



National Infrastructure Protection Plan

Water Sector

Homeland Security Presidential Directive 7 (HSPD-7) identified 17 critical infrastructure and key resources (CIKR) sectors and designated Federal Government Sector-Specific Agencies (SSAs) for each of the sectors. Each sector is responsible for developing and implementing a Sector-Specific Plan (SSP) and providing sector-level performance feedback to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to enable gap assessments of national cross-sector CIKR protection programs. SSAs are responsible for collaborating with public and private sector security partners and encouraging the development of appropriate information-sharing and analysis mechanisms within the sector.

Sector Overview

HSPD-7 designated the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as the Federal lead for the Water Sector's critical infrastructure protection activities. All EPA activities related to water security are carried out in consultation with DHS and the EPA's Water Sector partners.

The Water Sector includes both drinking water and wastewater utilities. There are approximately 160,000 public drinking water systems and more than 16,000 publicly owned wastewater treatment systems in the United States. Approximately 84 percent of the U.S. population receives their potable water from these drinking water systems, and more than 75 percent of the U.S. population has its sanitary sewerage treated by these wastewater systems.

The Water Sector is vulnerable to a variety of attacks including contamination with deadly agents, physical

attacks—such as the release of toxic gaseous chemicals—and cyber attacks. If these attacks were realized, the result could be large numbers of illnesses or casualties and/or a denial of service that would also impact public health and economic vitality. Critical services such as firefighting and healthcare (hospitals), and other dependent and interdependent sectors, such as Energy, Transportation, and Food and Agriculture, would suffer negative impacts from a denial of Water Sector service.

EPA is collaborating with the entire Water Sector to implement a broad-based strategy to address sector security needs. This work includes, but is not limited to, providing support to utilities by preparing vulnerability assessment and emergency response tools, providing technical and financial assistance, and exchanging information.

Sector Partnerships

EPA works with its security partners—public and private utilities, national Water Sector associations, States, and others—to better secure CIKR across the Nation. EPA works in partnership with the Water Sector Coordinating Council and the Government Coordinating Council on many programs supporting security-related activities, with the goal of enhancing the Water Sector's ability to **plan for and respond effectively to security threats and breaches**. Additionally:

- In response to the Bioterrorism Act of 2002, which provides EPA explicit authority regarding community water systems, EPA handles the receipt of community water systems' vulnerability assessments (VAs) and emergency response plan (ERP) certifications.
- EPA's Water Security Initiative (WSI), the Active and Effective Security Program, and the Water Laboratory Alliance (WLA) support the Water Sector's goal of sustained protection of public health and the environment. Both WSI and WLA also fulfill requirements under HSPD-9 to enhance the security of drinking water utilities through its contamination warning system and the development of a laboratory network that is able to support drinking water monitoring and surveillance programs.

To support the Water Sector's goal of **recognizing and reducing risks** in the Water Sector, EPA in coordination with DHS, will continue to encourage the conduct of risk assessments in the sector. EPA also supports the activities of the Water Information Sharing and Analysis Center, which provides service to drinking water and wastewater utilities to gather, analyze, and disseminate threat information that is specific to the Water Sector.

In support of **maintaining a resilient infrastructure**, EPA is partnering with the Water Sector on multiple programs and efforts. For example:

- The Water/Wastewater Agency Response Networks (WARNs) are a collaborative effort to establish intra-state mutual aid and assistance agreements for water and wastewater utilities to enhance preparedness and response.
- The extensive series of tabletop exercises, trainings, and drills with the Water Sector and response partners in support of National Incident Management System/ Incident Command System (NIMS/ICS) helps utilities to communicate with responders and prepare for security incidents.



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For questions or more information, please visit
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