

## **America's Water Infrastructure Act (AWIA) of 2018: Strengthen the Resilience of your Community Water System through Risk Management and Emergency Response Plan Updates.**

### Overview:

America's Water Infrastructure Act (AWIA) became law in 2018 to amend and update the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) Section 1433, often referred to as the 2002 Bioterrorism Act. The 2002 act required community water systems to complete vulnerability assessments to bolster the security of critical water supply, treatment and distribution systems. The 2018 AWIA (Section 2013), now requires Community Water Systems (CWS) serving populations of more than 3,300 to complete Risk and Resilience Assessments (RRA) and Emergency Response Plans (ERP), and certify the completion of these documents to the EPA. The newer AWIA requirements are a much more comprehensive evaluation of CWS security and preparedness than what was required under the 2002 Bioterrorism Act.

The new assessments not only include consideration of malicious acts, but also serve to review the risk of all types of emergency situations, and to conduct planning for CWS's to become as resilient as possible in order to maintain operations. Plans are intended to ensure the provision of a safe and reliable supply

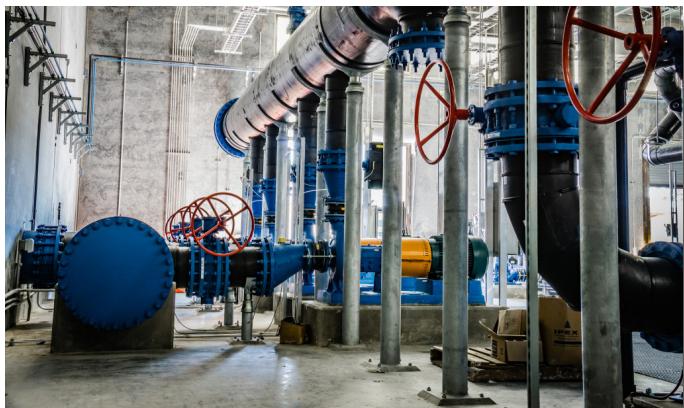
of public drinking water during difficult times. While the EPA is looking to replace the older vulnerability assessments with these new documents, previously completed vulnerability assessments may be used as a template and/or basis for an update to the more comprehensive documents. Likewise, many communities have existing emergency response plans for their public water supply systems and these may also need to be updated and certified to comply with the new rule.

### Deadlines for compliance to certify Risk and Resilience Assessments:

Population Served: Deadline:

100,000 or more	March 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2020
50,000 to 99,999	December 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2020
3,301 to 49,999	June 30 <sup>th</sup> , 2021

\*Certifications of Emergency Response Plan updates are due six (6) months after the compliance deadlines for the Risk and Resilience Assessments. Certifications must be updated every 5 years from the statutory deadlines listed above.



## Where to Start:

The effort required to meet the new requirements will vary greatly depending on the community's size, the scope of previous vulnerability assessments and ERP's, and the quality of existing water system asset information.

The first step to compliance is to determine what existing information the CWS has available, including older vulnerability assessments, active emergency response plans, capital program inventory data, asset management plans, engineering reports and studies, record plans, GASB 34 financial asset inventories, etc. If a water model has been completed, much of the distribution system information will be contained therein. A list of critical and hard-to-obtain parts and supplies will also be beneficial. These documents and associated information will be important for the Risk and Resilience Assessment. Additionally, other types of agreements and plans related to maintenance of operations during critical times will be beneficial with the evaluation of risk to continuity of operations such as operations manuals, business continuity plans, mutual aid agreements, NIMS/Emergency plans, staff training/cross training plans, etc.

## Where We Can Help:

Compliance with AWIA can seem daunting, especially if your CWS has not already compiled the information that will be required. However, the EPA has provided a great deal of information and useful tools to assist public water supply entities with AWIA compliance. EPA's AWIA website contains many resources at: [www.epa.gov/waterresilience](http://www.epa.gov/waterresilience). There is also a vulnerability self-help tool that municipalities may use to run scenarios and determine where they stand. The American Water Works Association (AWWA) also has many risk and resilience tools and documents to assist CWA's with compliance for AWIA.

MRB Group has many experienced professionals that can assist your community with meeting AWIA requirements and determining the best way forward for compliance. We are active in AWWA committees and training events and can help to guide you through the process at whatever level is needed for your system, whether it be limited to answering questions and providing guidance, or active participation with CWS decision makers, and the completion/update of Risk and Resilience Assessments and Emergency Response Plans. Feel free to reach out to Tim Wales for questions and to find out how MRB Group can help your municipality navigate AWIA compliance.

Tim Wales, P.E.  
Chief Water Resources Engineer  
[Timothy.Wales@mrbgroup.com](mailto:Timothy.Wales@mrbgroup.com)  
(518) 703-2480