



National Infrastructure Protection Plan

Drinking Water and Water Treatment Systems Sector

Homeland Security Presidential Directive 7 (HSPD-7) identified 17 critical infrastructure and key resources (CI/KR) sectors and designated Federal Government Sector-Specific Agencies (SSAs) for each of the sectors. Each sector is responsible for developing and submitting Sector-Specific Plans (SSPs) and sector-level performance feedback to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to enable national cross-sector CI/KR protection program gap assessments. 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 designates the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as the Federal lead for the Drinking Water and Water Treatment Systems (Water) Sector's critical infrastructure protection activities. All activities 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 wastewater systems in the United States. Approximately 84 percent of the U.S. population receives their drinking water from these 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 through 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 or healthcare and other dependent and interdependent sectors, such as Energy, Transportation Systems, and Agriculture and Food, would be negatively impacted by a denial of service from the Water Sector.

In collaboration with the entire Water Sector, a broad-based strategy to address the security needs is being implemented. 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 began working with its security partners—public and private utilities, national Water Sector associations, and others—to better secure CI/KR across the Nation prior to September 11, 2001. More recently, EPA has begun working with the Water Sector Coordinating Council and our Government Coordinating Council on similar efforts. Many of EPA's ongoing programs support security-related activities. In addition, the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act (Bioterrorism Act) provides explicit authority regarding community water systems. The Bioterrorism Act requires community drinking water systems serving populations of more than 3,300 persons to conduct vulnerability assessments (VAs) and prepare or upgrade emergency response plans based on the finding of their VAs. Additionally, EPA supports the Water Information Sharing and Analysis Center (ISAC) that provides service to drinking water and wastewater utilities of all sizes and ownership types.

The Water ISAC provides a centralized resource that gathers, analyzes, and disseminates threat information that is specific to the Water Sector. DHS has begun piloting a new secure computer-based counterterrorism network, the National Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN), which will provide secure communications across all critical infrastructure sectors. As the system begins operation, the Water ISAC will work with HSIN to best serve Water Sector utilities.



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For questions or more information, please contact NIPP@dhs.gov or visit www.dhs.gov/nipp.