

MRWA COVID-19 Emergency Response Statement



Water and wastewater operations specialists are essential personnel and should be prepared to address potential impacts to supply due to personnel interruptions tied to COVID-19. Water systems play a vital role in public health and Minnesota Rural Water Association is here to help systems put measures in place that ensure seamless operations during the Coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic. Please download the [Critical Operations Preparedness document](#) now. MRWA is also advising that ALL systems re-evaluate their emergency response plans.

Several of Minnesota Rural Water Association technical advisors will also be emergency responders in the event of a system emergency. Minnesota Rural Water Association staff are also available to offer remote assistance to your water/wastewater system for questions and non-emergency technical assistance. Please call our office: 800-367-6792 or one of our technical advisors directly.

If your system is a MnWARN member, MnWARN could and should be activated in an emergency situation; however, it should be stressed there is no guarantee a volunteer will come forward. In the event the State were to experience Pandemic Management Phase, many Minnesota communities would likely see a shortage of personnel to provide essential public services. That said, MnWARN is committed in their Mission of Utilities Helping Utilities, and would reach out to the 400+ MnWARN Members in an attempt to secure any requested resource.

Now is the time for municipalities, regardless of size, to update or draft Emergency Operations Plans (EOP's), reach out to our neighboring communities to discuss Continuity of Operations (COOP's), and most importantly, refresh and enforce preventive measures.

Minnesota Rural Water Association continues to monitor the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak and recommends all water and wastewater utilities review the best and latest information on the following trusted websites:

- Minnesota Department of Health: <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/action.html>
- CDC: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/summary.html
- OSHA: www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/controlprevention.html#solidwaste
- WHO: www.who.int/publications-detail/water-sanitation-hygiene-and-waste-management-for-covid-19
- CISA: www.cisa.gov/insights

Frequent and proper hand washing is one of the most important prevention measures for COVID-19. Good and consistently applied hygiene in communities, homes, schools, workplaces, marketplaces and health care facilities will further help to prevent human-to-human transmission of COVID-19.

This outbreak continues to evolve and information changes daily. COVID-19 is something to be taken very seriously. MRWA will continue to monitor the situation and is following the guidance of leading health authorities. Any impact to technical assistance, training programs, meeting and/or conferences will be posted prominently at www.mrwa.com.