either the inspector or homeowner has concerns about public health risk during the Covid-19

pandemic, an interior tour of the residence may be done by the homeowner over a video conferencing application that would allow the inspector to ask about and determine the presence of a garbage grinder, presence of water filtration unit, presence of sump pump, verify if laundry discharge is on a separate line, look for signs of sewage backup and verify number of bedrooms. Inspectors should make best efforts to meet the minimum requirements of the system inspection as stated in the Inspection Guidance at: <https://www.mass.gov/guides/guidance-for-the-inspection-of-on-site-sewage-disposal-systems#-minimum-requirements-for-an-inspection-> MassDEP recommends that the inspector provide documentation on the Title 5 Inspection form of the sources of the information gathered. Documentation could include review of an interior plan of the building and/or the video walkthrough of the building by the current occupant. Any information that is not available should be noted on the form and the inspector should put a comment on the front of the inspection report stating, "Due to COVID-19 issues, the inspector did not enter the premises."

Staffing and Licensure

Question (Staffing1): Can systems avoid receiving notices of non-compliance for staffing shortages if the facilities have SCADA systems in place?

Answer: Staffing shortage is a potential emergency that is required to be covered in existing emergency response plans under 314 CMR 12.00, for wastewater treatment facilities. Facilities should notify their MassDEP Regional Office of such shortages. Facilities should review these portions of their emergency response plans and prepare for the possible implementation of the emergency response plans if circumstances warrant it. MassDEP will work with facilities that are confronting absences to help determine whether other operators may be available to assist or whether remote operations (SCADA) may be sufficient during this emergency time period to substitute for some on-site practices.

Question (Staffing2): What if operators at small systems (facilities that are graded 4 or less) are unavailable due to illness?

Answer: Under existing rules, the person in direct responsible charge during the absence of the Chief Operator can be one grade below the grade of the plant. The Regional Office should be notified. For other situations, MassDEP will review requests received from systems expeditiously.

Question (Staffing3): How can we get more licensed operators?

Wastewater treatment facilities: Identify operators who can assist, including recently retired operators who are familiar with your system, and operators whose licenses recently expired (December 31, 2019).

Wastewater operators: Ensure that your license is active. Here are the options for obtaining a current license:

License Renewal

All licenses that expired on December 31, 2019 have been given an extension to renew. Due to the potential shortage of necessary wastewater operators and the closing of the exam site until April 13th, the Board is giving all operators an opportunity to remain active in the field. If your license has an expiration date of December 31, 2019 and you want to renew, please contact Michelle Jenkins, NEIWPC at 978-349-2516 to complete the necessary form and payment.

Inactive status

(Status change form: <http://neiwpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/statchng.pdf>)

For any operator who is currently under inactive status and could be needed as a backup operator for your facility, the Board will waive the requirement that an inactive operator needs 10 TCH before going back to active status. If you know any operators who have recently gone to inactive status, please reach out to them now about their potential to reactivate and work potentially as a backup operator.

Emergency Certification

(Form: http://click.neiwpc.org/training/training-docs/emergency_cert.pdf)

In accordance with 257 CMR 2.00, any person requesting emergency certification must apply in writing to the Board of Certification. Through a majority vote and for a good cause shown, the Board will grant Emergency Certification to enable an operator to work at a specified facility in a position for which the operator is not otherwise certified. Emergency Certification shall not be granted to employees or managers of contract operation and maintenance firms. Emergency Certifications shall be valid for no longer than six months. Because the exam site is closed until April 13th, operators who have been preparing to take the exam will be allowed to apply for emergency certification to allow them coverage until the exam site is back open and exams can be taken again.

Reciprocity

(Form: <http://click.neiwpc.org/training/training-docs/reciprocity.pdf>)

Wastewater operators certified in another state are able to be certified in Massachusetts through reciprocity. In accordance with 257 CMR 2.00, any person requesting reciprocity must be a certified wastewater treatment plant operator. Your certification must have been based on an examination process recognized by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts or the Associated Boards of Certification (ABC).

Contact

For any questions on wastewater operator licensing please contact John Murphy, Wastewater Operator Certification and Training – MassDEP (john.j.murphy@mass.gov or 617-292-5867).

Question (Staffing4): What else can a system do to increase its number of operators?

Answer: Wastewater treatment facilities are encouraged to **join the Massachusetts**

Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network (MAWARN.org) to find licensed operators who may

be able to help a system meet temporary staffing needs. Also, where staffing permits, systems should consider **cross-training other staff**. The Massachusetts Water Resources Authority has offered assistance in conducting one-on-one sampler training.

Question (Staffing5): A lot of trainings have been cancelled or interrupted, which could mean operators are not able to get the necessary contact hours to maintain their licenses. Can MassDEP and Board extend deadlines for getting contact hours? Can MassDEP provide opportunities for online training?

Answer: MassDEP is currently considering options to host training classes online to make up for recent course cancellations, if needed. In addition, MassDEP will be consulting with the Board on identifying any authority to extend license terms.

Answer Update 5/14: Many online training courses are becoming available. Contact John Murphy for more information: john.j.murphy@mass.gov or 617-292-5867.

Question (Staffing6): If an operator's family member is quarantined, should the wastewater facility ask the operator to stay home too? What if an operator is required to sample at a facility where a case of coronavirus has been confirmed? Do you have any guidance on how to advise the wastewater system?

Answer: These situations will have to be addressed on a case-by-case basis by the facility based on available information and working with public health authorities.

Question (Staffing7): Is there any recommendation on staffing? Should we be splitting up our crews and licensed operators? Should we only be going out on emergency calls and for sampling? Should the staff that are de-watering and performing lab procedures be rotated to eliminate a singular person to be exposed to probably the worst atmosphere possible? Should the personal that perform sludge hauling duty be rotated as well?

Answer: MassDEP encourages and supports all actions to ensure the continuity of treating wastewater during this emergency period, and for the safety of operations staff. Wastewater facilities should take all actions they determine to be necessary to provide the proper treatment and disposal of wastewater during this period and should inform their MassDEP regional office of all such plan or actions. If a split staffing approach is to be implemented, the staffing must always include a properly licensed staff person in responsible charge of the treatment works.

Question (Staffing8): If communities or the state begin shelter in place, how can we assure contract operators (private companies) will be able to travel freely about to collect samples? Can Licensed Wastewater Operators be deemed "essential" and able to travel regardless of whether they are a private entity? Who makes this determination? What documentation is needed by operators and who will provide it?

Answer: The Water and Wastewater section of Exhibit A to the Order issued by Governor Baker on March 23, 2020 is covered under the public works section to "support the operation, inspection and maintenance of essential public works facilities and operations", including water. Please see details here: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/covid-19-essential-services>.

Question (Staffing9): Can an Operator in Training (OIT) be granted full status to help fill in needs for operators?

Answer: These will be reviewed on a case by case basis through the emergency certification process. Contact john.j.murphy@mass.gov for more details.

Question (Staffing10): Can the 960-hour limitation for retirees in the state retirement system, as many DPW workers are, be waived for the duration of the emergency? The theory is many of these retirees would be working fulltime for perhaps an extended period of time.

Answer: On April 3, 2020, Governor Baker signed "An Act to address challenges faced by municipalities and state authorities resulting from COVID-19" (H4598) into law. The law exempts: (i) any person who has been retired and who is receiving a pension or retirement allowance from the commonwealth, a county, city, town, district or authority; and (ii) any person whose employment in the service of the commonwealth, county, city, town, district or authority has been terminated by reason of having attained a specified age without being entitled to any pension or retirement allowance from the caps on hours worked and earnings received during the state of emergency issued by the Governor on March 10, 2020. See Section 14 of the law here: <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2020/Chapter53>

Question (Staffing11): Where is the list of licensed operators?

Answer: Here is the operator search tool. If you don't enter a name you have access to all licensed operators with their city/state location, level of certification and expiration date.

<https://portal.neiwpsc.org/wwo-search.asp>

Question(Staffing12): Is it ok to reduce staffing to one operator per shift?

Answer: If there is any change in staffing the DEP Regional office should be notified. Reducing staffing to a single operator may raise safety concerns. There are some tasks that may require two people to perform safely (confined entry, etc...). Operators should coordinate with DPW or have a non-licensed staff person available for these activities - even if they use separate trucks, etc., to ensure safety.

Question(Staffing13): My public water utility would like to join MA WARN but does not have access to signatories during the COVID 19 emergency. Can the signature requirement be waived, or can my utility sign the membership agreement electronically?

Answer: MA WARN is a *voluntary* organization intended to provide mutual aid to water utilities during emergencies. Participation can be declined by a member for any particular emergency and withdrawal from MA WARN can be done at any time with notice to the group's representative.

Here is the MA WARN website: <http://portal.mawarn.org/Home.aspx>

Here is a general brochure about MAWARN: <http://portal.mawarn.org/Portals/0/MA-WARN%20Brochure%20Revised%20May%202010.pdf?ver=2017-04-24-100420-920>

SIGNATURE AUTHORITY TO BIND THE UTILITY. The person or persons authorized to sign and bind a public utility may not be the same for each system, so the first step in joining MA WARN would be identifying an authorized person to sign. This may be the board of commissioners for a utility, a DPW superintendent, water commissioner, city council or mayor or board of selectmen or town manager.

RELIEF UNDER STATE OF EMERGENCY. There has been no general declaration that changes or relieves any signatory requirements for municipal agreements, so in order to join MA WARN a signature on behalf of the utility is needed to demonstrate the utility's intention to join. MA WARN has published on its website a template for a utility to express its intent to join- but has not provided advice about electronic signatures. The template can be found here <http://portal.mawarn.org/Portals/0/MA%20WARN%20FINAL%202007.pdf?ver=2017-04-24-100420-920> No signature block is reserved for MA WARN to accept the agreement.

MassDEP's recommendation is to obtain a signature of an authorized person for your utility on the template membership agreement, and provide MA WARN with notice that the utility intends to join and has signed the membership agreement. Sending an electronic copy of the signed template form should serve as notice of the utility's intention to join. New England Water Works coordinates MA WARN membership. Please contact Kirsten King at 508-893-7979 or kirsten@NEWWA.org.

Question (Staffing14): Are municipal stormwater permit (MS-4) activities and the people who conduct these activities considered to be “essential” per Governor Baker’s list?

Answer: Yes, essential workers include those involved in public works and wastewater, which include personnel involved in stormwater management activities. EPA has issued some guidance on this – municipalities regulated by EPA’s MS4 permit are encouraged to keep doing the work required by their permits. If they cannot, they should keep track of what cannot be completed and report this in their annual report. Please contact Newton Tedder (tedder.newton@epa.gov) of EPA Region 1’s MS4 program for further information.

Question (Staffing15): Will DEP or the State be helping to bring back retired operators and reinstate them in retirement? The requirement to pay back all the years of retirement benefit is too daunting. Some are not interested in getting just a few weeks’ pay so the increase to maximum hours is not enough.

Answer: DEP will reach out to the Retirement Board to put forth this question.

Question (Staffing 16): Has the Board of Certification given thought to reducing the TCHs needed for license renewal?

Answer: Right now, licenses are in the first 4 months of a 2-year cycle. The Board has not discussed reducing the TCH requirement but can investigate this possibility if needed.

Question (Staffing 17): The Safety and Environmental Manager for the Coca Cola facility in Northampton has a situation of being short-staffed due to an operator being quarantined because of exposure to COVID through a third party. This is a 6C

Industrial facility. How can the facility get an operator? What grade is allowed? Is a lower grade than 6 allowed if the 6C operator is on call?

Answer: For emergency certification of operators please contact John Murphy at Contact john.j.murphy@mass.gov. Facilities in these situations should also contact the appropriate MassDEP Regional Office.

Question (Staffing 18): Is there an updated listing of Board-approved trainers/training providers, for TCHs hours, for Wastewater Operators' licenses?

The Board does not keep a list of approved trainers/training organizations. Trainings are approved on an individual basis using the request for training contact hour evaluation form (<http://click.neiwpc.org/training/training-docs/RequestTCHs.pdf>). Completed forms can be submitted by email to john.j.murphy@mass.gov.

There has been an effort to move more of the training courses online. NEIWPC, MAWEA, NEWEA, and EPA will be doing more online trainings in the next few months. MassDEP has been coordinating with MAWEA about doing their quarterly meetings via online training and with NEIWPC about their doing the Basic Wastewater Course via online training.

Question (Staffing 19): Our Town is considering bringing back all personnel but taking their temperatures every morning. Is this something that the DEP will support, or issue as a guideline? Are other towns taking similar measures? Can the licensing division require that operators wear masks whenever more than one employee is working together? Finally, some discussions have begun for some DPW departments to end their COVID staffing arrangements. Is there any guidance on maintaining COVID staffing arrangements such as split staffing?

Answer: On May 18th, the following guidance was issued by Mass DPH and the Command Center for workplaces open after May 18th: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/reopening-mandatory-safety-standards-for-workplaces>. MassDEP does not have independent guidance on workplace protocols for operators. Towns should continue to work with their local authorities, including Boards of Health, to make sure that the protocols are being followed. The following protection, guidance, and prevention measures apply to both State employees and contracted staff working on behalf of the State: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-employee-health-protection-guidance-and-prevention>.

Question (Staffing 20): When will testing facilities be opened for license exams?

Answer: Exam sites are now scheduled to open May 18th. Please note that the Bridgewater site will not reopen until June 1st. Go to: <https://www.psonline.com/important-notice-update-concerning-covid-19-coronavirus/> for more information.

Residuals/Sludge

Question (Residuals 1): What are the available resources/outlets for solids management in this region?

Answer: MassDEP is compiling a list of these facilities. A partial list is available at the end of this document and at this link: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/massdep-guidance-on-managing-wastewater-sludge-during-covid-19-pandemic/download>

Question (Residuals2): There are concerns about sludge disposal transportation and the availability of haulers.

Answer: Septage hauler companies have been contacted and anticipate little to no disruptions at this time. Facilities should notify their MassDEP Regional Office of any changes in the ability to get a septage hauler to service the facility.

Question (Residuals3): Are sludge haulers considered essential personnel?

Answer: The Water and Wastewater section of Exhibit A to the Order issued by Governor Baker on March 23, 2020 includes workers who "support the operation, inspection and maintenance of essential public works facilities and operations." Sludge haulers play an important role in wastewater treatment operations.

Septage

Question (Septage1): Are there recommendations for facilities treating septage? Any guidance on those facilities accepting septage?

Answer: MassDEP' Office of Research and Standards is reviewing the most current data available for the presence of COVID-19 in fecal matter. MassDEP will provide any updates it discovers, including those that relate to the handling of septage. It is advisable to follow the current CDC guidelines established for wastewater. Please also see the recommendations noted in Question Safety 3 of this document. MassDEP has compiled a list of facilities that accept septage. This list can be found at the end of this document.

Question (Septage2): What should a septage hauler do if a wastewater treatment plant will not accept its waste?

Answer: Proactively communicate with the treatment plants that you frequently utilize for disposal. Massachusetts' municipal wastewater treatment plants remain in operation. However, in response to COVID-19 outbreak and to maintain staffing, these facilities may be limiting hours and rotating staff on shifts or scaling back on the number of staff working in the facility at the same time. As staffing is reduced, some facilities may, in turn, have reduced capacity to receive septage. We are encouraging haulers to speak directly with the facility operators and, if requested, adjust their workloads so that emergency pump outs and crucial jobs are prioritized over routine septic maintenance/pump outs.

A list of Septage Receiving Facilities is posted at: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massdep-covid-19-resources-for-water-suppliers-and-wastewater-operators#wastewater-treatment-system-operator-resources>

For additional assistance or questions, please contact a DEP Regional Office.
<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-department-of-environmental-protection>.

Sampling and O&M

Question (Sampling/O&M1): Can sampling requirements at the facility be reduced or suspended?

Answer: The facility should make best efforts to continue to monitor and sample as required by its discharge permit. The facility should contact its MassDEP Regional Office or EPA's Michael Cobb regarding any difficulties or changes made in the sampling schedule.

Question (Sampling/O&M2): The facility served by the WWTP I operate is shut down and now not generating any wastewater flows. Am I required to sample?

Answer: If there is no effluent discharge for the month, there is no permit requirement to sample plant flows. On eDEP reports, the daily summary sheet should indicate dates for which there was no discharge. Sampling requirements for monitoring wells remain in place. In addition, under these conditions, operations staff should take actions to retain the biomass to the maximum extent feasible, so that the plant can go into a favorable operating condition quickly once wastewater flows are restored. The operations staff should continue to log site inspections and actions in the facility operations logbook.

Question (Sampling/O&M3): Non-flushable products are becoming a problem at wastewater facilities. What can be done to stop the flushing of wipes, etc.?

Answer: MassDEP has posted on social media regarding this problem and will be posting information concerning the proper disposal of wipes and other non-flushable items on its wastewater webpages. Update 5/14 Answer: MassDEP has posted this message here: <https://www.mass.gov/guides/caring-for-your-septic-system> and on Twitter and is exploring new ways to get this message out. We will also continue to advise the Command Center of this ongoing issue.

Question (Sampling/O&M4): Has there been any discussion regarding adjusting chlorine levels in the effluent to favor bacteria kill versus the current goal to achieve a controlled partial kill?

Answer: According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), "coronaviruses are susceptible to the same disinfection conditions in the healthcare setting as other viruses, so current disinfection conditions in wastewater treatment facilities is expected to be sufficient." However, where possible, if the permittee wishes to effect a more rigorous disinfection process, MassDEP

supports this approach, so long as there are controls to prevent against toxic impacts at and near the point of discharge.

Question (Sampling/O&M5): Has there been any discussion regarding adjusting treatment goals? For example, is it permissible if needed to forgo nitrification?

Answer: The facility should make best efforts to continue to treat, monitor, and sample as required by its discharge permit. The facility should contact its MassDEP Regional Office in regard to any changes made in the treatment provided or any planned bypass.

Question (Sampling/O&M6): We are not requiring operators at the plant to enter the headworks of the plant or to take Sludge Judge readings at both the Primary and Secondary tanks. Also, we are not performing any non - necessary maintenance at the plant. The sprayers are turned off to both the Aeration tanks and Secondary Tanks. Is this OK?

Answer: MassDEP encourages and supports all actions to ensure the continuity of treating wastewater during this emergency period, and for the safety of operations staff. Wastewater facilities should take all actions they determine to be necessary to provide the proper treatment and disposal of wastewater during this period and should inform their MassDEP regional office of all such plan/actions and of any deviations from their O&M plans.

Question (Sampling/O&M7): Would MassDEP be open to adjusting compliance schedules within its jurisdiction? If yes, how long of an extension would generally be allowed?

Answer: If a facility has a compliance schedule and believes an extension is required, they should contact its Mass DEP Regional office. These will be evaluated on case-by-case basis.

Question (Sampling/O&M8):What discussions MassDEP has had with U.S. EPA Region 1 on issues related to compliance schedules, reporting extensions and other deadlines that are under EPA's jurisdiction (ACOs, Consent Decrees, NPDES permits, etc.)?

Answer: MassDEP has been in contact with EPA. MassDEP and EPA are also consulting with one another on facility specific requests and will continue to stay in touch on these issues. Questions related to EPA-issued enforcement orders and consent decrees should be directed to EPA, but MassDEP would appreciate being copied on these requests. Questions related to MassDEP-issued enforcement orders for NPDES permits should be directed to the appropriate MassDEP regional office. For questions related to NPDES permit compliance, please remember to make requests to EPA and MassDEP since the NPDES Program is jointly administered.

Question (Sampling/O&M9): For Industrial Pretreatment Programs (IPP) and required industrial sampling and inspections, how will business closures and access for required sampling and inspections be addressed?

Answer: If the facility is in operation and discharging wastewater, it needs to have a certified operator present. If the facility is closed and not operating no inspections or sampling need to be done and it should be reported as no discharge.

Question (Sampling/O&M10): For those of us with septic systems, what household cleaners are you using that will kill the virus & yet be ok for septic systems?

Answer: It is generally recommended that household disinfecting cleaners be used. While it is likely that people are doing more frequent handwashing and more cleaning with disinfectants given the current health threats associated with Covid-19, if these products are used in their intended way, there should not be any severe impacts to the septic system given typical daily volumes discharged. Disinfectant wipes, paper towels and Kleenex should not be flushed to any wastewater system, including a septic system.

Update 5/14: EPA has published a list of disinfectants that are effective against the virus that causes covid-19. It's called List N: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>. The disinfectants on the list have not been tested specifically against the virus that causes COVID-19, but they demonstrate efficacy against a harder-to-kill virus; or against another human coronavirus. All surface disinfectants on List N can be used to kill viruses on surfaces such as counters and doorknobs. It is not safe to drink or inject them. Don't flush them if you have septic because these List N disinfectants may kill the beneficial bacteria that break down the organic matter in a septic system. Please make sure to dispose of personal care products, cleaning supplies, and other household waste properly by **putting them in the trash can, in the recycling bin, or at your local household hazardous waste disposal site.**

Question (Sampling/O&M11): In the event that a sludge incineration facility's staff becomes incapacitated or unavailable, can incinerator operators from other states be substituted?

Answer: While there are no formal reciprocity provisions for states and facilities in the federal incinerator regulations, EPA has indicated that a qualified operator from another facility could work at a "new" facility in the event of COVID-19-related staffing shortages. As long as a qualified operator receives training on the site-specific elements of the "new" facility, for example training requirements **(iii)-(ix) of §62.15920(c)(1)** (see below) as found in the Sewage Sludge Incineration (SSI) Federal Plan, EPA believes the operator training requirements would be fulfilled. EPA views these requirements as something an operator should be familiar with anyway when learning how to operate the "new" facility. If this situation arises, the facility should contact EPA and detail specific reasons why the staff substitution is needed. Documentation that the necessary site-specific training was completed by the visiting operator should be kept with other records related to qualified operator requirements.

40 CFR §62.15920(c)

(c) Training must be obtained by completing an incinerator operator training course that includes, at a minimum, the three elements described in paragraphs (c)(1) through (3) of this section:

(1) Training on the 10 subjects listed in paragraphs (c)(1)(i) through (x) of this section:

(i) Environmental concerns, including types of emissions;

(ii) Basic combustion principles, including products of combustion;

(iii) Operation of the specific type of incinerator to be used by the operator, including proper startup, sewage sludge feeding and shutdown procedures;

(iv) Combustion controls and monitoring;

(v) Operation of air pollution control equipment and factors affecting performance (if applicable);

(vi) Inspection and maintenance of the incinerator and air pollution control devices;

- (vii) Actions to prevent malfunctions or to prevent conditions that may lead to malfunctions;
- (viii) Bottom and fly ash characteristics and handling procedures;
- (ix) Applicable federal, state and local regulations, including Occupational Safety and Health Administration workplace standards; and
- (x) Pollution prevention.

Question (Sampling/O&M12): With limited information available about the COVID-19 virus, operators have expressed concern with sampling raw wastewater as there may be a risk of exposure to coronavirus, it is difficult to maintain social distancing, and personal protective equipment is difficult to obtain. With the potential of UV disinfection killing the virus, effluent samples aren't as critical, but influent has the potential to emit untreated aerosols. We understand that influent results are of value to calculate treatment efficiency in terms of percent removal, but we ask that until the shelter in place mandate is lifted, DEP suspend the influent sampling requirements for wastewater treatment facilities in hotspot locations, such as assisted living/nursing homes and hospitals, that do not have a reportable percent removal permit limit (groundwater discharge permitted facilities).

Answer: As stated in Sampling/O&M1, the facility should make best efforts to continue to monitor and sample as required by its discharge permit. The facility should contact its MassDEP Regional Office or EPA contact regarding any difficulties or changes made in the sampling schedule. We will be looking at these situations on a case-by-case basis and responding directly to those who notify DEP. If a facility anticipates discontinuing influent sampling at a Groundwater Discharge facility please contact Marybeth Chubb, Marybeth.Chubb@mass.gov, and the appropriate DEP Regional Office and provide the following information:

- Name of Facility
- Location of Facility
- Groundwater Permit Discharge Number
- MassDEP Region
- Dates of Influent Sampling Discontinuation
- Reason for Discontinuation of Influent Sampling

Question (Sampling/O&M13): Can't the MassDEP and US EPA give approvals for reasonable relaxation of permit requirements at this time? We asked for one and the message back was - try your best, document, and we'll decide later if it's a violation. It hard to schedule and plan around that. We are all doing scheduling gymnastics to separate employees and some help would be appreciated.

Answer: We can't emphasize enough to work with your regional office of MassDEP or your EPA contact if you are confronting a situation where you think you might violate your permit. They will help you document the situation and assess the potential for any alternatives. They can also help you confirm that there are no alternatives, if that's the case. We want to be sure the operators stay healthy and are able to do their jobs. We recognize that we are in a state of emergency and this is a pandemic.

Question (Sampling/O&M14): I have a ground water permit for a high school, there is no flow. The only thing that could happen is if the school is used in an emergency. Should I still sample even though there is no flow in or out?

Answer: If there is no flow, the effluent does not need to be sampled. Discharge Monitoring Reports (DMRs) should still be submitted through eDEP indicating no flow by entering 'ND' in the flow column of the Daily Data form. Monitoring wells should continue to be sampled on the regular schedule required by the permit. You should notify the regional office of the status of the facility and of any change to that status or any further deviations from sampling.

Question (Sampling/O&M #15): Does EPA intend to relax or modify its MS4 Stormwater Permit for municipalities?

Answer: EPA does not plan to change any MS4 permit milestones for Year 2 of the MS4 permit. As described in the March 26 policy, if a permittee is unable to meet requirements due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, EPA will consider the circumstances on a case-by-case basis when determining an appropriate response. In cases that may involve acute risks or imminent threats, or failure of pollution control or other equipment that may result in exceedance, the permittee should contact the EPA or authorized state as quickly as possible with all relevant info so that regulators can work with the permittee to mitigate or eliminate the risks or threats.

If communities have specific questions related to municipal stormwater requirements, they should reach out to Todd Borci at borci.todd@epa.gov, 617-918-1358. EPA will coordinate closely with MassDEP in responding to issues that arise.

Question (Sampling/O&M 16): We have a common activities log book and daily round inspection/sampling sheets that are filled out by the various operators on each shift. We require all operators to wear gloves and use their own pens during documentation. What have other plants been doing to reduce cross contamination on these common items?

Answer: You could use computer tablets that can be wiped down with Clorox wipes instead of pen and paper. You may also place a disinfectant spray and cloth near the pen and log sheet and ask employees to use it before and after touching the log and pen. Wearing gloves is also recommended.

Question (Sampling/O&M 17): Is DEP expecting all facilities to return to normal (operations) on May 18th?

Answer: No. As you know, water and wastewater operations have already been operating as essential services throughout this emergency situation. MassDEP, EPA and the utilities have engaged in regular communication throughout this event to ensure that water and wastewater facilities can continue to perform their critical functions to protect public health. On May 11th, the Baker-Polito Administration announced a four-phase approach to reopening the Massachusetts economy amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, and published Mandatory Workplace Safety Standards that will apply across all sectors and industries once reopening begins. The goal of the phased reopening, based on public health guidance, is to methodically allow certain businesses, services, and activities to resume, while protecting public health and limiting a resurgence of new COVID-19 cases.

<https://www.mass.gov/news/baker-polito-administration-announces-four-phase-approach-to-reopening-and-publishes-mandatory>

As the re-opening phases move forward, MassDEP will provide timely and reasonable notice of any planned changes to the compliance and operational guidance it has provided throughout the emergency.

Laboratory Services

Question (Lab1): I have had questions from multiple utilities on how or whether the labs will operate with the quarantine? Will you or do you have special conditions for sample drop off?

Answer: At this time the labs that have shared their status with MassDEP have indicated that they remain open for business but may have instituted new procedures for sample delivery and drop off. Wastewater facilities should contact their lab regularly and confirm whether they need to modify any of their routine practices. Labs can contact MassDEP's Wall Experiment Station for guidance on sample drop-off.

Question (Lab2): Are laboratories that do water quality testing to ensure fit and pure water and compliance with regulatory requirements would be considered "Essential Services" for purposes of the Order issued by Governor Baker on March 23, 2020?

Answer: They are. Laboratories are listed as essential in the Water and Wastewater section of Exhibit A to the Governor's Order, which includes personnel for "required sampling or monitoring" and for "distribution and testing."

Question (Lab3): The current Water Pollution study for laboratories closes on April 23, 2020 with no grace period. Any results not entered in the database by that date are considered not acceptable. If a laboratory fails to report a second time, it loses certification in that parameter. Will EPA consider a one-year extension of that deadline to April 2021.

Answer: EPA is extending both Study 40 and Study 39 and is developing guidance. The EPA contact is Greg Savitske, at (202) 564-2601 DMRQA@epa.gov

Update 5/14 Answer: EPA has announced that it has settled dates for the DMR-QA Study 40. This is an annual lab audit process for NPDES facilities and contract labs. There was some talk of cancelling or postponing in light of COVID-19, but now it will go forward with modified dates. The schedule and milestone dates are as follows: EPA will accept DMR-QA proficiency test standards for Study 40 that were ordered on or after March 20, 2020. EPA will continue to accept water pollution proficiency test standards where the study closed on or after January 1, 2020.

Question (Lab4:) Would DEP consider creating, and updating weekly, a list of laboratories and their current capabilities and contact information. It should identify drinking water and wastewater testing laboratories in service during the crisis.

Answer: DEP will investigate what information it has to create such a list and will update this response accordingly.

Chemicals and Other Supplies

Question (Supplies1): What if there is a shortage of necessary chemicals? Are chemical delivery companies considered essential personnel?

Answer: Yes, they are covered under the Governor's directive that essential staff include "*Employees needed to operate and maintain public and private drinking water and wastewater/drainage infrastructure.*"

MassDEP wants to know what chemicals are most in short supply. If you are concerned that your facility is or may be running out of chemicals in the near future, please notify your MassDEP Regional Office at once. MassDEP will work with federal and state authorities to see if we can help address such a shortage. But timely notification is essential to avoid disruption.

According to the Order issued by Governor Baker on March 23, 2020, "Essential Services" include workers who transport basic raw chemicals.

Question (Supplies2): Does MassDEP require official notification of a reduction in chemical dosing, such as hypochlorite, to conserve use?

Answer: Conservation of chemicals may be used to extend supply but the facility is still required to comply with the limitations of its permit and should not limit the use to the extent it causes discharge violations. Please notify the U.S. EPA and DEP Regional Office of any chemical shortages you are or may have.

Question (Supplies3): Can we get a waiver to store more chlorine on-site over the coming months?

Answer: Yes. But with prior notification to and approval by regional MassDEP staff, permission will be granted so long as proper protections are in place on receipt, storage, and use of the disinfectant chemicals.

Question (Supplies4): Some wastewater facilities are ordering way more chemicals than they would normally need, and other suppliers are concerned about this. Wastewater systems should be planning chemical usage and not "hoarding."

Answer: MassDEP strongly discourages hoarding of supplies as this could result in a shortage of supplies impacting the operations of many systems. We encourage you to coordinate with neighboring facilities if you do have ample supplies.

Question (Supplies5): Fuel supply and backup power? What if there is a shortage of fuel?

Answer: At this time, there have been no reports to MassDEP regarding the lack of sufficient fuel supply, or storage. If you are concerned about this matter, you should speak directly with regional MassDEP staff to determine appropriate next steps.

Question (Supplies6): I have heard that wastewater treatment plants may not be able to purchase oxygen. This is a concern since it is used in some facilities in secondary treatment processes supply issue.

Answer: MassDEP regions contacted the local water and wastewater facilities that rely on oxygen supplies. While we did identify one plant that is reliant on oxygen – without a backup treatment technology – this plant’s supplier has assured us that it will be able to receive oxygen. A second plant is also reliant on oxygen but may be able to rehabilitate its backup system so it would not need to receive oxygen. Currently both of the plants report having sufficient supplies of oxygen. Nevertheless, we want to know if this becomes a concern. Please notify your MassDEP regional office or your EPA contact of any oxygen supply concerns.

Reporting

Question (Reporting1): What are MassDEP’s expectations of reporting going forward? We want to make sure reporting still takes place and the appropriate people in each region are receiving it.

Answer: For Groundwater Discharge Permit facilities, reports are required to be submitted through eDEP an online service provided by DEP and accessible from any computer with user name and password.

To submit to eDEP go to:

<https://edep.dep.mass.gov/edep/DEPlogin.aspx? ga=2.52116073.1959123745.1584731304-1877506371.1584731304> .

If sampling is not done, please report ‘NS’ for ‘Not Sampled’ on the appropriate eDEP data form. Please use the Comments Section to note the reason(s) samples were not collected.

Please contact Linda Barba, Linda.Barba@mass.gov or 617-556-1150 with any eDEP questions for Groundwater Discharge reporting.

For NPDES Facilities, reports are required to be submitted through netDMR, which can be accessed here: <https://cdx.epa.gov>. Please contact Neil Handler, handler.neil@epa.gov .

Question (Reporting2): Can MassDEP give wastewater facilities time extensions on paperwork deliverables, such as 15-year Engineering Assessments, DMR’s, and staffing plans?

Answer: MassDEP will consider these types of requests and will continue to re-evaluate circumstances throughout the spring and summer. Groundwater discharge facilities should contact their regional office of MassDEP to request extensions for any paperwork they think will be submitted late. NPDES facilities should contact their regional MassDEP office, as well as U.S. EPA to request extensions. EPA contacts are Dave Turin (turin.david@epa.gov; 617-918-1598) for the Southeast Region and Doug Koopman (koopman.douglas@epa.gov; 617-918-1747) for all other regions.

Question (Reporting3): What should we do about the NPDES Discharge Monitoring Report Quality Assurance (DMR-QA) Study 40?

Answer: EPA is aware of the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. To address these challenges and provide greater flexibility to regions, states, PT providers, permittees and laboratories, EPA has decided to continue this year’s study under a modified schedule. We will accept DMR-QA proficiency test (PT) standards that were ordered on or after March 20, 2020. We will continue to accept Water Pollution (WP) PT standards where the study closed on or after January 1, 2020. The Study 40 closing date and all other milestones will be extended to allow participants additional time to complete the study.

The following table provides new milestones for DMR-QA Study 40. If you have any questions or concerns about the revised dates, please let Greg Savitske (Savitske.Gregory@epa.gov) know as soon as possible.

Date	Milestone
March 20, 2020	DMR-QA Study 40 begins, labs may begin ordering PT samples
May 29, 2020 <i>(was April 24)</i>	Address Verification Forms due to State DMR-QA Coordinator
October 2, 2020 <i>(was July 2)</i>	Study 40 ends. Labs: deadline to submit ungraded Data Report to PT Providers.
October 30, 2020 <i>(was July 31)</i>	PT Providers: deadline for sending graded results to labs
November 13, 2020 <i>(was August 14)</i>	Labs: deadline to send graded results to Permittees. For “Not Acceptable” results, labs to begin ordering retest samples as soon as possible
December 4, 2020 <i>(was August 28)</i>	Permittees: deadline to submit signed and completed Permittee Data Report Form to State DMR-QA Coordinator Labs: send corrective action letter including any retest results <u>as soon as possible</u> to your Permittee, if applicable.
January 29, 2021 <i>(was October 23, 2020)</i>	Permittees: deadline to submit Corrective Action Report, including retest results, to State DMR-QA Coordinator

Participants in this year’s DMR-QA study should focus on fulfilling day-to-day operations at their facility; the extended timeline we are proposing should provide greater flexibility for participants to complete study requirements. The EPA contact is Greg Savitske, at (202) 564-2601 DMRQA@epa.gov.

Question (Reporting4): Is there more guidance on NPDES permits?

Answer: EPA Region 1 has provided the following guidance, “NPDES Annual reports can be attached and sent through NetDMR for receipt by both EPA and MassDEP. For any questions related to NetDMR, contacts are Diane Castricone and Marie MacDonald. If for any reason a permittee cannot submit the report through NetDMR, it can be sent via email to EPA and MassDEP. For EPA, reports should be sent to Dave Turn (turin.david@epa.gov) for the Southeast Region and to Doug Koopman (koopman.douglas@epa.gov) for all other regions.” For MassDEP, reports should be sent to your regional office contact.

Question (Reporting5): What No Data Indicator (NODI) code should be used for COVID-19?

Answer: The NODI code “Z” is to be utilized for reporting in netDMR when sampling data are not available due to the COVID-19 pandemic. More information is available in the document entitled *Temporary Advisory for NPDES Reporting in Response to COVID-19 Pandemic*, issued by EPA on March 31, 2020.

Question (Reporting6): Will there be time extensions for submitting Annual Reports for Industrial Pretreatment Programs (IPP)?

Answer: The guidance in the EPA Memo *COVID-19 Implications for EPA’s Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Program* issued by Susan Parker Bodine on March 26, 2020 applies to annual reports for IPPs.

Funding

Question (Funding1): Are there funds available for COVID expenses?

Answer: There may be funds made available through FEMA to cities and towns, state agencies and certain non-profits in all Massachusetts counties to help pay for emergency protective measures (response costs) related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Sheets to track expenses provided by MEMA are located here: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/fema-3438-em-ma-covid-19-emergency-declaration> MEMA has sent out the information through its list service. DPH linked to the MEMA announcement and sent it to their list services, which included municipal partners. Anyone seeking reimbursement will likely need to be able to provide documentation of expenses as well as the authority under which emergency actions were performed, i.e. state or federal emergency declaration.

Question (Funding2): Can you please provide an update on plan for finalizing the Clean Water Intended Use Plans that will be financed through the Clean Water SRF loan Program. Particularly regarding the Asset Management Planning Grants, do you anticipate any effects on the timeline or procedural changes for the June 30th Appropriation of Local Funds, October 16th Financing Application deadline, or any other program changes?

Answer: The comment period on the Intended Use Plan closed on March 16, 2020 and MassDEP is working to finalize the IUP. MassDEP and the Clean Water Trust have issued the following statement:

COVID-19 Guidance for State Revolving Fund Borrowers

Due to protocols put in place by the State of Massachusetts in response to the COVID-19 emergency, MassDEP and the Clean Water Trust are working remotely during this time. Both agencies are fully functional and the day to day operations continue to assist borrowers in funding their projects.

We have heard from many communities concerned about their ability to hold town meetings or sign contracts due to availability of construction materials and the uncertainty of the impact the COVID-19 emergency will have on project costs.

Additional Subsidy for 2019 Intended Use Plan (IUP)

In response, MassDEP and the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust (the Trust) have extended the deadline to qualify for additional subsidy for eligible borrowers in the 2019 Intended Use Plan for both the Clean Water and the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (SRF) programs. **Additional subsidy will be disbursed over construction contracts that are executed by August 14, 2020.** This 45-day extension will be reassessed and may be further extended if so required. MassDEP and the Trust remain committed to work with borrowers during these challenging times to ensure SRF financed projects are implemented in order to protect public health and the environment.

Local Authorization for 2020 IUP

The final IUPs, when published, will state that to be considered for funding priority, **communities must have appropriated the necessary local project funds or have committed to a schedule to obtain those funds by October 16, 2020.** This deadline will allow for communities to plan for a town meeting in the fall in time to submit the complete SRF loan application.

For questions please contact:

Maria Pinaud, Division Director for Municipal Services at MassDEP

Maria.Pinaud@mass.gov

Nathaniel Keenan, Deputy Director, Massachusetts Clean Water Trust

nkeenan@tre.state.ma.us

Question (Funding3): Is there any consideration for grant deadline extensions?

Answer: MassDEP is looking into extensions for existing grants for all of its programs. It is also considering allowing electronic submission of new grant requests and additional time for responding to these new grant requests.

Question (Funding 4): The economic impacts are likely to last beyond the virus. With the economic downtrend, how will revenue and rates be affected?

Answer: This question affects both water and wastewater. Many of you are looking ahead to what impact there will be on operations with less water usage, larger customers being idle, and the possibility of more people having trouble paying bills. We have identified these concerns at the state level. There are groups at the National level that represent water and wastewater utilities that are raising this issue with Congress. We will update this information as we learn more.

Question (Funding 5): Section 11, Chapter 53 of Acts of 2020 prohibits the shutoff of water service until June 30, 2020. However, Section 11 discusses interest charges but states “may” waive the payment of interest. Yesterday’s call indicated that it must waive interest, which is it?

Answer: Section 11 states (with emphasis added):

“[T]he Chief Executive Officer of a city or town . . . or the prudential committee or commissioners of a district may waive the payment of and other penalty in the event of late payment of any excise, tax, betterment assessment or apportionment thereof, water rate or annual sewer use or other charge added to a tax for any payments with a due date on or after March 10, 2020 and made after its respective due date but before June 30, 2020, if the nonpayment resulted from a demonstrated inability to pay due to circumstances related to the outbreak of COVID-19 or the governor’s March 10, 2020 declaration of a state of emergency; provided that the inability to pay shall include a demonstrated financial hardship of a resident, which may include, but not be limited to, loss of employment, serious illness of someone within the home or death of someone within the home” (<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2020/Chapter53>).

Our General Counsel’s Office notes (as the question itself did) that the language of Section 11 uses the phrase “may waive” for any late payments on bills that were due “on or after March 10th”, with the conditions: (1) a resident must demonstrate an “inability to pay” due to COVID-19; and (2) the provision applies to payments received before June 30, 2020. Public water suppliers should seek the advice of their Town Counsels when interpreting Chapter 53 of Acts of 2020.

Question(Funding6): What is the status on the CWSRF IUP finalization?

Answer Update 5/14: The IUPs for both Clean Water and Drinking Water SRF have been finalized and can be found here: <https://www.mass.gov/lists/2020-final-srf-intended-use-plans>.

Question (Funding 7): Is there infrastructure money in any of the stimulus bills coming out of Washington? Are water and wastewater projects part of the infrastructure money? Will the money be distributed as it was in 2009 from the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act - through SRF funding? Should facilities be thinking about "shovel-ready" projects?

Answer: There has not been a bill passed yet but there is a lot of work being done on this. MassDEP will continue to monitor this and provide updates.

Question (Funding 8): Would the attendance and participation in the weekly MassDEP COVID-19 briefings be reimbursable expenses for water and wastewater personnel?

Should water and wastewater personnel keep a record of their attendance at these briefings and submit their time, along with other COVID-19 expenses, to FEMA through their municipality or district?

Answer: MassDEP recommends that water and wastewater personnel keep track of all COVID-19 related expenses. However, FEMA makes the final decisions on what is reimbursable.

Question (Funding 9): Can there be direction on how to fill out the MEMA needs spreadsheets that support reimbursement under the FEMA COVID-19 Federal Disaster Declaration?

Answer: There is a lot of information on the COVID-19 Federal Disaster Declaration here:

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-federal-disaster-declaration>, including a “Questions” section which is portal to submit questions to MEMA. MEMA checks this site and ensures all questions are answered. Please follow this link to go directly to the question form:

https://massgov.formstack.com/forms/em3438_declaration_fema_pa_questions. Also, MEMA recently held applicant briefings to provide guidance on filling out the reimbursement forms. MEMA will post the recordings, slides, and Q&As shortly.

Research

Question (Research1): Given the time between the Biobot sample being collected and analyzed, wouldn't it be prudent to assume that the virus is alive at the WWTF?

Answer: While there has been testing done on fecal matter from COVID patients indicating low viability of the virus, MassDEP strongly recommends that all staff handling materials containing untreated sewage carefully follow all safety recommendations by the CDC. These can be found at “Guidance for reducing health risks to workers handling human waste or sewage” (https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/global/sanitation/workers_handlingwaste.html).

Careful implementation of best work practices should always be a priority for employees involved in wastewater management operations, including those at wastewater treatment facilities. This should include using the engineering and administrative controls, safe work practices, and PPE required for work tasks when handling untreated wastewater”

(<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid19/controlprevention.html#solidwaste>).

Question (Research #2): Is there any update on Biobot sampling program?

Answer: The Biobot research is new and emerging and MassDEP will continue to follow it. MassDEP does not have an update. MassDEP did provide the information reported to it from one of the participating systems to the Command Center so that the public health officials also have it. Update 5/6: A few participants on the call provided information that Biobot was expanding the sampling and had reached out to the state for funding. DEP will follow-up through the Command Center to see who Biobot is working with at the state. It was also stated that the Biobot sampling cost

would be going up to \$1200 per sample in June. The Biobot website can be found here: <https://www.biobot.io/covid19>.

Additional Information

Calling all drinking water and wastewater operators who are willing to assist other facilities!

Please fill out this survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/5VTP5SS>

Question (AdditionalInfo1): What actions should water and wastewater system operators take to address the Coronavirus?

Answer: There are several best practices that operators can adopt to minimize interruption of services as well as illness of employees. These include:

Review your Emergency Response Plan (ERP) with staff, with a focus on the pandemic/communicable disease section. Update as necessary to ensure continuity of operations in the event a staff member or members become affected and must quarantine. Remember, a shortage or lack of resources that could affect operations of your system is considered an emergency under 310 CMR 22.04(13).

Participate in mutual aid programs! Being a member of MAWARN and/or the statewide mutual aid programs will be of value if you need to call upon other communities' resources for assistance. **If you are not part of any mutual aid program, you can access the forms at these links:**

- **MAWARN** – Massachusetts Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network download the application at www.mawarn.org and submit to Kirsten King at NEWWA.
- **Statewide Mutual Aid** - <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/intrastate-mutual-aid>

Reach out to your neighboring utilities to see what they may be doing to plan. Good communication before an event is key to response and recovery. If neighboring utilities are not members of MAWARN or other mutual aid, encourage them to join.

Check in with your chemical suppliers and other critical vendors to see if any deliveries may be impacted and what you can do to ensure you have enough supply through advance purchases. Check in with other key suppliers for status on materials.

Fuel your service vehicles and generators. Equip your vehicles with cleaning supplies and personal protective equipment.

Encourage all employees to get the flu shot if they have not done so already as this helps to boost your immune system. It's not too late!

Curtail interactions; practice "social distancing."

Question (AdditionalInfo2): Where can I find information for the wastewater industries?

Answer: Below are links to helpful resources for the **wastewater industries**:

MassDEP

- Wastewater & COVID Guidance: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massdeps-covid-19-information-resources>
- Recordings of the Commissioner's calls, as well as Q&As for both wastewater and water supply are at: <https://www.mass.gov/lists/covid-19-information-for-drinking-water-and-wastewater-operators>
- Wastewater Programs: <https://www.mass.gov/wastewater>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

- https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/global/sanitation/workers_handlingwaste.html
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/water.html>

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Guidance on Coronavirus and Drinking Water and Wastewater

- <https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-drinking-water-and-wastewater>
- EPA document on enforcement and COVID-19 on 3/26: *COVID-19 Implications for EPA's Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Program*: <https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2020-03/documents/oecamemooncovid19implications.pdf>
- EPA March 31st document link: <https://netdmr.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/360041746231-Temporary-Advisory-for-National-Pollutant-Discharge-Elimination-System-NPDES-Reporting-in-Response-to-COVID-19-Pandemic>
- Disinfectants that can be used against COVID: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>
- EPA press release: <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-urges-states-support-drinking-water-and-wastewater-operations-during-covid-19>
- Letter: https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2020-03/documents/wheeler_gov_covid-19_ow_3-27.pdf

American Water Works Association

- <https://www.awwa.org/AWWA-Articles/coronavirus-and-water>

Water Environmental Federation

- <https://www.wef.org/news-hub/wef-news/the-water-professionals-guide-to-the-2019-novel-coronavirus/>

- <https://www.wef.org/wef-waterblog/wef-waterblog/a-message-to-the-wef-community-about-coronavirus/>

WaterISAC, a membership organization and international security network created by and for the water & wastewater sector:

- <https://www.waterisac.org/>
- <https://www.waterisac.org/portal/business-continuity-planning-event-influenza-pandemic-reference-guide>

WaterOnline-Coronavirus-What Treatment Professionals Need To Know

- <https://www.wateronline.com/doc/coronavirus-and-the-water-cycle-here-is-what-treatment-professionals-need-to-know-0001>

Stantec article

- <https://ideas.stantec.com/water/coronavirus-and-the-water-cycle-here-is-what-treatment-professionals-need-to-know>

Question (AdditionalInfo3): Where can I find more general information?

Answer: Below are additional links to helpful resources:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

- <https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus>
- “Top 10 List Pandemic and Natural Disasters Notebook” (being updated now; tips are still relevant, but some links are outdated):
<https://www3.epa.gov/region1/eco/drinkwater/pdfs/TopTenFlu.pdf>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

MA Department of Public Health (MDPH)

- <https://www.mass.gov/resource/information-on-the-outbreak-of-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>
- <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-guidance-and-directives#businesses-&-employment->

Solids Management Facilities

RMI - rmi@rmirecycles.com 603-536-8900

Casella - Patrick Ellis - patrick.ellis@casella.com 603-661-3820

Synagro - Pat Rimkoski - primkoski@synagro.com 860-483-0160

Waste Management - Jason Barroso - jason.barroso@wm.com or jbarroso@wm.com

UBCW is the only Massachusetts incinerator

MWRA is a dryer and pelletizer

Hoosac Valley is the only large compost facility

Gardner MA is the only sludge mono of which MassDEP is aware

There are some small-scale composters that recycle sewage sludge also.

Englobe (Quebec) is taking solids from at least northern New England; contact: Nicholas Leblanc, Nicholas.Lebblanc@englobecorp.com, 819.829.0101, ext. 182033

Veolia runs two major merchant incinerators, one in CT and one in RI. contact: Dan Gorka, daniel.gorka@veolia.com, 401-265-1085

Denali Water provides solids management services, and has a significant presence in upstate NY: contact: Jason Fleury, jason.fleury@denaliwater.com, 479-498-0500

Agresource manages biosolids composts and other soil amendment products and has considerable expertise: info@agresourceinc.com, 978-388-5110

Septage Receiving Facilities

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massdep-covid-19-resources-for-water-suppliers-and-wastewater-operators#wastewater-treatment-system-operator-resources->