

Improving Cybersecurity in Small and Medium-Sized U.S. Water Utilities

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CHALLENGE: Critical Lifeline Risk Management

Throughout the United States, there are 13,820 small water systems that serve populations ranging from 501 to 3,300 persons and 4,871 medium-sized systems that serve populations ranging from 3,301 to 10,000. Combined, these two categories represent more than one-third of all community water systems and provide water to 48 million Americans daily. However, many of these small and medium-sized water sector utilities lack the cybersecurity capacity to ensure operational continuity of drinking water and wastewater utility treatment operations in the event of a cyber attack.



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APPROACH: Reaching the Water Sector

American Water Works Association (AWWA) will design, develop, and deliver no-cost educational events to equip water sector managers and operators with the skills needed to effectively use AWWA's cybersecurity resources. In addition to free, face-to-face events, no-cost webinars will also be created to provide access to these resources for utility employees who are unable to attend local workshops. Effective use of these resources will result in the identification of cybersecurity coverage gaps at these utilities, as well as the discovery of detailed, actionable steps to enhance security and preparedness.

NEXT STEPS: Testing, Distribution, and Evaluation

Subject matter experts are working with AWWA to reorganize AWWA cybersecurity materials for the deployment events. Deliverables are expected to be available for testing in summer 2017.



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At the completion of the project, these products will be available for distribution by the 34 AWWA Sections (local chapters) located throughout the United States. Evaluations will measure attendance, changes in learning, changes in behavior, and actions taken by water utilities to adopt recommended cybersecurity practices.

The National Infrastructure Protection Plan (NIPP) Security and Resilience Challenge is managed by the Office of Infrastructure Protection, within the National Protection and Programs Directorate of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), in partnership with the National Institute for Hometown Security (NIHS). To learn more about this project, contact Jay Robinson, Program Manager, DHS, at Jay.Robinson@hq.dhs.gov or Ewell Balltrip, CEO, NIHS, at eballtrip@thenihs.org.



Homeland Security