

## Protect Your Water For Life



### IMPROVING THE SECURITY OF OUR WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

#### Overview

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) works closely with partner organizations -- other government agencies, and water utilities and associations (both drinking water and waste water) to ensure clean and safe water. Industry and government are also working cooperatively to improve drinking water and waste water security. More specifically, EPA helps the water sector to: (1) understand and utilize the best scientific information and technologies for water security; (2) assess vulnerabilities to possible attack; (3) take action to improve security; and (4) respond effectively and efficiently in the event that an incident occurs. These actions are outlined in EPA's Strategic Plan for Homeland Security. The strategic plan can be obtained on the Web at <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/security/>

#### Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002

Drinking water utilities today find themselves facing new responsibilities. While their mission has always been to deliver a dependable and safe supply of water to their customers, the challenges in meeting that mission have expanded to include security and counter-terrorism. In Title IV of the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002 (the Act), Congress and the Administration recognize the need for drinking water systems to redouble efforts on water safety and security. Title IV of the Act, Public Law 107-188, amends the Safe Drinking Water Act and specifies actions certain community water systems and the EPA must take to improve the security of the nation's drinking water infrastructure. More information is on the Web at: <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/security> Legislation addressing waste water utilities is being considered by Congress.

#### Requirements for Community Drinking Water Systems

The Act requires every community water system that serves a population of greater than 3,300 persons to:

1. Conduct a vulnerability assessment -- Evaluate weaknesses to potential threats and identify steps that can reduce the risk of serious consequences from attack;
2. Certify completion and submit a copy of the assessment to the EPA Administrator;

3. Prepare or revise an emergency response plan that incorporates the results of the vulnerability assessment; and
4. Certify to the EPA Administrator, within 6 months of completing the vulnerability assessment, that the system has completed or updated their emergency response plan.

Note: Optional certification forms are available on the Web at <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/security/community.html>

### **Responsibilities of the U.S. EPA**

EPA has the responsibility to implement a protocol to protect the vulnerability assessments from unauthorized disclosure, and to provide information on threats to community drinking water systems:

- # In November 2002, EPA completed, with input from federal law enforcement and intelligence officials, an *information protection protocol* to safeguard vulnerability assessments submitted by community drinking water systems, and any information derived from these vulnerability assessments, once these documents are in EPA's possession.
- # EPA completed the *Baseline Threat Information for Vulnerability Assessments of Community Water Systems* document in September 2002, and made it available to community drinking water systems that serve populations greater than 3,300 and thus, are required to complete vulnerability assessments. The document presents an overview of threats, methodologies, strategies and responses for water utilities to consider when conducting these assessments.

### **EPA Work in Progress**

- # Support training and technical assistance for small and medium drinking water, and wastewater utilities;
- # Facilitate development of tools for vulnerability assessments and emergency planning;
- # Promote information sharing through the water sector Information Sharing and Analysis Center (WaterISAC) on the Web at <http://www.waterisac.org>; and
- # Support research and technology initiatives to improve contaminant detection, physical facility security, monitoring protocols and techniques, and treatment effectiveness.

**More information on these topics can be found on the Water Infrastructure Security Web site at: <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/security/>**