



## Fact Sheet

# Appropriate planning for nonexpanding water systems

Planning is the foundation of a successful public water system whether it serves a residential community or a small grocery store. Developing and actively using a plan will help you make informed decisions as you manage your system's infrastructure, operations, and budget. As such, it will strengthen your system's ability to continue providing the safe, reliable water you and your customers expect.

**This factsheet is for water systems developing a small water system management program (SWSMP).** All water systems with fewer than 1,000 connections must develop a SWSMP. We don't require most of these systems to submit their SWSMP to us for approval, but there are exceptions. If you intend to apply for a Drinking Water State Revolving Fund loan, or you plan to expand your number of approved connections or service area, contact our regional office planner to discuss your specific plan submittal requirements. A professional engineer is not required to certify a SWSMP.

### Main objectives of a SWSMP

1. Document source water production and customer usage to determine current and future water demand.
2. Evaluate facilities and operations to determine system needs and overall capability to meet current and future demand.
3. Prepare a prioritized improvement schedule and a budget that funds near-term system improvements.

Planning is critical, especially during challenging economic times. System components will not last forever, and prevention costs less than repairing infrastructure after problems occur. Planning will help you understand your system's current and expected future needs so that you can create a realistic funding plan to address preventive maintenance and future improvements strategically and economically.

### Importance of a preplan meeting before submittal

**If you intend to submit your SWSMP for our approval, start by setting up a preplan meeting with our regional office.** At the meeting, we will discuss your system's top priorities and planning goals in order to scope the content and level of detail for your plan. We will document the outcome and share it with all participants.



HELPING TO ENSURE SAFE AND RELIABLE DRINKING WATER

## What to consider when developing or updating a SWSMP

- What is the condition and capacity of system infrastructure?
- How much water does the source produce?
- How much water do your customers use?
- Are the source, storage, and other infrastructure capable of meeting the water demand?
- Did the last sanitary survey show any significant deficiencies?
- What large expenses are expected and when?
- Does the budget cover current and anticipated expenses?
- Do you have a plan for obtaining additional funding, if necessary?
- Do the service policies govern all relevant aspects of providing service?

You can find out more by taking our online [capacity assessment survey](#). After the survey, you will receive a customized report with feedback and recommendations. The report will tell you where to focus your future planning efforts to improve your system's managerial and financial capacity.

## Building an effective SWSMP

The planning-related activities you have done already will help to create a useful SWSMP. The documentation that you have in any format will help you manage and maintain your water system as long as you use the information and keep it current. You can download our comprehensive SWSMP guides for community and noncommunity water systems:

- [Small Water System Management Program Guide](#) (331-134) for community systems.
- [Noncommunity Small Water System Management Program Guide](#) (331-474)

## For more information

Office of Drinking Water website

<http://www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/DrinkingWater.aspx>

Other planning-related publications

<https://fortress.wa.gov/doh/eh/dw/publications/publications.cfm?action=pubindex&id=14&type=subject&CFID=6625&CFToken=62925058>

Office of Drinking Water capacity information and online survey

<http://www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/DrinkingWater/WaterSystemAssistance/CapacityDevelopment.aspx>

## Office of Drinking Water Regional Offices

**Eastern Region:** Spokane Valley 509-329-2100

**Northwest Region:** Kent 253-395-6750

**Southwest Region:** Tumwater 360-236-303

