



# Missouri Department of Natural Resources

## Natural Disaster Assistance for Missouri Citizens - Disaster Response Guidance for Public Drinking Water and Wastewater Systems

Department of Natural Resources fact sheet

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Department of Natural Resources Director: Carol S. Comer

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The following information is intended to provide initial emergency guidance to the operators, owners and employees of both publicly and privately owned facilities that produce and distribute drinking water or collect and treat wastewater. Facilities damaged or out-of-service because of a disaster situation should follow their own emergency plan and procedures. If no plan is available, or for further support and guidance, individuals should contact an office listed in the emergency telephone numbers section of this document.

### Disaster Response: First Steps

- Implement your emergency response plan.
- Contact the Missouri Department of Natural Resources' regional office serving you for further information. See the [regional office map](#) for a listing of the regional office nearest you.
- If a public water system experiences a problem during a natural disasters (flood, drought, etc.), to address the problem quickly, submit a Drinking Water Emergency Waiver Exception Request application as soon as possible to the Public Drinking Water Branch-Permits and Engineering Section. Form is located at the link below.

<https://dnr.mo.gov/forms/780-2821-f.pdf>

- Consult the resource list at the end of this document.

### Public Drinking Water Systems threatened by Natural Disasters

Here are some things to consider:

- Make sure your generators are operational and follow all safety protocols.
- Make sure you have access to or enough fuel for several days.
- Keep fuel tanks full in utility vehicles and have extra fuel on hand for backup generators.
- Once the weather event begins, manually fill towers so you start the event with full system capacity.
- Have emergency supplies on hand and in a safe place (flash lights, batteries, radios, first aid kits, warm clothing, protective equipment, food, water).
- Emergency Operations Plan - know where it is and keep it up to date so you have contact names and phone numbers available (including alternative water supplies, contractor services, equipment suppliers, and technical information.).
- Consider staffing issues during the weather event.
- Keep track of all emergency related labor hours and work repairs performed. Don't forget to take pictures of damage to building contents and facilities. Apply for financial assistance after the emergency is over. State Emergency Management Agency's website is [www.sema.dps.mo.gov](http://www.sema.dps.mo.gov).
- Issue boil advisories if necessary (system pressure drops below 20 psi).

If your utility is not already a member, consider becoming a member of MoWARN which is a mutual assistance program that helps participating members borrow equipment from other members on an as-needed basis for emergency management. MoWARN is coordinated nationally by the AWWA, and sponsored locally by the Missouri Rural Water Association. Participation in MoWARN is open to all water and wastewater utilities, but an application process is necessary. Find out more at [moruralwater.org/mo-warn](http://moruralwater.org/mo-warn).

For additional information and links to resources, visit the department online at [dnr.mo.gov/disaster.htm](http://dnr.mo.gov/disaster.htm).

### **Notification for Wastewater Treatment Plants Threatened by Natural Disasters**

- If a facility is significantly affected by flood waters, ice or other natural disasters, it is authorized to bypass or shutdown if necessary to prevent loss of life, personal injury or property damages; or where unavoidable excessive storm drainage or runoff would damage any facilities or processes necessary for compliance with the effluent limitations and conditions of this permit.
- The facility must take all reasonable measures to prevent a bypass or shutdown. If prevention is not possible, the facility must take all reasonable actions to minimize the bypass or shutdown and all impacts.
- The facility must call the Department of Natural Resources within 24 hours and follow with a written report to the regional office within five days if a shut down or bypass occurs. Call the department's [regional office](#) serving you during normal business hours, use the online bypass reporting application, or call the after hours Environmental Emergency Response hotline at 573-634-2436.
- The facility must notify the department daily if a bypass or shutdown occurs on multiple days.
- The wastewater treatment plant is authorized to take any reasonable actions to contain excess storm water to prevent a bypass without a construction permit.
- After the bypass or shutdown event is over, the facility must provide a written report to the department's regional office that includes:
  - Name and permit number of permittee.
  - Location, duration and approximate volume of all bypasses.
  - Duration of any shutdown.
  - Description of conditions causing a bypass or shutdown.
  - Description of all actions taken by the wastewater treatment plant to avoid a bypass or shutdown. If avoidance was not possible, include a description of the actions taken by the facility.

### **Restoring Service**

When attempting to restore service, be aware of potential hazards. Use the "buddy system." Exercise caution with respect to the following:

- Confined spaces – use personal protection when entering. Test atmosphere for toxic or explosive gases and oxygen levels. If in doubt, ventilate or don't enter.
- Electrical hazards.
- All underground utilities.
- Hazardous chemicals, such as chlorine.
- Biological hazards, such as bacteria and viruses.
- Potential for back injuries.
- Possibility of cave-ins or collapse of trenches.
- Structural damage and the potential for failure of a damaged structure.
- Fire or potential for fire.

Remember that safe operations always take precedence over shortcuts. Time saved is not worth a life lost or serious personal injury.

**Contact Information**

**The following numbers are answered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week:**

Missouri Department of Natural Resources' Environmental Emergency Response	573-634-2436
Missouri Highway Patrol Headquarters	573-751-3313
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	913-281-0991
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Kansas City District	816-426-6320
CHEMTREC (hazardous materials information)	800-424-9300
National Response Center (e.g., oil and chemical spills, terrorist threats)	800-424-8802
State Emergency Management Operations Center	573-751-2748
National Weather Service	
Kansas City	816-540-6125
St. Louis	636-447-1887
Springfield	417-869-4491

**The following numbers are answered during normal business hours:**

Department of Natural Resources	800-361-4827
Water Protection Program - Public Drinking Water Branch	573-751-5331
Water Protection Program - Water Pollution Branch	573-751-1300
Department of Natural Resources' Regional Offices	
Kansas City	816-251-0700
Macon	660-385-8000
Poplar Bluff	573-840-9750
St. Louis	314-416-2960
Springfield	417-891-4300
State Emergency Management Operations Center	573-526-9100
Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services	866-628-9891
Missouri Rural Water Association	573-657-5533
Missouri Water and Wastewater Conference	573-761-0376
International Bottled Water Association	800-WATER-11

For publications about restoring services after disasters, please call the Missouri Department of Natural Resources at 800-361-4827, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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**Nothing in this document may be used to implement any enforcement action or levy any penalty unless promulgated by rule under chapter 536 or authorized by statute.**

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**For more information**

Missouri Department of Natural Resources  
P.O. Box 176  
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0176  
800-361-4827 or 573-751-1300

<http://dnr.mo.gov>