

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Environmental Health & Drinking Water Branch

DWS Circular Letter #2023-49

TO: Community Public Water Systems

FROM: Lori Mathieu, Public Health Branch Chief, EHDW 

DATE: December 4, 2023

SUBJECT: Free Confidential Security Assessments for Community Public Water Systems;
Upcoming Cybersecurity Webinar

The Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) is pleased to announce the U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) is now offering cybersecurity and physical security assessments to interested community public water systems (CPWSs) at no cost. These confidential assessments provide CPWSs with knowledge and awareness of identified security gaps so they can take steps to maximize their defenses against bad actors at critical facilities.

The Iran-linked [cyber attack](#) on the Municipal Water Authority of Aliquippa, Pennsylvania last week is a stark reminder of the increasing risks posed by hostile adversaries. According to media reports, hackers gained control of a Unitronics Vision system, which is a programmable logic controller (PLC) with an integrated human-machine interface (HMI). The compromised system was disabled when an alarm notified operators of the intrusion and there was no threat to the water supply.

CISA has provided a list of [mitigation measures](#) specific to the Unitronics PLC and EPA is detailing the threat in a [joint webinar](#) with CISA and the Federal Bureau of Investigation on December 6th. Of critical note, CISA warns that hackers are simply attempting to access any vulnerable PLCs and other network connected devices using known default passwords, highlighting the need to be vigilant about password integrity and to enable multifactor authentication on such devices, regardless of brand.



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DPH is committed to helping CPWSs build cybersecurity resilience so that Connecticut's water industry is well-protected against similar threats. We encourage all public water systems to attend the free webinar on December 6. Interested CPWSs should contact Eric Lindquist at eric.k.lindquist@ct.gov or at 860-884-8865 to be referred for free, confidential cybersecurity and/or physical security assessments conducted by CISA.

c: Deputy Commissioner Lisa Morrissey, DPH
Abad Cabassa, CISA
Certified Operators
Local Health Districts