

# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Environmental Health & Drinking Water Branch

### DWS Circular Letter #2023-39

**TO:** Public Water Systems

**FROM:** Lori Mathieu, Public Health Branch Chief, EHDW *Lori J. Mathieu*

**DATE:** August 28, 2023

**SUBJECT:** Cybersecurity Reminder and Updates

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The DPH Drinking Water Section wishes to remind public water systems (PWS) of the importance of an active cybersecurity program. In December of 2021, DWS created a simple [Cybersecurity Self-Assessment Checklist](#) that was sent as part of DWS Circular Letter 2021-089. DWS Survey staff have been discussing and including recommendations about cyber security in routine sanitary surveys from 2022 to the present. EPA has released many new resources related to PWS cybersecurity including how to report a cybersecurity incident, cybersecurity self-assessment tools, and referrals for cybersecurity technical assistance providers. Please visit the [EPA Cybersecurity for the Water Sector | US EPA](#) website to view all available resources. It is strongly recommended that PWSs make cybersecurity a priority and use the resources that are available to help identify cybersecurity vulnerabilities and strengthen defenses against potential cyberattacks.

With EPA, Horsley Witten Group (HWG) is offering free, confidential, cybersecurity assessments and technical assistance to interested water utilities. The assessment consists of a questionnaire completed with HWG staff, and the technical assistance consists of developing a cyber action plan based on the results of your utility's assessment focused on best practices to prepare for, respond to, and recover from a cyber incident. For more information about the program, contact Gemma Kite of HWG at [gkite@horsleywitten.com](mailto:gkite@horsleywitten.com), or (508) 833-6600.

The Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), the operational lead for federal cybersecurity and the national coordinator for critical infrastructure security and resilience is also available with several free resources to assist with the effort to understand, manage, and reduce



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risk to our cyber and physical infrastructure. CISA offers an array of free resources and tools, such as technical assistance, exercises, cybersecurity assessments, and trainings. More information can be accessed at: [Resources & Tools | CISA](#).

WaterISAC also encourages any water utility who has experienced malicious or suspicious activity to email [analyst@waterisac.org](mailto:analyst@waterisac.org), call 866-426-4722, or use the [online incident reporting form](#).

CISA developed two infographics on Cyber Risks and Resources for the Supply Water and Manage Wastewater National Critical Functions to provide water and wastewater systems managers and state, local, tribal, and territorial partners with an overview of the cyber risks they may face and to highlight resources available to help them enhance their cybersecurity. Each infographic focuses on risks to the Water and Wastewater Systems Sector, and identifies risks under three categories—IT, OT, and IT/OT convergence—to demonstrate the potential risks that can be caused by malicious cyber-attacks. The infographics and additional resources can be found at: [National Critical Functions - Supply Water and Manage Wastewater | CISA](#).

On March 3, 2023, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a memorandum regarding a requirement for states to include cybersecurity of operational technology used by a PWS while conducting a sanitary survey. Several states and national organizations have challenged this interpretation and there is currently a stay (pause) of the interpretive rule memorandum. While the case makes its way through the legal process, DPH encourages all PWSs to undertake cybersecurity best practices and voluntarily engage in a review of cybersecurity during the sanitary survey to ensure utilities are addressing cybersecurity gaps.

c: Deputy Commissioner Lisa Morrissey, MPH, Department of Public Health  
Local Health Directors  
Certified Operators