

Rural and Small System Threat Readiness and Response

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Level of Threats:

- The likelihood of a terrorist act in rural and small communities is unlikely. However, that does not mean it can be ignored and each of us has the obligation to take as many steps as possible to prevent such an act.
- Emergencies occur all over the world, from natural disasters such as flooding in the Midwest to tornadoes in Texas and from man made disasters such as poison gas in Japan's subway to the bombing of the World Trade Center.
- While we do not like to think that it can happen in rural and small communities, it can. If your system is prepared it may prevent the act from occurring.

Awareness and Vigilance

Lock Down

1. Insure that access to buildings, tanks, towers, reservoirs, and other access points to chemicals, equipment, sources, and treatment processes are locked down as much as possible.
2. Deter entry to areas with signs such as "Restricted Area" or "Employees Only".
3. Establish a communication chain of command for reporting of suspicious activity by customers, employees, or the general public.
4. Provide employees with photo Identification.
5. Ensure system vehicles are secured.
6. Enlist local law enforcement to provide extra surveillance of facilities.
7. Enlist local businesses to report suspicious activity and individuals to law enforcement agency.
8. Review emergency plans with employees and governing officials.
9. Review manual operations in case of power failure or virus infection of electronic controls.
10. Be aware and extra vigilant of activities and any suspicious activity in and around the community, water and wastewater facilities, and water sources.

Response

The system must be prepared to act immediately in the event that an incident does occur. An incident does not necessarily have to be terrorism from a foreign nation; an act of vandalism by a disgruntled individual can have the same impact and results.

1. Most plans are designed with the primary focus on natural disasters.

Update the plan to address terrorist acts and vandalism.

2. Ensure employees are aware of the plan contents and how it is to be implemented.
3. Ensure there is a notification and communication plan with correct contact numbers.
4. Evaluate public notification procedures and alternate water supplies.

Resources

Contact the Wisconsin Rural Water Association for on-site assistance to assess, prepare, plan, and respond.

Critical Infrastructure Assurance Office-<http://www.ciao.gov>

National Infrastructure Protection Center-<http://www.nipc.gov>

Partnership for Critical Infrastructure Security-
<http://www.pcis-forum.org>

Local Law Enforcement and Health Officials