



UTAH DEPARTMENT of
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

**DRINKING
WATER**

Public Water System COVID-19 Readiness Actions

The Division of Drinking Water is here to help water systems put measures in place that ensure operations during the coronavirus pandemic. Public water systems maintain and provide a safe and reliable drinking water supply. This is an essential service. Water operators are frontline personnel and should be prepared to address impacts to water supply due to any interruptions related to coronavirus. The Division of Drinking Water is advising all water systems in Utah to take the following actions.

Critical Operations Preparedness

- Continue to take the required compliance samples and report results to the Division of Drinking Water. Many laboratories in Utah remain open, fully functional and ready to assist. Your continued compliance with drinking water quality monitoring is essential.
- Continue to respond to customer complaints and inquiries. Document and maintain records of customer complaints and your response.
- Develop a site visit protocol if water operators' interaction with customers is needed.
- Stay stocked on chemical supplies and order products in advance to avoid delays from suppliers.
- Generate a back-up supplier contact list for essential chemical and operation needs.
- Update/create detailed written instructions for crucial operations (i.e. shutdown, water quality sampling, public notification, label critical pipes/valves).
- Review/update emergency response plans and contacts. Identify key customers—hospitals or care facilities—with special needs
- Identify essential employees required to maintain continuous operation and designate an emergency backup for these employees in case they cannot report to work.
- Discuss cybersecurity precautions when using remote access. Back-up critical files frequently as a prevention measure to restore data.
- Consider emergency food and necessities at 24-hr facilities for personnel working long or extended shifts.
- Limit meetings, gatherings, and travel. Switch to virtual meetings or conferencing. Encourage personnel to postpone all non-essential travel to areas affected by COVID-19.
- Educate residents that their public water supply is safe and that public drinking water systems are designed to continuously deliver safe drinking water to their taps. Drinking water treatment and disinfection protect Utah's population with safeguards against water-borne viral infections.
- Encourage personnel to stay home when they are sick. Provide work-from-home or sick leave options. Discuss backup or alternative shift rotations for personnel that need to stay home to care for themselves and/or loved ones.
- The Utah Water and Wastewater Agency Response Network (UTWARN) is compiling a pool of certified water and wastewater operators that may provide emergency on-site assistance or backup coverage. You do not need to be a member of UTWARN and we encourage you to participate with this effort. If you may need to bring in external assistance for system operation, consider preparing in advance for facilities to be operated by an outside operator (i.e. access to facilities, communication tools to contact sick operators, locate critical SOPs, identify critical components).

Contact the Utah Division of Drinking Water's mainline (801) 536-4200, or the emergency response number (801) 560-8456, or email ddwreports@utah.gov, with concerns, inquiries or emergencies.