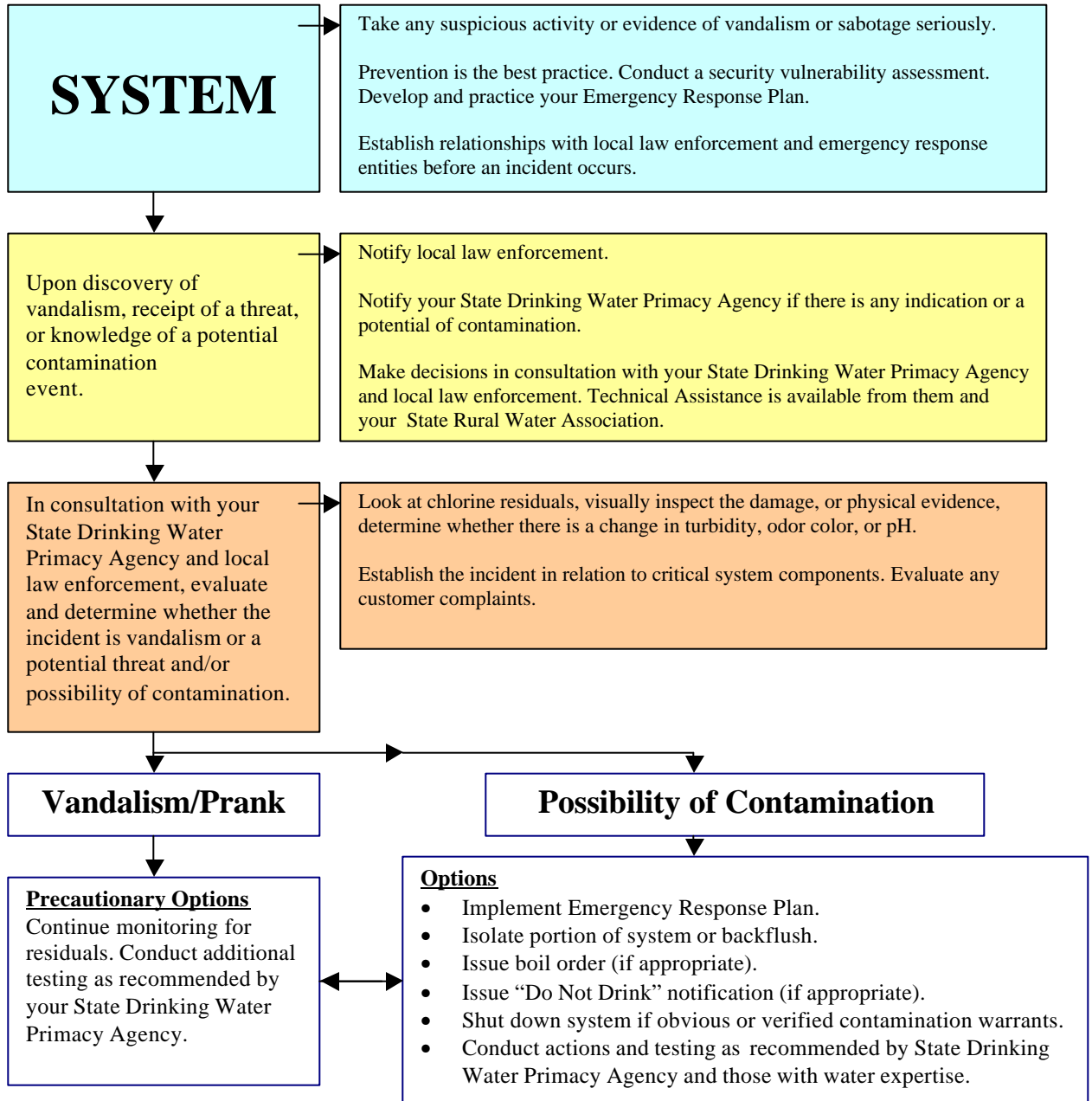




# A Utility Guide For Security Decision Making

These guidelines are designed to assist utilities in determining the level of security concern if a break-in or threat occurs at the water system and to assist the utility in appropriate decision making and response actions. These various steps and actions can be adjusted to meet the needs of specific situations and to comply with individual state requirements. **Specific actions should be undertaken in consultation with your State Drinking Water Primacy Agency.** Technical assistance is available from your state drinking water primacy agency and state rural water association for prevention initiatives such as vulnerability assessments, emergency response planning, and security enhancements.



- Do not disturb evidence and document what you see. Keep notes and take photos as you go.
- Collect samples for future analysis and store them appropriately.
- Alert other officials as appropriate and keep the public informed (designate one spokesperson).
- Use the expertise in public drinking water supplies and public health in the decision making process.
- Preventative measures are the best practice to prevent such an incident.
- Prior communication with the local law enforcement authorities and local emergency response entities prevents confusion and defines who has responsibility for what, when an incident occurs.

## **A Joint Collaboration between the National Rural Water Association and the Association of State Drinking Water Administrators**

**Prevention First** Simple security precautions and procedures should be a first priority for all size systems. Conducting a security vulnerability self-assessment and developing and practicing your Emergency Response Plan in cooperation with your local law enforcement and local emergency response entities prior to an incident is essential for a proper response to any emergency.

### **Discovery or receipt of threat**

- Take any suspicious activity or evidence of vandalism or sabotage seriously.
- Document what you see and take photos and keep notes as you go.
- Contact local law enforcement.
- Notify the regulatory authority (State Drinking Water Primacy Agency).
- Notify other agencies and organizations as appropriate.
- Map customer complaints.

**In The Event of An Incident (break-in, damage or threat)** - Local law enforcement should be notified. Notify the state drinking water primacy agency if there is any question or potential of contamination.

**An initial evaluation must be made by the system owner or operator to make appropriate decisions on any actions that should be taken. The initial evaluation should include a review of:**

- Physical evidence such as containers or material in the intrusion area.
- A quick check for chlorine residuals in all parts of system.
- A visual check of finished water as to turbidity, odor, color, or pH.
- Intrusion or incident location in relation to critical system components such as finished water supply.
- Other items and areas relevant to the system operation and environment.

**Consultations in Decision Making** - The system may want to obtain assistance in the evaluation process and obtain input as to the appropriate actions to take. This input is best obtained from those with expertise in law enforcement, and drinking water treatment, distribution, and its impact on public health. The system should work with the state drinking water primacy agency, the National Rural Water Association and other drinking water professional organizations, as well as emergency response agencies, in the decision making process. These decisions must be made jointly to ensure public health protection and to avoid adverse affects. For example, a non-water person may suggest that the system be drained. This has ramifications in fire protection and could impact the integrity and safety of the water supply.

**Technical assistance to assist in the implementation of preventative or remedial measures is available from your state drinking water primacy agency or State Rural Water Association.**

### **Actions to Consider**

The system must make decisions as to what level of actions must be taken to perform due diligence in protecting the public health and provide a safe quality water supply. Actions can range from a determination that the incident is a prank with no action needed to implementing additional monitoring as a precautionary measure. If contamination is indicated, the system may declare an emergency and implement their emergency response plan. **These decisions impact public health and safety and should be made in cooperation with law enforcement and your State Drinking Water Primacy Agency.**