

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Renée D. Coleman-Mitchell, MPH
Commissioner



Ned Lamont
Governor
Susan Bysiewicz
Lt. Governor

Environmental Health and Drinking Water Branch

Circular Letter 2020-09

FROM: Lori Mathieu, Public Health Branch Chief
TO: Community Water Systems (CWS) Serving 1000 or more Persons
Date: March 6, 2020
SUBJECT: **Emergency Preparedness for Coronavirus**

Handwritten signature of Lori Mathieu, dated 2020.

With growing national concern about coronavirus ([COVID-19](#)) and the surge of normal cases of the [Flu](#) virus, water utilities should prepare for potential impacts to operations and to respond to customer inquiries about water safety. In the event of a severe pandemic, absenteeism would increase from illness, the fear of infection and the need to care for ill family members. Absenteeism could affect the capability of drinking water system operators to operate and maintain their systems adequately, and thereby increase the risks to public health. Absenteeism would also affect workers from other essential and interdependent sectors such as the transportation, power and chemical sectors. It can have an adverse impact on services such as delivery of chemicals and other essential materials and supplies. As a result, your **contingency plan to deal with potential absenteeism and chemical sufficiency should be revisited, updated and necessary measures to lessen the impact of these effects should be put in place.** Use this link to assist you in updating your staffing contingency plan:
<https://www.waterisac.org/system/files/Business%20Continuity%20Planning%20for%20Water%20Utilities.pdf>

In addition, consider becoming a member of CtWARN so that in the event of need resources can be shared. Information about CtWARN can be found at: <https://ctawwa.org/CtWARN>

CWSs in CT serve over 2.9 million people on a daily basis and are an essential DPH partner in public health preparedness. Emergency response, planning and adequate resources are a vital responsibility of CWS throughout the state and keeping safe and adequate water supply to CT's residents is mission critical.

An event titled "Health 2020-01-07 Novel Coronavirus 2019" is now open on the state WEBEOC, which is the web-based emergency management information system used by the State's Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) to communicate with local and state emergency



Phone: (860) 509-7333 • Fax: (860) 509-7359
Telecommunications Relay Service 7-1-1
410 Capitol Avenue, P.O. Box 340308, MS#12DWS
Hartford, Connecticut 06134-0308
www.ct.gov/dph

Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer



managers. The Department of Public Health (DPH) *Statewide Drinking Water Status Controller Board* on the WEBEOC will provide a vital link between all levels of government and the utilities and will be the main modality of communications utilized by the DPH in emergency response. Therefore, **CWSs are asked to access and use WEBEOC to report the status of staffing and resources under the aforementioned Coronavirus event.** Utilities are encouraged to report the status of staffing and other resources weekly or more frequently if necessary.

If you have not attended a training session and need assistance in accessing [WEBEOC](#) or the *Drinking Water Status Controller Board*, please visit the DPH Drinking Water Section website at: <https://portal.ct.gov/DPH/Drinking-Water/DWS/Drinking-Water-Section-WebEOC>
Should you have any questions, please contact Sachin Patel at Sachin.patel@ct.gov or 860-509-7333.

C: Heather Aaron, MPH, LNHA – Deputy Commissioner, Department of Public Health
Local Health Directors
Certified Operators