



MAY 2025



## Highlights

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...and more...

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## Notable Dates

Drinking Water Week 4/4-4/10  
Next [DWAG meeting](#) 6/2  
Water Use Efficiency Reports Due 7/1  
Consumer Confidence Reports Due 7/1  
[CCR Specialist Exam Review 8/20-21](#)



## Connections

[The Office of Drinking Water Newsletter](#)  
[SIGN UP](#) to get this in your inbox!  
[Find Your Regional Offices and Staff](#)  
[Drinking Water Home Page](#)

## Drinking Water Week Winners

We celebrate National [Drinking Water Week](#) annually during the first full week of May. We recognize individual water systems and operators that do an outstanding job providing safe and reliable drinking water to their customers. Award winners are nominated by their peers, customers, stakeholders, or others in the industry.

### Governor's Proclamation

Every year the Governor signs a proclamation announcing Drinking Water Week. [Read the 2025 proclamation.](#)

### CONGRATULATIONS 2025 DRINKING WATER WEEK AWARD WINNERS!

If you didn't tell us their stories, we wouldn't know about their amazing efforts. We're grateful to all who were nominated and wish we could give awards to each person. It is a privilege to present this year's winners!

### Commitment to Excellence



*Raquel Callans, ODW; and Jeff Tasoff, Facet NW.*

**Jeff Tasoff**, Principal of Civil Engineering, Facet NW Engineering. Jeff collaborates with local government and community leaders to ensure that infrastructure projects are not only effective but aligned with community needs and priorities. Jeff is a member of Whidbey Island Water System Association's board and is a resource for multiple small water systems on the island. He helps them address failing infrastructure, future planning improvements, and offers advice on complex challenges. He mentors young professionals and has made a profound difference in the area. He exemplifies the spirit of innovation, compassion, and excellence.

### Grace Under Pressure

**Jason Knisley**, Water and Sewer Lead, City of Chewelah. Since joining the City of Chewelah's Public Works Department in 2017, Jason consistently demonstrates outstanding dedication, leadership, and expertise in water distribution. He is recognized for his extensive knowledge of water systems and his unwavering commitment to water quality. He approaches every project with meticulous attention to detail, ensuring that all work is up to specifications and thoroughly documented. Jason's calm demeanor, kindness, and willingness to mentor new team members have made him an invaluable asset. His ability to stay composed under pressure and his passion for teaching reflect a true leader who inspires those around him.



*City of Chewelah Public Works Team. Left-right: Zach Haus; Mike Frizzell; Jason Knisley; Scott Mallery, ODW; B; and Colby Dollar.*

**City of Vancouver Water Department Team.** Tim Higgins, Mehrin Selimgir, Mike Steuben, Jim Lewis, Nathan Copewin, Rob Weber, Patrick Craney, Brian Wilson, Topher Gates, and Kristi Lucht. The City of Vancouver discovered PFAS in their water in 2020 and started sampling and tracking the contamination to build data and provide information to their customers. They were proactive in dealing with this challenge and through the construction of a new treatment system and development of a management plan, the city drinking water will be PFAS-free by 2031. They also share their knowledge and experience with other Southwest Washington drinking water systems, including larger systems and other industry organizations to train and help develop cross-connection control programs.



*City of Vancouver Water Department Team, left to right: Tim Higgins, Mehrin Selimgir, Mike Steuben, Jim Lewis, Nathan Copewin, Rob Weber, Patrick Craney, Brian Wilson, Topher Gates, and Kristi Lucht.*

## Lifetime Achievement

**Heather Pennington**, Tacoma Water Interim Superintendent. Heather has been a dedicated drinking water professional for over thirty years. At one time she was the highest ranking female with Tacoma Public Utilities. She has served on multiple local, state, and national committees and boards with the drinking water industry. These include Pacific Northwest Section of the American Water Works Association, Washington Water Utility Council, Water Research Foundation Collaborative Utility Benchmarking, West Coast Regional Benchmarking Group, Partnership for Water Conservation, and the Washington Water Resources Advisory Committee. She initiated many programs that are now best practices and industry-wide standards. Heather consistently goes above and beyond serving, collaborating with, and mentoring others.



*Heather Pennington, TPU; and Mike Means, ODW.*



*From left to right: Joseph Perkins, ODW; Tracey Hunter, ERWOW; Mike Pendergraft, ERWOW; Lori Pendergraft; Scott Mallery, ODW; Chad Short, ERWOW.*

**Mike Pendergraft**, Evergreen Rural Water of Washington (Retired). Mike has been a dedicated water

industry professional since serving with the City of Omak in 1986. Over his career, Mike helped countless small water systems. During wildfires, he was instrumental in restoring water to stricken communities. He is described as "Mr. Reliable" by those who have worked with him and witnessed his pursuit of excellence. Mike was always willing to help and share his knowledge and expertise with everyone he worked with. He has had a significant impact in the industry, his legacy is an inspiring example of commitment and passion in the drinking water industry.

**Jacki Masters Brown**, Utilities Manager for the cities of Longview, Mt. View Edgewood, Port Orchard, Manchester, and Kitsap County (Retired). Jacki has a long and storied career in the drinking water industry. She served on the Operator Certification Advisory Board, Board of Directors for the Lower Columbia Subsection and the South Sound Subsection of AWWA, Board of Directors for the Pacific Northwest Section of AWWA, Customer Service Committee, and Subsection Advisory Council. She has tackled water systems with numerous challenges and source problems and brought them up to standards and serving high-quality water. She shares her expertise and knowledge and is generous with her help and service. Her positive influence has impacted many drinking water professionals and water systems for the better.



*Jacki Masters Brown*

## Friend of Drinking Water

**Jim Lynch**, Public Works Director, City of Waitsburg. Jim worked in every public works area and achieved numerous certifications on his way to director in 2014. His finest character is his duty to the city, caring for the community and its utility systems. He was instrumental in proactive planning for infrastructure repairs and upgrades, allowing for the future drinking water needs of the city. He is an astute and generous collaborator, improving the drinking water quality and quantity supplied to the residents of Waitsburg. His foresight and legacy will benefit the city now and for many years to come.

**Mark Hess**, Water and Wastewater Foreman, Clallum County PUD No. 1. Since 2008, Mark's performance and technical skills raise the bar every day in a way that elevates workplace standards and culture. Known for his resilience in extreme conditions and a steadfast "can-do" attitude, Mark brings exceptional technical skill and leadership to every challenge. His diverse background and dedication to excellence highlight his experience and effectiveness. A respected mentor and role model, he builds strong, respectful partnerships with contractors and navigates challenges with professionalism and poise. As he retires, Mark leaves a legacy of professionalism, service, and commitment to community health and safety. 💧





# Expanding Our Certified Operator Workforce

Celebrating Drinking Water Week is an opportunity to spotlight some challenges in our industry. One of these challenges is expanding our certified operator workforce. For 2025, 461 certified operators did not renew their certifications. This continues a negative trend with the loss of over 1,472 operators in the last four years.

The demand for certified operators is higher than ever and most utilities have not prepared for this predicted workforce gap. The biggest challenge is a lack of entry level jobs. Utilities are looking for certified operators; but a candidate can't get certified unless they have water system operating experience; but they can't get operating experience unless they get hired by a utility—this cycle created the void we're currently seeing.

*The demand for certified operators is higher than ever.*

**Utilities must create career pathways for a new workforce** and give candidates the operating experience needed to be eligible for certification. These entry level positions are vital to the transfer of knowledge and retention of new staff. Many utilities are raising salaries for their certified operators in response to the limited supply. Even if your utility does a good job with succession planning, a neighboring system may raise their salaries and attract your operators to better opportunities.

**Succession planning takes more than just salary adjustments.** Studies show that Millennials and GenZers look for different things than are traditionally offered by utility work. We must meet the next generation of workers "where they are" and consider:

- ◆ Flexible schedules;
- ◆ Advancement opportunities;
- ◆ Engagement in decision making; and
- ◆ Bringing professionalism to the industry.

Another challenge to our operator workforce is "economy of scale." **Many expenses for water utilities are the same no matter how many people they serve.** This makes it very difficult for systems with small customer bases to afford their utilities as the cost of operations continue to increase. The demand on volunteers and free technical assistance has increased over the last 20 years, while the availability of these services become harder to find. Many small water systems should consider consolidation or regionalization to create the economy of scale needed to keep water rates from becoming prohibitively expensive. This also provides opportunities for fewer operators to serve more systems and develop their professionalism. Professional operators can keep up with changing regulations, provide expert care to utilities, are

held to high standards, and relieve the stress on volunteer decision makers.

**Backflow Assembly Testers (BAT) are another**

**group whose numbers are decreasing** and 2025 is their professional growth year. These, in-person, practical exams are offered throughout the three-year cycle and there is no need to wait until the end of the year. Please use the Washington Certification Services (WCS) webpage to schedule your professional growth exam soon to avoid the stress of waiting until the end of the year when spots are limited. The WCS webpage is a good place for everyone to visit. Operators can review their professional growth status, update their contact information, look for approved training to meet their continuing education requirement, and apply for certification exams.

**We developed a process to help water systems recruit for certified operator vacancies.** Upon request, we can use your information to send a targeted recruitment announcement to operators currently holding the desired certifications. You can request and submit completed applications at: [dwopcert@doh.wa.gov](mailto:dwopcert@doh.wa.gov). Please note we need at least two weeks to process applications.

**We must find ways to become competitive in a challenging workforce market.** The world is changing and much of the drinking water industry is slow to react. Each county in Washington experiences a 1 percent population growth every year; yet we struggle to maintain the same number of operators we've had since the 1990s. More infrastructure, government regulation, capacity demands, technology, and media stresses mean we must have an engaged, informed, and properly compensated workforce to ensure safe and reliable drinking water for the social, economic, and environmental needs of our state. 💧

*We must have an engaged, informed, and properly compensated workforce to ensure safe and reliable drinking water for the social, economic, and environmental needs of our state.*



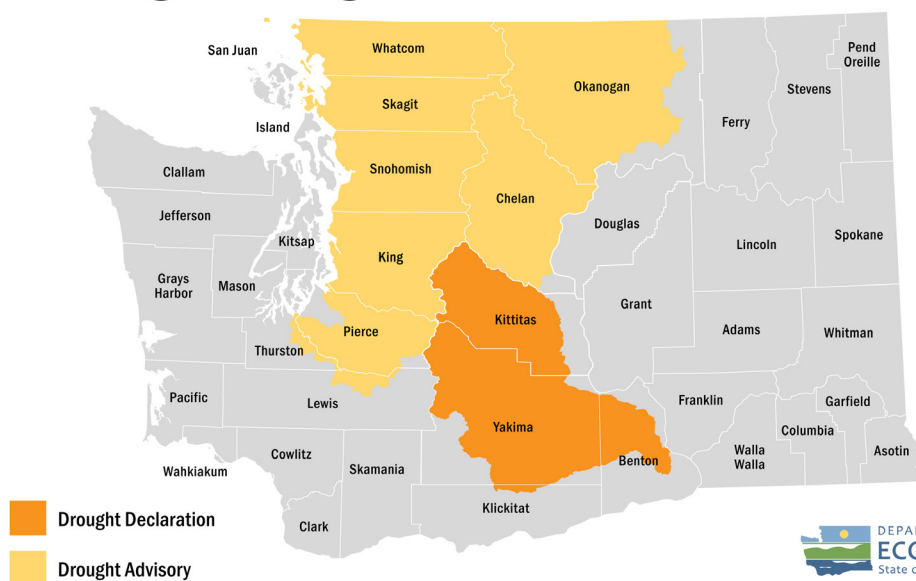
# Department of Ecology Issues Drought Emergency for Southern-Central Washington State

On April 8, the Washington Department of Ecology extended a drought emergency for a third consecutive year in southern central Washington (see the area in orange on the map below). They are also issuing a drought advisory for north-central Washington and parts of the Puget Sound region (shown in yellow).

## More Information from Ecology

- ◆ [Emergency adopted rule \(CR-103E\)](#)
- ◆ [Rule language](#)
- ◆ [2025 Drought Response Grant Funding Guidance](#)

## Washington Drought Declaration



Back-to-back droughts in 2023 and 2024 took their toll on Upper Yakima, Lower Yakima, and Naches watersheds, causing significant deficits in precipitation and soil moisture. Although snowpack in the watersheds that feed critical surface water reservoirs is now at near-normal levels for this time of year, there simply won't be enough spring runoff to replenish reservoirs and rejuvenate soils.

Ecology also issued a drought advisory for watersheds in Pierce, King, Snohomish, Skagit, and Whatcom counties, along with Okanogan and Chelan counties in north-central Washington. A drought advisory is a public awareness and preparation tool. It helps increase awareness and readiness for water users. This helps water users plan, prepare, and even reduce the impact of drought conditions.

For the drought emergency declaration area, Ecology is making a total of \$4.5 million available in [drought response grants](#) to offset impacts from the current drought conditions for sectors such as drinking water systems, agriculture, and fish and wildlife.

If needed, Ecology may adopt subsequent emergency rules and is [working on rulemaking](#) for a permanent emergency drought relief rule.

## What this Means for ODW

We regulate more than 16,000 public water systems in Washington, serving more than five million people. Our goal is to ensure our communities have safe and reliable drinking water.

During a drought emergency, we:

- ◆ Work with the Governor's Office, the Department of Ecology, and other state agencies to monitor drought impacts on water supplies.
- ◆ Provide technical assistance to at-risk water systems, including helping them apply for emergency grants.
- ◆ Help water systems manage and conserve water and restore safe and reliable water in the event shortages or outages do occur.

- ◆ Educate water systems, operators, and consumers about what they can do to help ensure an adequate water supply for people, agriculture, businesses and fish.

You can read more in our publication, [DOH's Role During a Drought Emergency 331-297 \(PDF\)](#).

## Drought-Impacted Water Systems Encouraged to Take Action

We encourage publicly owned Group A water systems—such as municipalities, water districts, and similar entities—located in the drought emergency area and experiencing drought-related impacts to take the following steps.

**Apply for Drought Response Grants.** Submit a direct application to the Department of Ecology to access available [drought response grants](#).

**Notify Your ODW Regional Engineer.** Let your regional engineer know that your system is experiencing drought impacts.

ODW regional engineers and other staff work with privately-owned non-profit Group A water systems that

are experiencing drought consequences. We can provide information about accessing our emergency drought funds.

## Identify and Avoid Potential Water Shortages

### Monitor Your Water Levels

Some water sources are more vulnerable to water shortages. Surface waters, springs, and shallow wells are often heavily reliant on runoff from snow and recent rainfall for recharge. Checking source water levels frequently can help identify alarming trends and give you more time to react. Your local pump technician, Evergreen Rural Water of Washington at (360) 462-9287, or a large neighboring utility, can help you measure water levels. You can also find helpful information with [Measuring Water Levels in Wells 331-428 \(PDF\)](#).

### Find Leaks and Repair Them

Leaky water pipes waste precious water. Help from qualified professionals on leak detection and repair is available through Evergreen Rural Water of Washington or a professional leak detection company.

### Educate Your Customers About Water Conservation

This is the time to stress the importance of wise use of water. Water conservation ideas for homeowners can be found at the [Alliance for Water Efficiency's website](#). We have statement inserts/bill stuffers available for your use. You can order them for free in our [publications database](#) (use the publication number) or print them yourselves.

- ◆ [Indoor Water Conservation 331-120-1 \(PDF\)](#)
- ◆ [Outdoor Water Conservation 331-120-2 \(PDF\)](#)
- ◆ [Lawn Watering 331-120-3 \(PDF\)](#)
- ◆ [Indoor Water Audit 331-120-4 \(PDF\)](#)
- ◆ [Meter Reading and Leak Repair 331-120-5 \(PDF\)](#)
- ◆ [Soil Preparation and Planning 331-120-6 \(PDF\)](#)
- ◆ [Irrigation and Landscaping 331-120-7 \(PDF\)](#)

## Prepare a Water Shortage Response Plan

Thinking ahead and developing a plan helps tremendously when problems arise.

- ◆ [Summary of how to prepare a Water Shortage Response Plan \(PDF\)](#)
- ◆ [Detailed guidance and templates on how to prepare a Water Shortage Response Plan](#), which may help you qualify for drought-related financial assistance programs if needed.

## Look for Alternate Sources of Water for Emergency Use

Develop a relationship with a neighboring water system before you need it. Work together for mutually beneficial solutions to a water shortage or get an emergency water source ready and approved for use. If you have not already done so, this may be the right time to join Washington's Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network (WARN). This network allows water and wastewater systems to receive rapid mutual aid and assistance from other systems in times of an emergency. You can find more information on our [WARN Response Network website](#).

## Test Your Emergency Sources

Get your emergency water source ready for use. For wells that have been out of service for a while, inspect the seal under the well cap to make sure it's in good condition, make sure there are no open holes in the well head, and there are no potential contaminants in the immediate vicinity. It is also a good idea to test for bacteria and nitrate. That way, if it needs to be sterilized, you can do it before the emergency. Read these publications for additional guidance and requirements [Nitrate Sampling 331-222 \(PDF\)](#) and [Coliform Sampling 331-225 \(PDF\)](#).

Remember, we are always ready to help you navigate any challenges or emergencies that arise. Working together, we will get through this! ◆

# Water Use Efficiency Guidebook Update

We updated the [Water Use Efficiency Guidebook 331-375 \(PDF\)](#) and published it this month. We refreshed it and brought it up to 2025 standards by removing old dates and deadlines (like 2007, 2017), clipart, confusing verbiage, and outdated code references. Our main goal was to make this guide more useful, so we re-organized the text, updated publications, websites, and made links for inter-document navigation. You will find the guidebook now is completely readable electronically. No policy changes have been made to WUE so this was not a complete overhaul.

For complete details on the guidebook edits reach out to [odw-fphs@doh.wa.gov](mailto:odw-fphs@doh.wa.gov). ◆



Water System Planning

## Water Use Efficiency Guidebook Fourth Edition

331-375 • Revised 5/1/2025



This update was funded in part by the State of Washington's investment in [Drinking Water Foundational Public Health](#).



# Adding New Connections: Is it expansion or is it infill?

Part of ODW's role in ensuring safe and reliable drinking water is to evaluate proposed expansions and approve additional connections. We require water systems to demonstrate they have the physical and legal capacity to serve their growth. Many community water systems, particularly cities, have a constant rate of growth over time and are expected to always have some level of expansion. Other systems, like those owned by homeowner associations, have set boundaries and are not expected to grow past the original planned development boundary.

## What is an expanding water system?

There are two main things that indicate a water system is expanding:

1. They are requesting approval for additional connections beyond what was previously approved (additional infrastructure or water rights are needed to accommodate the growth); or,
2. They are requesting to expand the service area boundary.

In both of these cases, for us to approve the expansion of the community water system (of any size), they are required to submit a water system plan.

## What is Infill?

There is one situation in which a water system can request an increase in connections and we do not consider it to

be expanding. This special situation is if the water system is requesting to serve more connections, but they do not need to add any infrastructure, any water rights, or make any changes to the service area in order to serve those connections. For this special situation we use the term "infill."

An example of infill is an existing homeowner's association (HOA) with undeveloped lots. Say they have a previous approval for 100 connections, but because of conservation measures they dramatically reduced their water use. They have landowners within the HOA boundary wanting to connect to the water system. Their engineer determines the existing sources, storage, water rights, distribution piping, treatment, and booster pumps are all adequate to serve 120 connections. The boundary of the HOA is not going to change, so the service area and water rights place of use stays the same. In this case, they can request an increase for their approved connections by submitting a project report that provides a "capacity analysis" of the water system. The capacity analysis runs through all the calculations to demonstrate the system is capable of serving 120 connections with the existing physical facilities and water rights.

If you have any questions about this topic, please [reach out to the regional planner or regional engineer](#) assigned to your county. 💧

# Upcoming Training Opportunities

**JUNE 4** CISA/EPA Virtual Cybersecurity Table-Top Exercise (TTX) for the Water Sector, ([read flyer for details](#)).

**JUNE 23** AWR-213. Critical Infrastructure Security and Resilience Awareness. **Held in-person** on Monday, June 23, 2025, from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Camp Murray, WA. Target audience includes professionals across Emergency Management, Law Enforcement, Health Care, Public Works, and IT.

This course provides foundational knowledge on safeguarding critical infrastructure, including risk management frameworks, identifying sector-specific threats, and understanding infrastructure interdependencies crucial for effective planning and response.

Enrollment link AWR-213: [Critical Infrastructure Security and Resilience Awareness](#).

**JULY 10-11** MGT-310 **held in-person**: Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) and Stakeholder Preparedness Review (SPR), held in person Thursday and Friday, July 10-11, 2025, from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM each day at



Camp Murray, WA. Target audience includes professionals across Emergency Management, Law Enforcement, Health Care, Public Works, and IT.

Participants will gain practical skills in conducting comprehensive THIRA and SPR processes, identifying community-specific threats, analyzing capability gaps, and creating targeted solutions to enhance overall preparedness and resilience.

Enrollment link MGT-310: [Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment and Stakeholder Preparedness Review](#).

# PFAS Regulation Changes, Sampling Requirements, and Free Sampling!

The regulatory framework for PFAS in drinking water in Washington has changed a lot over the past few years. The State Board of Health (SBOH) revised [WAC 246-290 Group A Drinking Water Rules](#) in December 2021, which requires public water systems to monitor for select per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). On April 26, 2024, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released their [final PFAS regulation](#).

After the release of EPA's PFAS rule, the SBOH began the process to adopt the federal rule while maintaining our current rule's public health protections. The intent is to use current health-based information to support water system operators' efforts in providing safe and reliable drinking water. For more information on requirements during the transition, please see our publication [Update: Impacts of Federal PFAS MCLs on Water Systems 331-750 \(PDF\)](#).

The federal PFAS rule requires community and NTNC water systems complete initial monitoring requirements by April 26, 2027. The initial monitoring requirements are based upon system size and source water type as shown in the table below. Groundwater systems with populations less than 10,000 must collect two samples that are five to seven months apart. Groundwater systems serving greater than 10,000 people, all surface water systems and all groundwater under the influence systems must collect four quarterly samples with samples collected two to four months apart.

Systems may use previously collected data to satisfy some or all of the initial monitoring requirements. This includes data collected to satisfy our state rule or UCMR 5. The seasonal variation for samples is considered without regard to the year when you use prior results to meet the initial monitoring requirements.

We took these federal PFAS rule requirements into consideration when scheduling PFAS sampling on your Water Quality Monitoring Schedule (WQMS) for 2025. You may see "initial quarterly" monitoring scheduled with a specific WQMS month. We scheduled those specific months to align with past sampling and future requirements to ensure systems meet their initial sampling requirements. This means if you have sampled in the past, you should try to collect your 2025 and future samples in the WQMS month assigned for each source. You need to ensure your sample timing meets the federal requirements (five to seven months or two to four months apart based on system size and source type). Please contact your regional office for assistance if you have questions about your sampling schedule or PFAS requirements.

## Free PFAS Sampling Program Still Accepting Systems

We have been offering to pay for some or all of a public water system's initial PFAS sampling since 2021 and we will continue this program through the initial federal monitoring deadline of April 26th, 2027, if funding lasts. Right now this is a first come, first serve program so it is important to sign up now. Fill out the [Department of Health, Office of Drinking Water PFAS Free Sampling Enrollment Form](#), and we will contact you when your system is assigned to a lab for sampling. **PLEASE NOTE:** we are processing hundreds of requests for sampling so please be patient as we must evaluate each system's eligibility, past sampling, and lab capacity when assigning systems. This can take several weeks to complete so your patience is greatly appreciated. 💧

All PWSs Serving More Than 10,000 People, No Matter the Source Type	Surface Water Sources for Systems Serving Less Than 10,000 People	All Groundwater Sources for Systems Serving Less Than 10,000 People
Collect four quarterly samples within a 12-month period. Samples must be collected 2 to 4 months apart.	Collect four quarterly samples within a 12-month period. Samples must be collected 2 to 4 months apart.	Collect two samples within a 12-month period. Samples must be collected 5 to 7 months apart.

## Drinking Water Advisory Group (DWAG) June 2 Meeting

We hold all our meetings through Microsoft Teams video, so you can join our meeting with your computer, laptop, tablet, or phone from wherever you are. You can find the Teams links and meeting agenda on our [DWAG Meeting webpage](#). After the meeting we post any handouts or presentations and, within a month, we post the meeting notes.

Do you want to receive advance notice of meetings and their agendas? [Join our advisory group email list](#).

Do you have questions about the advisory group or topics you'd like to discuss? Email [Brad Burnham](#) with your ideas. 💧

# Legislative Update

The last scheduled day of the 2025 Legislative Session was April 27. Now that session is over, we have a full tally of which new laws will go into effect. We also have a conference budget that includes what programs are likely funded. However, until the budget bill is signed, we don't have a complete picture. Until then, we can review some of what happened.

This Legislative Session, we did not have any bills of our own, which are called "agency-request legislation." So, our focus was on a handful of other bills related to drinking water. As of April 28, three of those bills crossed the finish line and will soon become new laws.

**House Bill 1064**, sponsored by Representative Abbarno, is related to the Interagency, Multijurisdictional System Improvement Team, or SYNC. The SYNC group is made up of agencies that fund infrastructure projects in our state. The agencies are DOH, Ecology, Commerce, and the Public Works Board. We meet with these agencies to coordinate our work and discuss shared projects and priorities. House Bill 1064 removed a sunset date of June 30, 2025. As a result, SYNC will remain in place with an official stamp of approval from the Legislature to continue this important work.

**House Bill 1947**, sponsored by Representative Engell, relates to the requirement for new Group B water systems to be owned or operated by a Satellite Management Agency (SMA). The bill removed the requirement for new Group B water systems with fewer than ten connections that meet certain criteria. For a Group B system with fewer than ten connections to be eligible for this exemption, it must not be required to treat the water, not have atmospheric storage,

and not provide fire flow. For all other new Group B water systems, the requirement to have an SMA stays in place. The bill also states that local health boards may adopt SMA requirements for the exempted systems.

**House Bill 1615**, sponsored by Representative Caldier, relates to using a default number to calculate the average number of people served by a water system. The bill revised the definition of a Group A public water system to prohibit the use of a default number of people for determining whether a water system should be designed as a Group A or Group B water system. We are evaluating if this bill requires any rule updates with the State Board of Health.

Now that the legislative session is over, we will carefully review all drinking water-related bills that passed and begin implementation plans for any new requirements. Implementation plans usually include developing guidance, updating webpages, communicating to staff, sending messages to water systems through [our Rules listserv](#), and initiating rulemaking, if needed. Please [reach out to our office](#) with any questions or related support. 💧



## Cross-Connection Control Specialist Exam Review

ERWOW just added a virtual Cross Connection Control Specialist Exam Review. Two days of virtual training.

**Wednesday, August 20—Thursday, August 21**

**8:30 AM—4:30 PM Pacific**

At this two-day course, we will review the information needed to prepare the attendee for the CCCS Exam. We will discuss how cross connections affect public health, the potential risks and liabilities, how to conduct surveys and carry out enforcement actions, the two types of hydraulic conditions that cause backflow, and backflow prevention assemblies and their applications.

Taught by Backflow Management Inc.

Earn 1.4 CEUs

Costs: Members \$225/Non Members \$300

**[Click Here to Register](#)**

*\*Class closes for registration on August 6 to allow time for books to be mailed.* 💧





# EPA Enforcement Emphasis

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) notified states that they intend to place a greater emphasis on ensuring water systems are in compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act. All requirements are subject to spot checking, which includes unannounced site visits and inspections. We are aware of projected Washington water utilities on the list for unannounced inspections third and fourth quarters 2025.

Particular emphasis is being placed on America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018 (AWIA), cybersecurity, and emergency response planning. The utilities prioritized for EPA technical assistance and compliance activities are utilities that serve Department of Defense (DoD) facilities and/or installations. If water systems have falsely certified to EPA completion of these requirements they are subject to fines and civil penalties.

## AWIA requires Public Water Systems (PWS) serving more than 3,300 persons to do the following:

- ◆ Conduct Risk and Resilience Assessment (RRA)
- ◆ Prepare or Revise Emergency Response Plan (ERP)
- ◆ Submit Certification Letter to EPA for each
- ◆ Review and update both items every 5 years
- ◆ Record maintenance

## Required Risk and Resilience Assessments (RRAs) under AWIA include:

- ◆ Malevolent Acts (to include physical and cyber security)
- ◆ Natural Hazards
- ◆ All critical Components of the System
- ◆ Monitoring Practices of the System
- ◆ Financial Infrastructure
- ◆ Use, storage, or handling of various chemicals
- ◆ Operation and maintenance of the system
- ◆ Capital and Operational needs for risk and resilience management

## Required elements of Emergency Response Plans (ERPs) under AWIA:

- ◆ Strategies to improve resilience, including physical and cyber security.
- ◆ Plans, procedures and equipment to be utilized in all hazards response.
- ◆ Actions, procedures, and equipment to lessen impact on public health.
- ◆ Strategies for detection of emergencies.

## AWIA Compliance Deadlines

### Risk and Resilience Assessments (RRAs)

Population Served	Previous RRA Deadline	Next 5-Year Submission Cycle RRA Deadline
≥ 100,000	31-Mar-20	31-Mar-25
50,000-99,000	31-Dec-20	31-Dec-25
3,301-49,999	30-Jun-21	30-Jun-26

### Emergency Response Plans (ERPs)

Population Served	Previous ERP Deadline	Next 5-Year Submission Cycle ERP Deadline
≥ 100,000	30-Sep-20	30-Sep-25
50,000-99,000	30-Jun-21	30-Jun-26
3,301-49,999	31-Dec-21	31-Dec-26

## Three Ways to Certify Completion to EPA

1. Electronic submission through secure online portal – preferred method.
2. Email: [awiaservicedesk@epa.gov](mailto:awiaservicedesk@epa.gov)
3. Regular Mail:  
U.S. EPA Data Process Center  
ATTN: AWIA  
C/O CGI Federal  
12601 Fair Lakes Circle  
Fairfax, VA 22033

## Resources for Technical Assistance

[Enforcement Alert: Drinking Water Systems to Address Cybersecurity Vulnerabilities | US EPA](#)

[EPA: Cybersecurity Technical Assistance Program for the Water Sector](#)

[EPA: Water Sector Cybersecurity Evaluation Program](#)

[CISA Region X](#)

[USDA Rural Development Circuit Rider Program](#) ◆

[Enforcement Alert: Drinking Water Systems to Address Cybersecurity Vulnerabilities | US EPA](#)

# Chemical Overfeeds

A chemical overfeed occurs when treatment chemicals are introduced into a drinking water system in an uncontrolled and potentially hazardous manner. The severity of such incidents depends on the chemical's toxicity and reactive properties. Past overfeed events have led to serious health consequences, including chemical burns, illness, and fatalities.

A water system in Washington State recently experienced a chemical overfeed incident when chemical dosing pumps at one of its treatment plants remained "on" while the source water pump was "off." This malfunction caused a highly concentrated plume of chlorine and fluoride to enter the distribution system. Operators acted quickly to isolate the faulty treatment equipment and affected distribution zones, preventing major injuries. However, some users reported skin irritation along with taste and odor issues. The incident led to the shutdown of one of the system's highest-producing sources, required extensive system flushing, and triggered a public notification.

In response to the incident, the water system immediately implemented several overfeed prevention measures across all treatment plants. These included the installation of continuous chemical analyzers, flow switches interlocked with source pumps, and enhanced integration of critical alarms into the SCADA system.

Chemical overfeed events can result from both human error and mechanical failure. Now is the time to evaluate the overfeed risks associated with your chemical injection systems—before an emergency occurs. Clearly written standard operating procedures (SOPs) are essential for helping operators recognize and respond to overfeed situations. Common overfeed prevention features include, but are not limited to:

- ◆ Flow-paced chemical injection control.
  - ◆ Continuous monitoring equipment with integrated alarms and shutdown setpoints (many plants install redundant continuous analyzers at critical monitoring points).
  - ◆ Proper cross-connection control, including anti-siphon valves on all chemical feed lines.
- Overfeed protection is like an air bag for your plant—it adds a little to the cost, and you hope to never use it, but it can be a life saver when it counts. 💧**
- ◆ Secondary day tanks limited to no more than 30 hours of chemical storage.
  - ◆ Redundant flow switches interlocked with source pumps.



*Example of a secondary day-tank in use.*

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