



AMERICAN WATER UTILITIES ASSOCIATION
MWUA
OUR WATER. YOUR FUTURE.

Media and Public Relations Guide



Created in collaboration with





Thank you to the Maine Drinking Water Program!

This project would never have been possible without the support and funding of the Maine Drinking Water Program. On behalf of Maine Water Utilities Association and all its members, we thank you for your support and guidance in completing this guidance document for water systems across Maine.

Introduction

For many people, media and public relations remains a bit of a mystery. If pushed for an answer, most will focus on press releases and crisis management. While public relations does involve both of these things, there are far more layers beneath the surface.

With an effective public relations strategy, you can increase your utility's credibility, grow awareness, and build its reputation. These are the vital foundations that all organizations are based on, and this is what an effective public relations program delivers.

In this guide we will provide a variety of tools and resources to help you feel more comfortable when dealing with the public and media. In the following pages we will tackle the following topics:

- **What is PR?**
- **The Purpose of PR**
- **PR today**
- **Understanding the Media**
- **How to know which media to use**
- **Pitching to Journalists and the Media**
- **Media Training**
- **Sample scenarios and templates**



Methodology

The world of public relations is ever evolving and it's crucial that information is gathered from multiple trusted sources in order to gain additional perspectives. Content for this guide has been gathered from a variety of sources including:

- Public Relations Society of America (PRSA)
- Demand Metrics Research
- Media Interviews
- Publicize.co
- PR Stack
- Public Relations Today
- Institute for PR
- NCMPR
- Biola University
- Queensland Government
- Maine Water Utilities Association
- Tom's Water Solutions LLC
- Merriam-Webster
- And many more

Additionally, the guide has been researched and edited by Janette Torres from Towers Marketing Group. With over 20 years of marketing and public relations experience, Janette has helped organizations of all sizes navigate the world of public relations, media and more.

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Introduction..... | i |
| Methodology | i |
| Table of Contents..... | ii |
| What is PR? | 1 |
| Defining PR | 1 |
| The Difference Between PR and Publicity | 2 |
| When to Use PR | 2 |
| The Purpose of PR | 3 |
| PR Today | 6 |
| The PR Process | 8 |
| Types of Media | 10 |
| Know Your Audience | 11 |
| Communication in PR | 12 |
| Knowing What Media to Use | 13 |
| Understanding the Media | 14 |
| How to Pitch to Journalists and the Media | 16 |
| Sample pitch | 16 |
| How to Reach the Media | 18 |
| Media Training | 19 |
| Do Your Homework | 19 |
| Tell Your Story and Tell It Well | 20 |
| Answering Questions | 20 |
| Practice and Polish | 21 |
| Press Release Tools | 22 |
| Using Consumer Confidence Reports for PR | 22 |
| PR Ethics | 24 |
| Ethical Decision Making | 25 |
| Sample Scenarios | 27 |
| Re-routing Techniques | 28 |
| Do's and Don'ts | 28 |
| | 29 |

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Crisis Management Plan | 31 |
| Sample Templates | 32 |
| Do Not Drink Water (abbreviated version – for customer)..... | 32 |
| Do Not Drink Water (detailed version – informational for media) | 33 |
| Do Not Drink Water (Arabic & French translations)..... | 35 |
| Do Not Drink Water (Somali & Spanish translations)..... | 36 |
| Do Not Use Water (abbreviated version – for customers)..... | 37 |
| Do Not Use Water (detailed version – informational for media) | 38 |
| Do Not Use Water (Arabic & French translations) | 39 |
| Do Not Use Water (Somali & Spanish translations) | 40 |
| Boil Water Order (abbreviated version – for customers) | 41 |
| Boil Water Order (detailed version – informational for media) | 42 |
| Do Not Use Water (Arabic & French translations) | 43 |
| Do Not Use Water (Somali & Spanish translations) | 44 |
| Rate Increase Notice | 45 |
| Personnel Crisis | 45 |
| Unexpected Crisis | 46 |
| Construction Notification | 46 |
| Job Openings | 47 |
| Essential Worker Designation | 47 |
| Source Water Protection | 48 |
| Pandemic Press Release | 48 |
| Water Conservation Order | 49 |
| Media Contacts Template | 50 |
| In Summary | 50 |
| Glossary of Terms | 50 |
| | 51 |

What is PR? (Public Relations)

First off, before we start explaining how to do public relations, what exactly is it? This question stumps a lot of people and often takes up whole chapters of overly technical explanations in PR for Beginners books.

Let's start with the textbook definition of PR from the Public Relations Society of America:

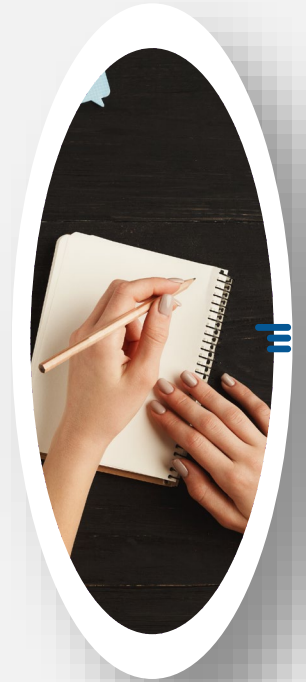
“Public relations is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics.”

When public relations is done well, it is the art of building all the positive attributes of a company into a narrative that supports the utility's goals. The media is then used to broadcast that narrative to their audiences. The media is the conduit through which a utility delivers its public relations strategy. Therefore, building relationships with journalists and other media influencers is vital.

Defining PR

Below are a few bullet points that hopefully help you better understand the definition of public relations:

- Management of relationships between your utility, your audiences, and your stakeholders through strategic communications.
- A way to enhance the understanding of your utility's objectives, strategies, and achievements.
- A way of building a strong reputation, credibility, and positive organizational image.
- More than just media relations. PR is a two-way street between an organization and its publics.





The Difference Between PR and Publicity

Some may have the opinion that PR and publicity are one in the same. In actuality, they are two different types of media. PR uses many strategies to accomplish an organization's goals of managing and communicating information in order to affect the public's perception. Whereas publicity concerns the attention of someone or something by the media. In other words, PR is controlled internally, while publicity is provided by external parties and is not controlled by your organization. PR is the instrument used to influence publicity.

When to Use PR

There are many different reasons and situations that call for the use of PR. These can be narrowed down to the following: to fix a problem, one time event/announcement, or to reinforce something that is going well. Ultimately, these all fit under 2 categories: responding to a crisis/emergency or performing community outreach.

Often times, an organization will have a guide or standard operating procedures defined to aid in the use of PR during an emergency. These are preplanned and should be event specific for ease of application. We'll discuss planning for emergencies as you read further. On the other hand, organizations have time to plan and implement PR in community outreach, simply, because time is not as critical outside of emergencies/crises. You will still need to consider deadlines and timing of delivery, but there should be significantly more time for doing so.


PR Considerations in Emergency Response Planning – It is important to plan ahead for emergencies. Additionally, it is important to create PR plans to implement during these emergency events. These plans can include templates for media and press releases and guidance on types of messages to use, how to use them, and who will be in charge of using them. Most Emergency Response Plans designate a person in charge of PR during emergencies. They are called the Public Information Officer or PIO and they work directly with the Emergency Response Lead to relay factual and pertinent information in a timely manner to the public.

PR Outside of Emergencies – Although the PIO is an emergency response role, this can be translated into a normal operations role as well. In this normal operations role, one might be responsible for working with the manager/superintendent to create, maintain, and implement a PR plan in an effort to gain or maintain the public’s trust, confidence, and positive attitudes about your organization. Everyday PR can actually prevent a crisis, increase the public’s involvement and buy-in, and improve the service your organization provides. With all this in mind, if PR is done haphazardly/off the cuff, it is likely to be unsuccessful and could potentially harm your PR efforts. That is why it is important to designate a PIO for normal operations, so they can conduct PR in a planned and constructive way that benefits the organization and the public.

For additional resources and templates, please see the templates sections of this guide.

The Purpose of PR

Public Relations is a continuous process that shifts and evolves as your utility ages and grows. Getting a utility’s name in print is sometimes viewed as the sole objective of PR. However, there are multiple reasons why you might want your utility in the media. Some examples include, promoting an upcoming event or to position yourself as a subject-matter expert in your field. Regardless of your reasons to be highlighted, you always want to make sure you build on these pillars:

-  **Credibility** – A utility can use PR to gain and/or maintain public trust. This is your credibility. PR supports this by getting your narrative in front of your target audience and building a digital footprint. Through PR, you can showcase your utility and its expertise by positioning yourself as a subject matter expert with the media. This can be achieved by offering factual information in a professional manner about a situation or event involving your organization.

➔ **Credibility** (cont'd) – Some examples of when credibility is essential to maintain the public's trust are when changing treatment processes, beginning a flushing program, and any other situation in which the public must "buy-in" to be successful.

➔ **Awareness** – This is the first step to PR. Before a utility can gain the public's "buy-in" and/or support, they must first become aware of the utility and what their goal is. Out of sight, out of mind is a common theme for underground utilities. Instead, utilize PR to stay top-of-mind with the public. Increase awareness by informing them of upcoming events, new products/services, provide an inside look at the utility and its employees, and any other ways that gets your utility out there. The more you can get your utility's name in front of your audience, the more aware they will be.

➔ **Search Engine Optimization** – PR and Search Engine Optimization (SEO) work hand-in-hand these days. Search engine optimization is the process of increasing/maximizing the traffic to a website by working to make sure the website appears high on the list of results returned by a search engine (i.e. Google, Yahoo, etc.). Usually, this is accomplished by getting your name out there in as many ways as possible. For example, when a business wins a piece of earned media (i.e. an unsolicited article or review written about your organization) in an online publication, this usually includes a backlink to your website. And backlinks still remain a vital ranking factor for search engine ranking. In other words, if someone searches for terms like 'water safety precautions' or 'how to know if water is contaminated', the article will appear, which will include a link to your website, which not only drives traffic to your website but increases credibility.

When it comes to credibility, search engine rankings help. Think of yourself; when you do an online search for something, are you more likely to trust and click on the websites that appear on the first page or are you going to go with the websites that are past page 2? Yep, that's what we thought. Perception is reality. And when it comes to search rankings, the higher you appear on the search, the more credible you appear. That's why improved search rankings are a great perk of public relations.



Brand Authority - When the public thinks about your organization, what do they think? Do they think positively, negatively, or do they even think about it? Maybe not. It is important in PR to create your image or “brand authority”. This is what comes to mind when the public thinks about your organization. Someone dedicated to PR can maintain and/or improve your brand authority, which in turn, fosters consumer confidence and support for your business. An organization can have multiple brand authorities that could be positive or negative. The following are examples of brand authority:

- Positive - The association of clean, safe drinking water with a water utility.
- Positive - The association of a place to take your pet to get all of the supplies they need with Petco.
- Negative - The association of cancer and a cigarette company.

Obviously, negative brand authority is not good for your PR. Therefore, a company should constantly work at gaining and maintaining a positive brand authority because it is easier to gain a negative image than a positive one.



Customer Buy-in - “Buy-in” or support is a key purpose of PR. Without “buy-in” you have not achieved your PR goal. Your customers may be aware of your organization and goal but may not know why they should care/support it. Increasing the aforementioned pillars, Credibility, Awareness, and Search Engine Optimization, can increase customer “buy-in.” For example, if you are implementing a new “See something, say something” policy involving the public around your water sources, you want them to participate. Tell them how this benefits the water they drink, ultimately, telling them why they should care.

In order to be successful in your PR efforts you want to make sure to do the following:

- **Define your goals**
- **Know your story and brand authority**
- **Be clear and concise**
- **Understand your audience**
- **Follow the news in your industry and stay relevant**
- **Be a useful and reliable source (aka: subject matter expert)**

PR Today

The PR industry, much like most industries, has evolved rapidly over the last decade. Many within the industry now split PR activities between “traditional” and “digital”.


In the good ol’ days, you only had journalists to worry about. Now you have journalists, influencers, social media personalities, podcasters, industry experts, and more. But that’s not a bad thing! Use them to your advantage to get your name and message out to the public in controlled, intentional ways. This is very important for issues such as PFAS, fluoridation, lead, and other controversial topics where you need to be the industry expert and have your customers trust you due to your credibility.

More people equals more options. Today you have countless options to gain coverage on both traditional and digital media. You can reach out via press release, social media, email, or phone. There’s a media outlet for everyone these days. Just know what type of media your audience consumes, what platforms they’re on, and focus your attention on those.

On the following page is a guide to help you understand both traditional and digital media.



Traditional vs. Digital



TRADITIONAL PR



DIGITAL PR

Press, radio, TV, events

Journalists, reporters, producers

Press releases, interviews, original content

Brand and reputation maintenance, crisis management

Reputation and crisis management for larger corporates, winning earned media in newspapers and TV

Can be unsuited to the needs of startups and smaller businesses trying to get established, difficult to measure results.

OUTLETS

Online publications, blogs, podcasts, social media, events

RELATIONSHIPS

Journalists, bloggers, social media personalities, industry experts

METHODS

Press releases, videos, guest blogging, online content

OBJECTIVES

Building credibility and online footprint, supporting SEO

STRENGTHS

Building awareness and credibility for startups and small businesses, growing an online footprint and SEO, clear tracking of results.

WEAKNESSES

May not be suited to the needs of larger corporates looking to win traditional earned media.

The PR Process

The PR process is a complex thing to understand. Many people only understand bits and pieces, but to be successful in your outreach, there are 4 layers that must be followed. These layers consist of Research, Programming/Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation; all forming the acronym RPIE. As you read on, we'll discuss each layer individually and how they affect and segue into each other.

The first step in the process when following RPIE is Research. Your very first step to research is to identify the problem. Once identified, you are able to determine the following: the type of information to collect, how will that information be used, to whom should you reach out, how soon you need that information, who is your target audience, costs, and who should conduct the campaign. All of this information should lead you to a robust understanding of the whole picture, goal of your campaign, and how you will achieve that goal. Bearing all this in mind, your research must be valid and reliable. For example, you wouldn't make your organization's 50th anniversary announcement on the same day that a major tragedy occurs/occurred because it isn't a valid announcement based on current events. It would be best to wait for a more valid/appropriate time. Determining whether your research is reliable is a bit simpler. Ask yourself the question: "Can the results of my research be duplicated," if the answer is "Yes," then your research is reliable. If not, perhaps you need to conduct more or different research. The public trusts you as a drinking water professional to provide valid and reliable information and when this falls apart, so too do public relations.

The "P" in RPIE or the Programming layer of the PR process is sometimes referred to as the Planning layer. A program or plan should be developed after research has been completed and it's time to decide the best course of action to implement your PR campaign. The plan will consist of your goal, objectives or steps to reach your goal, your strategies to support your objectives, and your tactics to implement your strategies. During this layer of RPIE, often times, it's beneficial to create a formalized Program Plan. These plans are beneficial because they outline everything you have compiled and allow for a better understanding of what must be done to be successful. We'll review in more detail at the end of this section.

The next layer or "I" in RPIE represents the Implementation layer of the PR process. In this layer you will use your Plan/Program described in the previous layer to actually conduct your outreach. Basically, this is when everything and anything that must happen to get from not having a PR campaign to the end of your campaign. During this phase it is helpful to create a calendar/timetable of events and deadlines as well as a budget. This will help you remain organized and prepared which is key when implementing your PR campaign.

The PR Process

The last layer, but still key to the success of your organization’s PR overall is to Evaluate your campaign. You will review the management of the results of your outreach against your established objectives. This can be broken down into 3 key steps. The first is to look at the campaign’s conceptualization and design or what was actually done during your outreach. The second is the monitoring and accountability step or when you determine if everything happened according to plan. The last step is to assess the program/plan utility or to decide if you accomplished what you said you would. A couple of guiding questions to ask yourself during this layer are, “Did it work?” and “How could it have been better?” It is important to look at media production/output, message exposure, audience awareness, audience attitudes, and audience actions to get the best understanding of the success of your campaign. Another important determination you are able to gain from evaluating your campaign is your Return on Investment or ROI. This will tell you if your money was well spent in this instance and can be beneficial when determining future budgets.

Lastly, it is important to discuss the development of a Program Plan. This plan will encompass all the layers of the RPIE process and identify what must be done in each. Typically, to get the best understanding of your success and ROI, you must develop a Program Plan. Below is a basic outline to a plan and what is completed during each layer of RPIE.

RPIE

| Research | Programming / Planning | Implementation | Evaluation |
|---|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify the situation through research | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determine objectives• Determine/break audience into segments/outreach groups• Determine strategies• Determine tactics | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create a calendar of events• Create a budget | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluate your outreach |



OWNED MEDIA



EARNED MEDIA



PAID MEDIA



Types of Media

Understanding the difference between owned, earned, and paid media will assist you in your marketing strategy. Although each type of media is a separate component, they may be used in combination to achieve a more solid marketing plan. This in turn will enable you to gain the most exposure of the intended information to the public.

OWNED MEDIA

This is content or information that your organization owns and maintains control of. Examples of owned media are websites and blogs. The more owned media you have, the better chance you have to increase your presence.

EARNED MEDIA

Unlike owned media, earned media is information published about your organization on sites and channels not owned and controlled by your establishment. For instance, online product or customer reviews on YouTube, social media or blogs, media coverage of your organization and word-of-mouth recommendations are all types of earned media.

PAID MEDIA

This is marketing that you pay for in order to reach out to your intended customer. Paid media can create more exposure to entice the public to your owned media, like your website.

In summary, owned media is a great way to provide general information about your industry, while earned media is a good avenue to promote the necessity of your industry. Moreover, earned media helps in gaining credibility. Finally, the intention of paid media is to attract the consumer to your posted information. Simply put, paid media generates earned media which drives traffic to your owned media. When different types of media are used in combination, your marketing strategy will be more effective in your public relations.

Know Your Audience

A key part of your research phase is getting to know your audience/the public you want to reach. There are 4 categories of people in the public including those who are active, passive, aware, and latent. Further, there are 4 levels of public buy-in including those who are knowledgeable, those who have accepted the PR, those whose attitude has changed about the PR, and those whose behavior around the PR has changed. We will dive deeper into these categories and levels to gain a better understanding of the audiences/public we deal with every day.

First, it is important to define the categories that the public is broken into. If the public is active, it is willingly participating in your outreach. On the other hand, if they are aware of the outreach, but not participating in it, they are passive. If they know about the campaign, they are aware and if they aren't aware of it at all, they are latent. These are important factors to consider because you wouldn't want to provide ways to participate in a campaign to a latent audience. They are not even aware of the campaign. Instead, it would be better to first inform them and make them aware of the PR.

Next, it is beneficial to define the levels of public buy-in. The public starts by not knowing about your PR. Then, they become knowledgeable/aware of it. After that, they might accept your PR. If they continue to buy-in more, they will have a change of attitude about the campaign. Lastly, if they completely buy-in, they have a change of behavior and will be an active participant in your outreach.

These categories and levels are important to consider prior to and after your PR campaign. Prior to, it is best to segment your audience/public into groups so that you can have the best outreach to everyone. For example, you can send ways to participate to your active audiences, while sending basic introductory information to your latent/unaware audiences to increase the buy-in of your campaign. Post campaign, these categories and levels are all measurable and you can collect data around them. This data will assist you when evaluating the success of your outreach. This will provide you with invaluable information on the audiences/public you must work with for future PR campaigns.

Communication in PR

In order to be successful in PR, you should understand communication and its involvement. In this section we will outline the elements of communication and some key considerations for successful outreach.

When communicating, there are multiple underlying layers that need to be considered and we usually do so without even having to think about them. In PR, it is best to keep them in the fore front of your mind to prevent any miscommunications or misunderstandings which can severely impact the success of your outreach.

Elements of Communication - There are 5 elements involved in communication. They are broken down into the sender, message, channel, receiver, and feedback. In your PR, your organization's PR official is the sender, the message is the actual outreach, the channel is how your message is delivered, the receiver is your audience, and feedback is the return message from the receiver back to the sender. Feedback is key to determining the success of your message. Occasionally, the receiver automatically sends feedback, but often, the sender must request the feedback.

Considerations of Communication - There are 2 important considerations for communication to be successful. The first is to determine if your audience or the receiver is appropriate. For example, if your water system is attempting to relay a message about a Boil Water Order being issued, you wouldn't send your message over a channel that reaches an audience not served by your system. You would want to make sure the appropriate audience which are your customers were receiving that message. The second consideration for successful communication is "noise." "Noise" is anything that interrupts your message from being delivered in the intended manor. Types of "noise" include environmental, competitive, predisposition, value, and more. It is best to consider the types of "noise" that may interrupt your message prior to sending it to make sure that the audience receives your message how you intended it.

Knowing What Media to Use

Not all types of media are equal. Some are better for time-sensitive communication than others. Below are several scenarios and the types of media that are recommended for each.

Time-sensitive information – includes water contamination, scheduled down-time/repairs notification, boil water order, etc.

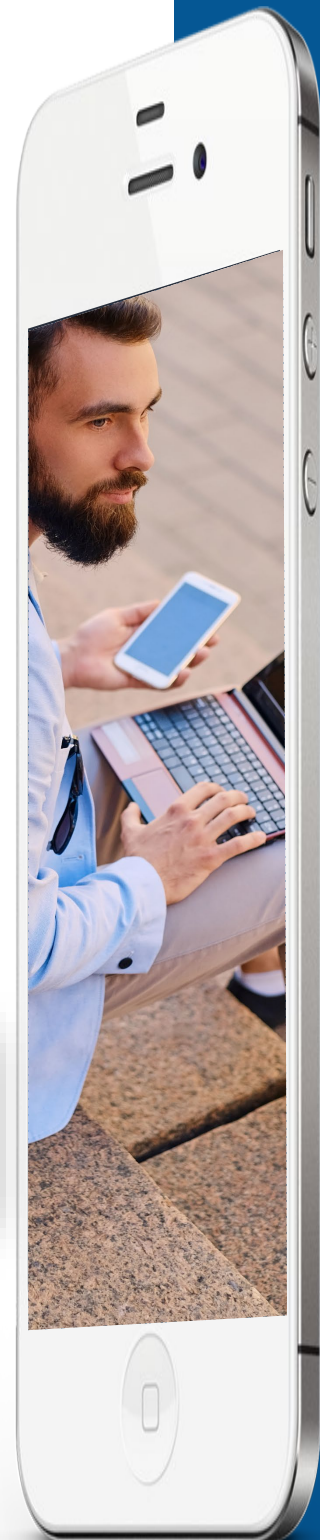
- Social media – Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. (Twitter is especially helpful as the media often finds stories on Twitter and your story can be covered by several media outlets with just one tweet)
- Email
- Website (pop-ups are best to ensure visibility)
- Press releases – local radio and local television news station
- Email signature line (see example below)



- Door flyers and door knocking

Industry information – includes rate increases, change in leadership, planned construction etc.

- Direct mail
- Email
- Website
- Industry blogs
- Local publications (newspaper, community guides, etc.)
- Local TV news station



Event information – includes local events, job fairs, facility tours, etc.

- Social media
- Website
- Local radio
- Email
- Local publications (newspaper, community guides, etc.)

Understanding the Media

As with any endeavor, the more you understand your “opponent,” the better off you’ll be. When it comes to PR, the media can be your biggest friend or foe. Understanding the media industry will only help you be more successful in your outreach and outcomes.

- ➔ **The media is busy** – On any given day, editors from media outlets are inundated with over 100 press releases a day and the general news that they need to cover. It’s important that you respect their time and only ask for their attention when it’s truly relevant. The more you respect their time and expertise, the better response you’ll get from them. Since the media is not the subject matter expert, it is crucial that you tell them why your pitch is important and why they should cover it.
- ➔ **Target journalists, not publications** – The mistake many people make is to send information to the generic email address. These email addresses are the black holes of publications, usually managed by interns. You should instead always aim to contact a journalist directly. They are the decision makers, after all. Find out who covers the topics you’re looking to discuss. Build a database of names, email addresses and phone numbers of the media you want to reach. Find out who the editors, assistant editors, and writers are. Build your contact database and refer to it as needed.
- ➔ **Know what they cover/area of expertise** – Be sure that you are contacting the best journalist/media professional for the story you’re pitching. You’ll never get media attention if you’re sending your press release about upcoming construction to the food editor. Know your media contacts and go straight to the source. You’ll save yourself a lot of time and effort if you know WHO covers WHAT. This information can be added to your database of media contacts to have more robust understanding of the media avenues available.

Understanding the Media (cont'd)

Find a connection – Why might they be interested in your story? Did they recently cover a story about the rising levels of mercury in water? If so, tell them about the updates you're making to detect high levels of contaminants. Did they recently cover a story about the traffic congestion in your area? Give them a heads-up about construction updates that might affect people's commute. Make sure to include the connection in your outreach. For example, "you recently covered the increase in traffic in Belleview. Therefore, I thought your readers should know that there will be some upcoming construction that may affect the local roads and their commute times. Below is a schedule of upcoming construction and the purpose of the project." This may help residents better understand the reason for the inconvenience.

Know their lead times – As the saying goes "timing is everything." Know what the lead times are for the different outlets and publications. Thanks to digital news (online news, social media, etc.) some outlets may be able to report on a story the same day. However, if you want to appear in the local newspaper or magazine, those have longer lead times. You may need to submit your story weeks before the publication is released. Ask what the deadline and lead times are so you can prepare accordingly and avoid missed opportunities. This information can also be compiled and added to your database of media contacts for an even better understanding of what it will take to get your story in the media.

How to Pitch to Journalists and the Media



In the old days, large organizations could pretty much just send out a press release when they had something to announce. Journalists would then willingly write these up into articles, and hey presto, the organization had earned media.

I'm afraid to say this approach to PR no longer cuts the mustard today.

While press releases do still play an important role in a well-balanced PR strategy, utilities need to be far more imaginative. After all, the average utility only has a limited number of genuinely newsworthy announcements to turn into press releases each year.

How then do you win media coverage (aka: earned media) on a regular basis when you don't have any big utility announcements up your sleeve?

You need to develop a PR plan in which you're regularly approaching journalists and other media influencers with interesting ideas and pitches. These need to help further your narrative, tie in with your service, and have wider relevance to your industry or something topical in the news cycle. Entice the media. Tell them why the public and they should care about this story. Below are some examples to illustrate this point:

-  **Example 1** – Your local newspaper is covering the drought in your area. You can seize the opportunity by contacting the editor and offering to provide water conservation tips. Want to be even more creative? Offer to provide water conservation tips that children can participate in.
-  **Example 2** – Summer is coming and many students have some free time on their hands. Write to your media contacts and tell them about the internship program your utility is offering or certification courses to attract young adults to our industry. Use it as an opportunity to connect with younger generations and provide career assistance.

- ➔ **Example 3** – National coverage of PFAS contamination has customers concerned. Write to an editor to explain to them that you have been testing and have found no traces of the chemicals, or if you have found the chemical what are you doing to address the issue.

- ➔ **Example 4** – Water utilities are aware that new lead and copper rules are being developed. Write to an editor to explain to them that your district is being proactive and have developed a plan to inventory all service materials and have a plan to replace lead service lines if found.

- ➔ **Example 5** – To help with disinfection by products (DBPs) your utility decides to change from free chlorine to chloramines. Explain in detail the reasons why (DBPs, longer lasting residuals) and rebut the concerns of others.



Sample Pitch

SUBJECT: [JOURNALIST NAME] – Story Pitch: Opportunities in the fast-growing Water and Wastewater Industry

Hi [NAME],

With an over 20% increase in retirement after the pandemic, there is a huge opportunity for jobs seekers to join the water and wastewater industry. The industry has grown considerably in the last few years, thanks to new technologies related to water management. The job opportunities include roles as service technicians, engineers and roles in information technology, administration and more.

With over [insert number] local residents looking for employment, it is important to inform the community of the many options the water and wastewater industry provides.

[NAME] is the managing director (or insert role) of [COMPANY NAME], the leader in water technology. He/she is keen to offer their unique insights on this booming industry and what it can offer to job seekers. They would be happy to comment as an expert on the following topics:

- The new cultural shift in the blue-collar landscape
- Which types of job opportunities are the most competitive and promising
- The bright future of the water industry and how the next generation can get involved.

[NAME] would be more than happy to provide expert commentary for any future stories on this subject. He/she is also available for interviews, or could even pen an article on this topic which could provide your readership with great insight and actionable takeaways.

All the best,
[Your Name]



How to Reach The Media

OK, now that you have an idea of how to pitch to the media... how do you reach them?

You can search press email addresses with email finder tools. You can either do it the slow way for free, or the quick way for a fee. The slow but free way is to use [Hunter](#). This free tool tells you the email address format for any domain that you search for. You then just match this against each journalist name you've listed at each publication.

Other similar outreach tools you can use for free are [Any Mail Finder](#), [Voilanorbert](#) and [Who.is](#).

The quicker (but not free) way is to sign up for a tool like [Cision](#), which hosts one of the largest journalists' databases. They don't publish their rate card, but for small businesses prices reportedly start at \$20 a month.

The last way is to reach out to individual publications directly. Introduce yourself and/or invite them to the office. Basically, make a connection. People in general, are more likely to work with acquaintances/people they know than strangers. The value of building connections is often underestimated in today's world.



Media Training

Whether you're giving a speech, being interviewed in the media, or just presenting an idea to one or two people, adequate preparation is essential. This guide will provide you with effective techniques for dealing with today's hyper-connected, chaotic world and ensuring your key messages come through with authority, credibility, and sensitivity in the social conversation.

We can't afford to simply deliver the message we want to instill in the minds of the other actors. Besides expressing our point of view, we also must be empathetic to their feelings, make proposals that appeal to the common good, and present a shared destination we can work together to reach.

Do Your Homework

- Know your audience: their concerns, their weaknesses, their level of knowledge, their intentions, their values.
- Don't assume they're already familiar with something and avoid phrases such as: "As you know," ...
- Identify your desired course of action.
- Come up with key messages and back them up with "evidence": statistics, facts, studies, third-party testimonials, examples, and personal anecdotes.
- Come up with short responses that address the concerns of the other actors within your orbit of interests.
- Make sure your messages contain proposals that will appeal to the other parties. Sometimes you need to tell them why they should care.
- Determine the best avenues in which to deliver your messages. What audience are you targeting and how do they use the media?

Tell Your Story and Tell It Well

- Come up with a clear structure. It's best to illustrate your topic with three key points. Make sure to include your purpose and intent, provide relevant context, and propose actions that are in tune with the collective sentiment.
- Memorize your key messages. You should be able to get them across without looking at your notes. To do so, write down your messages, but also come up with a mental image so you can remember them better and express them in your own words. Be the subject matter expert.
- Be clear and concise in your messages. The general public most likely won't understand workplace jargon.
- Be engaging. Get their attention by making a strong first impression. Use questions, humor, surprising facts, relevant news, anecdotes.
- Scan the audience as you're delivering your message. Observe their reactions to gauge whether the message is getting through.
- Be the subject matter expert and establish your credibility.
- Make sure they know why you are the right person to deliver these messages.
- Be relatable and form connections. Share your personal experience or anecdotes.

- Be prepared to anticipate and proactively avert any negative questions before they are asked.
- Be impactful. Build a memorable conclusion. Make sure the audience knows why they should care.
- Summarize and highlight your most important points. If you're giving a presentation, employ a visual aid while recapping those points verbally.
- Inspire and motivate your audience. Deliver a motivating call to action, such as: "You can make a difference" (if applicable). Make them want to "buy-in".

Answering Questions

- If you don't understand a question, **ask for clarification**.
- **Don't allow statements that are incorrect**, or which could lead to a misunderstanding. Correct them immediately (accept the question, not a bad intention).
- **Never lie**. Credibility is harder to earn back and maintain than to lose.
- If you don't know the full answer to a question, **provide whatever relevant information you have** and offer to take up the question again when you have further information. (No one knows everything). But be sure that someone contacts the journalist later and provides what was promised.
- **Don't repeat negative phrases**. On the contrary, reply using positive words. People prefer to be guided into making the right choices than blocked from the wrong ones.
- **Don't say "no comment"** without a valid reason. Respond positively and creatively. For example, instead of "no comment" reply with "we are currently reviewing that [process/person/situation] and will provide additional information as soon as it becomes available."
- **Remain professional**. Don't take challenging questions as personal attacks or become defensive. Stay calm and composed even when you feel under attack.
- Respond directly to challenging questions and **redirect by building a bridge to positive replies**: your key messages.
- **Don't speak negatively about the competition** or any other person, unless this is part of your strategy and you're prepared for the repercussions.

Practice and Polish

- Channel your nerves with positive body language.
- Take a deep breath.
- Breathe and speak slowly.
- Avoid industry jargon or acronyms.
- Stand up straight with your feet firmly on the floor. Keep your feet shoulder-width apart.
- Eliminate filler words (ex: umm, well, so, you know, etc.). Instead use pauses.
- Convey authority, self-confidence.
- Show enthusiasm.
- Smile.
- Stay focused on the moment.
- Vary the inflection of your voice while also maintaining its normal tone, rhythm and timbre. Speak louder than usual.
- Be professional.



Press Release Tools

Using PR press release tools can assist you to positively promote your organization. These tools are cost-effective and allow you more control than widely focused advertising campaigns. Below is a list of tools to consider when implementing your PR campaign.

- **Media Relations** – Media strategies target communicating messages by means of media channels to control how the media portrays your organization. Its purpose is to inform the public of your industry’s mission, policies, and practices in a positive, credible manner. This is achieved by coordinating with those responsible for generating the news to the mass media. A few examples of mass media include journalism, social media, television, and radio. Developing good relationships and contact lists with leading journalists will facilitate your media releases to local, regional, or state forums. This will enable you to promote your utility or manage issues and crises.

- **Advertorials** – An advertorial is paid content in the form of a combination of an advertisement and an editorial in newspaper reviews or news stories. Advertorials are effective in relaying your message to a specific group of people. By choosing a particular medium to publish your advertorial, the PR official needs to consider their PR budget before using this tool as paid advertising can be costly. You may want to evaluate using an advertorial if the local public utilities commission has approved building a new facility or improving the existing one.
- **Social Media** – This is an interactive technology used to share or exchange information via websites or other applications through social networking. Some popular examples of social media include blogs, Facebook, and Twitter. This type of media allows you to sidestep the media and go straight to your customer. Social media grants you the ability to follow and be followed by journalists, drive website traffic, increase exposure, and manage issues in a timely manner.
- **Newsletters** – Emailed newsletters are a great and legitimate way to promote your industry. Newsletters give you the means to inform and communicate with your affiliates and customers. An engaging newsletter will help you promote your utility and inform the public of your current operations.
- **Brochures and Catalogues** – Brochures and catalogues gives your customer the opportunity to consider your message and services and drive them to your website. Additionally, these pamphlets can be individually designed for the various sections of your website.
- **Business Events** – Events can be a great opportunity for your utility to gain exposure and share ideas with you affiliates. For example, trade shows give you the latitude to share information with the public and others in your industry.
- **Speaking Engagements** – Speaking at public or social occasions where your customers are likely to attend, positions you to be an expert in your field. It also helps to strengthen your utility's reputation. These are valuable promotional opportunities that can provide networking possibilities. For instance, speaking to a local club to entice others to join your board of trustees and the benefits it can offer them.
- **Sponsorships** – Sponsorships are good for your reputation and industry's continued success. In particular, offering internships at your utility to recruit potential employees in your field is an example of supporting your community. Sponsorships correlate to the public's opinion of good business practice and morality.

Using Consumer Confidence Reports for PR

Every year many water systems must comply with federal regulations requiring them to produce and distribute a water quality report or Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) to their customers by July 1. These reports include information on the system's current conditions, information on the source(s) of water, how the system has complied with drinking water regulations over the year, and more. Basically, since the report is issued to the public, it is a form of PR that can be used to maintain or improve your organizations PR.

NOTE: Federal rules require certain language be included in CCRs. [Click here to access the Maine DWP's templates and tips for submitting CCRs and forms.](#)

CCRs are a place for a water system to explain anything that could be perceived as a negative in a positive way. They are also a place to detail anything going well that you think the public may be interested in knowing. See examples below:

- **Explain a negative in a positive way** - Your system had a contamination event and subsequently issued a boil water order. The CCR is a place to explain how the system caught the event, protected the public by issuing the water order in a timely fashion, and how the system corrected the event. A system might also include information on how they are attempting to prevent these contamination events in the future. When done in a thoughtful and constructive way, this can turn a negative (contamination/boil water order) into a positive (the system is protecting the public).
- **Highlighting the positives** - Your system could explain the new treatment process being used to eliminate tastes and odors that is going well. This could include a comparison of what the water used to be like to what it is now. Ultimately, this highlights something positive for the system and gives the public confidence in its management.

CCRs can also include additional information not required by federal regulation. This information can include an explanation of treatment processes and their costs, information on source water protection and conservation, a statement from the system's manager/superintendent, and any additional educational materials that may be relevant but not required. These optional pieces of information can be beneficial to an organization's PR because they can increase public awareness and involvement. Systems can take advantage of a fillable .pdf template of a CCR on the Maine Drinking Water Program's website.

PR Ethics

Ethics in PR are the fundamental moral standards one should be guided by to represent your industry in a professional manner. Using and demonstrating ethics will help you establish public trust, retain employees and possibly lead to greater change in your industry. The values listed below are crucial to the sincerity and trustworthiness of a successful and positive PR campaign.



Honesty

Your public relations official should provide accurate and truthful information when communicating with the public. Honesty will help to generate support for the message you're trying to deliver by increasing your credibility.

Advocacy

This is how you represent your organization with an idea which allows you the capability to persuade the public to look at your message positively. In essence, be an ambassador for the organization you're representing by believing and supporting in their mission, message and product. This will help to enable you to influence your audience.

Expertise

This requires the PR official to know the industry for which they represent. You need to be knowledgeable about the topic(s) you're discussing to maintain your credibility as the expert in the field. Additionally, an expert conveys confidence, if you stumble over what you're saying, the public will think that you are less credible. Furthermore, your audience may have questions that you will need to answer for them. If you don't know the answer, tell them you'll get the information and be sure to get back to them. Therefore, you must do your homework and research on the subject prior to the PR campaign.

Independence

To be effective in building trust with your organization and target audience, you must be impartial and accountable for your actions and communications while supporting the facts. It is imperative to be independent from your organization and audience so that only the facts are relayed. The public will not support your PR effort/goal if they sense the information is one sided and biased.

Loyalty

You must remain dedicated to the industry you represent and believe in the message they want to communicate for the public to support the intended subject matter. If you don't buy-in, why would they?

Fairness

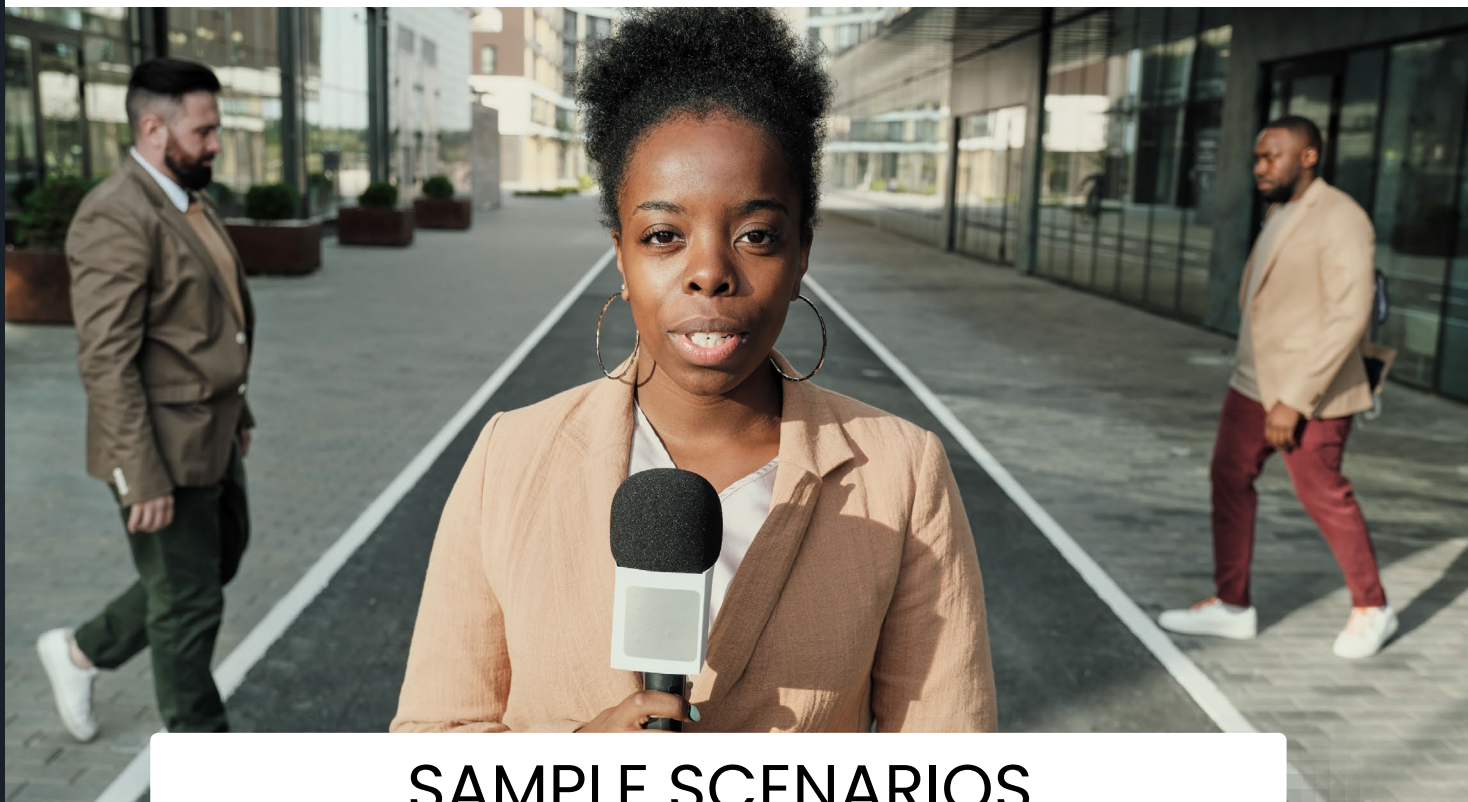
It is crucial to stay unbiased and respectful of everyone's views and opinions. This enables your utility and the public to be willing to express their ideas and thoughts about the subject matter in an open forum. This allows for the free flow of information which in turn builds audience trust and support.

Understanding and practicing the previously noted ethics is necessary to provide a positive PR image. It is critical for the PR official to maintain these ethics while supporting the organization they represent. Hence, allowing the PR official the ability to influence the audience.

One of the fundamental principles of the Public Relations Society Of America (PRSA) concerns the disclosure of information. The disclosure of information promotes informed decision making through open communication. The objective of this principle is to disclose all details necessary for responsible decision making to build trust with the media and the public. This code further states that PR members must be willing to divulge who is sponsoring the promotion and why they are doing so. This requires the PR official to be honest and accurate in all correspondence and communication. They also must steer clear of deceptive practices. Ethical decision making prepares your PR official to promote and communicate a positive campaign/message to the public.

- **Know the Facts** – To ensure a successful campaign, one must research, understand and define the cause you're promoting.
- **Identify all Factors** – Your campaign won't be lucrative if you are uninformed. Therefore, make a list of all the information that will be needed to make an informed decision about your promotion. Likewise, identify any presumptions that may be made about your campaign. This will enable the PR official to be prepared, knowledgeable and concise.
- **List the Concerns** – This will allow you to consider all the facets that can influence the public's decision-making process. Questions to evaluate: Who will be involved or affected? What might their concerns be, etc.
- **Develop Resolutions** – This step involves methods to address potential answers to issues and their outcomes. For instance, how might the public's concerns be addressed? This would be a good time to create rehearsed responses to potential questions.
- **Evaluate the Resolutions** – Decide what the potential outcomes for each possible resolution entails. Thus, consider the cost, legality, and impact of the resolution. This is the appropriate time to seek advice and guidance from knowledgeable sources such as engineers, industry, local, and state professionals, etc.
- **Recommend an Action** – It's finally time to implement your course of action. Consider to whom and when the action will be taken. Also, evaluate any possible follow ups that may need to occur.

Following these ethical decision-making steps will allow your industry to portray a positive and successful campaign. This will preserve the integrity of the PR official and your industry that you represent. Lastly, it will maintain your trustworthy relationship with the media and the public.



SAMPLE SCENARIOS

Re-routing Techniques

With any interaction with the media, there's a chance that you'll be faced with an uncomfortable question or one that you're not anticipating. That's why it's important to be prepared with re-routing strategies and techniques such as the following.

Scenario 1

- *Halt the course of the interview.*
- *Correct something that was said.*
- *Create a space for inserting the key message.*

Respond using the following...

"Let me clarify that point."

"That piece of information is incorrect, but I can tell you that ..."

"Your question is based on a debatable assumption..."

Scenario 2

- *Move the discussion from hostile to friendly territory.*
- *Avoid a “no comment” response.*
- *Encourage the journalist to move to issues of interest to the interviewee.*

Respond using the following...

“Our policy is not to discuss this issue. What I can say is ...”

“What you’re asking leads us to an even more important point...”

“I’m not responsible for that information, but what I can say is ...”

Scenario 3

Transition from a topic that doesn’t align with the question but pivots to one you are interested in speaking about.

Respond with the following:

“Let me explain in more depth”

“Before we get to that, let me take a step back...”

“First, let me elaborate on one point...”

Do’s and Don’ts

- **Be confident.** Credibility and confidence go hand in hand.
- **Be professional.** Dress accordingly, stand up straight and tall, avoid slang and vulgar terminology.
- **Be clear and concise.** If your message is too long or confusing, then chances are the point was lost.
- **Be convincing.** Make your audience care and want to buy-in.

Do's and Don'ts (cont'd)



- **Don't be afraid of pauses.** Taking a few seconds to think will seem longer to you than to the reporter or the audience and will make you seem prudent and cautious.
- **Don't let them provoke you.** Don't lose your composure. Stay calm.
- **Don't assume the reporter knows more about the topic than you do.** Generally, the opposite is true.
- **Don't assume the microphone, camera, or tape is turned off** immediately before or after an interview. It's safer to believe that everything you say is being taped. Nothing is "off the record." If you don't want to read about it tomorrow, don't say it today.
- **Don't lie.** Be factual. Don't provide false or inaccurate information or try to deceive the press.
- **Don't speak for someone who's not present** nor blame others for what happens. This can lead to issues with credibility.
- **Don't speculate.** It's better to say, "I don't know."
- **Don't say "no comment."** Instead, offer the information that is available and pertinent.
- **Don't use jargon.** Jargon can be industry and/or workplace specific, so your message could be lost.
- **Don't say more than necessary.** When you're satisfied with your answer, stop speaking. Additional information could create ambiguity.

Crisis Management Plan

You can't always foresee a PR disaster, that's why it's important to have a process in place in the event that you need to take swift action.

Refer to the following guide below as your "go to" during uncertain times.

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Crisis Response Team (CRT) | Identify your CRT and create your emergency contact list (CRT manager, spokesperson(s), marketing/social media team, front line employees, etc.) |
| Scenarios | Develop scenarios and incident management checklists. |
| Messaging | Develop cohesive and consistent message that will be distributed on all channels (website, social media, press release, etc.). Once created, distribute it to your CRT and prepare responses in the event that they are contacted by the media, residents, employees, etc. |
| Monitor | Task people in your CRT to monitor media mentions, social media posts and internal gossip. Craft a consistent response for all scenarios. |
| Train | Train all members of the CRT on how to handle questions, media, emails, etc. Conduct tabletop exercises. |
| Test & Refine | Conduct mock crisis scenarios and refine as needed. Review after action reports post event and adjust accordingly. |

Sample Templates

The following are sample templates that can be used for different scenarios. Feel free to use these 'as is' or edit accordingly. Simply insert the appropriate fields (city, contact information, etc.) in order to apply to your organization.

For *Boil Water, Do Not Drink, or Do Not Use Water* advisories, notification should be made as soon as possible or at least within 24 hours of its issuance. Recommended outlets include radio, television, local newspaper, e-mail, other electronic media (social media, website), or public address methods for systems where hand delivery is impractical.

In addition, the abbreviated versions are tailored for release to customers for prompt notification, while the detailed versions provide more information and may be best used when sending to the media or in follow-up scenarios.

Do Not Drink Water (abbreviated – for customers)

should be sent to residents and media

Note: State's template can be [found here](#)



[INSERT CITY NAME] - Due to unsafe drinking water conditions, residents in the [insert city/zip code] areas are **directed to Not Drink the Water.**

This includes making ice cubes, food preparation, brushing teeth, washing hands, showering, or any other activity involving the use of water for people or pets. The use and flushing of toilets is permitted. Discard any food or drink (and ice) that was previously prepared with water. This Order shall remain in effect until further notice.

Many pets will be unaffected by consuming water under a Do Not Drink Water Order but some may be affected. As a precautionary measure, it is recommended to **include your pet in the Do Not Drink Water Order.** For specific guidance on your individual pet, we recommend you contact a veterinarian

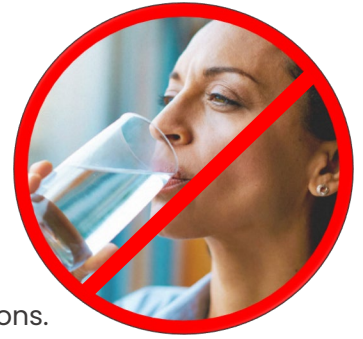
Questions regarding this notice should be directed to [insert contact name] at [ABC Water District] or to the State of Maine Drinking Water Program at 207-287-2070 during normal business hours: [insert business hours].

TO BE POSTED IMMEDIATELY.

Do Not Drink Water (detailed – for media/info)

should be sent to residents and media

Note: State's template can be [found here](#)



The [ABC Water District] issues a **Do Not Drink Water order for all customers in the [location]** as a result of unsafe drinking water conditions. The Do Not Drink Order is in effect until further notice.

Customers are **ordered not to** consume/use the water for:

- Making ice cubes.
- Food preparation.
- Brushing teeth.
- Any activity involving the consumption of water.

Customers **should use bottled water** for:

- Drinking.
- Brushing teeth.
- Washing fruits and vegetables.
- Preparing food and baby formula.
- Making ice.
- Giving to pets.

Discard any food or drink (and ice) that was previously prepared with water.

Many pets will be unaffected by consuming water under a Do Not Drink Water Order but some may be affected. As a precautionary measure, it is recommended to **include your pet in the Boil Water Order**. For specific guidance on your individual pet, we recommend you contact a veterinarian.

The order is in effect until [ABC Water District] and the State of Maine Drinking Water Program are confident there is no longer a public health concern. We will provide the next update at [date or timeframe]. Customers will be notified immediately when the order is lifted.

Tests results from [date] showed [contaminant] at [levels/amount]. The State of Maine Drinking Water Program is working closely with [ABC Water District] to find the contamination source and fix the problem.

[Insert quote from System Public Information Officer – instill customer confidence]

To correct the problem, we are [describe corrective action (i.e., Flushing the entire water system)]. [Give dates or time estimate for duration of the order, if possible]. There have been [Number or No] illnesses related to the community's drinking water so far reported.

If you are concerned about your health or your family, call your health care provider or the [local health officer/department].

[Include any required EPA Health Effects Language for specific contaminant or violation.]

[If applicable: ABC Water District customers may pick up (alternative water supply, bottled water) at (location and time).]

Please share this information with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (i.e., apartments, nursing homes, schools, and businesses).

For more information:

- Go to [ABC Water District's website] or call [phone]. Mail inquiries should be sent to [ABC Water District], [Address]
- Or contact the State of Maine Drinking Water Program at 207-287-2070 during normal business hours.
- [If applicable, include local health officer/department contact.]

TO BE POSTED IMMEDIATELY.

الرجاء عدم شرب الماء



ونظرا لتلوث المياه وعدم صلاحيتها للشرب،
نرجوا من المستهلكين بعدم شرب الماء، و يشمل ايضا صنع مكعبات الثلج، تجهيز الطعام ، تنظيف الأسنان أو
عمل أي شيء آخر يتطلب استهلاك المياه.
يظل هذا الأمر ساري المفعول حتى إشعار آخر!

اي اسئلة بخصوص هذا الإعلان ينبغي أن توجه إلى:
في

أو إلى
برنامج مياه الشرب بولاية ماين على الرقم
2070-287 خلال ساعات العمل الرسمي.
ليتم نشرها فوراً.

Do Not Drink Order

DWP SOPID#: DWP0061-G

Maine Drinking Water Program (Arabic translation provided by City of Portland, Minority Health Program Aug 2013)

NE BUVEZ PAS L'EAU

En raison de l'insalubrité de l'eau, il est ordonné aux consommateurs de / du
de **Ne Pas Boire L'Eau**. Cela inclut la préparation
des glaçons et des aliments, se brosser les dents ou pour toute autre activité impliquant
la consommation d'eau. Cet avis restera en vigueur jusqu'à nouvel ordre !

Les questions concernant cet avis doivent être adressées à :

au
ou auprès du
State of Maine Drinking Water Program, (Programme d'eau potable de l'Etat du
Maine)
au 287-2070 pendant les heures ouvrables

À DIFFUSER IMMEDIATEMENT.

Do Not Drink Order

DWP SOPID#: DWP0061-G

Maine Drinking Water Program (French translation provided by City of Portland, Minority Health Program Aug 2013)



🏠 Hacabin Biyaha 🏠

Sababa laxariira nadaafada biyaha lacaba, _____ ayaa macaa misha waxaa loo sheegayaa **in aysan cabin biyaha**. Ama aysan u isticmalin in aay kasameystan baraf, diyaarinta cuntada, marka ay ilkaha cadeyanayaan ama sababa kale oo laxariira isticmaalka biyaha. Hanaankan ayaa ah

Mid sii jiri doona ilaa amar dambe!

Wixii su'aal ah oo kusabsan fariinta kala xariir:

Ama

State of Maine laanta u xilsaran biyaha lacabo kawac
287-2070 xiliga saacadaha shaqada lagu jiro.

TO BE POSTED IMMEDIATELY.

🏠 No beba el agua 🏠

Debido a las condiciones de insalubridad del agua , _____
Se ordena a los consumidores **no beber el agua**. Esto incluye no hacer cubos de hielo, no usarla en la preparación de alimentos, el cepillado de los dientes o cualquier actividad que requiera del consumo de agua. ¡Esta orden permanecerá en vigencia hasta nuevo aviso!

Cualquier pregunta sobre el particular debe dirigirse a:

al _____

o al

Programa de Agua Potable del Estado de Maine al
287-2070 en horario de trabajo.

PARA SER PUBLICADO INMEDIATAMENTE.

Do Not Drink Order

DWP SOPID#: DWP0061 Maine Drinking Water Program
(Spanish translation provided by City of Portland, Minority Health Program Aug 2013)

Do Not Use Water (abbreviated – for customers)

should be sent to residents and media

Note: State's template can be [found here](#)



[INSERT CITY NAME] – Due to unsafe drinking water conditions, residents in the [*insert city/zip code*] areas are **directed to Not Use the Water**.

This includes making ice cubes, food preparation, brushing teeth, washing hands, showering, or any other activity involving the use of water for people or pets. The use and flushing of toilets is permitted. Discard any food or drink (and ice) that was previously prepared with water. This Order shall remain in effect until further notice.

Many pets will be unaffected by consuming water under a Do Not Use Water Order but some may be affected. As a precautionary measure, it is recommended to **include your pet in the Do Not Use Water Order**. For specific guidance on your individual pet, we recommend you contact a veterinarian

Questions regarding this notice should be directed to [*insert contact name*] at [*ABC Water District*] or to the State of Maine Drinking Water Program at 207-287-2070 during normal business hours: [*insert business hours*].

TO BE POSTED IMMEDIATELY.

Do Not Use Water (detailed – for media/info)

should be sent to residents and media

Note: State's template can be [found here](#)

The [*ABC Water District*] issues a **Do Not Use Water order for all customers** in the [*location*] as a result of unsafe drinking water conditions. The Do Not Use Order is in effect until further notice.

Customers are **ordered not to** consume/use the water for:

- Making ice cubes.
- Food preparation.
- Brushing teeth.
- Any activity involving the consumption of water.

Customers **should use bottled water** for:

- Drinking.
- Brushing teeth.
- Washing fruits and vegetables.
- Preparing food and baby formula.
- Making ice.
- Giving to pets.

Discard any food or drink (and ice) that was previously prepared with water.

Many pets will be unaffected by consuming water under a Do Not Use Water Order but some may be affected. As a precautionary measure, it is recommended to **include your pet in the Do Not Use Water Order**. For specific guidance on your individual pet, we recommend you contact a veterinarian.



The order is in effect until [ABC Water District] and the State of Maine Drinking Water Program are confident there is no longer a public health concern. We will provide the next update at [insert date]. Customers will be notified immediately when the order is lifted.

Tests results from [date] showed [contaminant] at [levels/amount]. The State of Maine Drinking Water Program is working closely with [ABC Water District] to find the contamination source and fix the problem.

[Insert quote from System Public Information Officer – instill customer confidence]

To correct the problem, we are [describe corrective action (i.e., Flushing the entire water system)]. [Give dates or time estimate for duration of the order, if possible]. There have been [Number or No] illnesses related to the community's drinking water so far reported.

If you are concerned about your health or your family, call your health care provider or the [local health officer/department].

[Include any required EPA Health Effects Language for specific contaminant or violation.]

[If applicable: ABC Water District customers may pick up (alternative water supply, bottled water) at (location and time).]

Please share this information with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (i.e., apartments, nursing homes, schools, and businesses).

For more information:

- Go to [ABC Water District's website] or call [phone]. Mail inquiries should be sent to [ABC Water District], [Address]
- Or contact the State of Maine Drinking Water Program at 207-287-2070 during normal business hours.
- [If applicable, include local health officer/department contact.]

TO BE POSTED IMMEDIATELY.



الرجاء عدم استعمال الماء

ونظرا لتلوث المياه وعدم صلاحيتها للشرب، نرجو من المستهلكين بعدم استعمال الماء، و يشمل ايضا صنع مكعبات الثلج، تجهيز الطعام، تنظيف الأسنان، غسيل الايدي، الاستحمام، أو عمل أي شيء آخر تتطلب استهلاك المياه للانسان او الحيوانات الاليفة. يسمح فقط باستعمال و نظافة مراحيض دورات المياه. يظل هذا الأمر ساري المفعول حتى إشعار آخر

اي اسئلة بخصوص هذا الإعلان ينبغي أن توجه إلى:
في

أو إلى
برنامج مياه الشرب بولاية ماين على الرقم
2070-287 خلال ساعات العمل الرسمي.
ليتم نشرها فوراً.

Do Not Use Order

DWP SOPID#: DWP0061-G

Maine Drinking Water Program (Arabic translation provided by City of Portland, Minority Health Program Aug 2013)

N'UTILISEZ PAS L'EAU

En raison de l'insalubrité de l'eau, il est ordonné aux consommateurs de / du de **Ne Pas Utiliser L'Eau**. Cela inclut la préparation des glaçons et des aliments, se brosser les dents, se laver les mains, prendre une douche, ou toute autre activité impliquant l'utilisation de l'eau pour les individus ou les animaux domestiques. L'utilisation et le rinçage des toilettes sont autorisés.
Cet avis restera en vigueur jusqu'à nouvel ordre !

Les questions concernant cet avis doivent être adressées à :

au

ou auprès du

State of Maine Drinking Water Program, (Programme d'eau potable de l'Etat du
Maine)

au 287-2070 pendant les heures ouvrables

À DIFFUSER IMMEDIATEMENT.

Do Not Use Order

DWP SOPID#: DWP0061-G

Maine Drinking Water Program (French translation provided by City of Portland, Minority Health Program Aug 2013)

Somali

Ha isticmaalin Biyaha



Sababa laxiriira xalada biyah lacabo oon wanagsaneeyn, _____ ayaa macaa misha waxaa loo sheegayaa **in aysan isticmaalin biyaha.** Ama aysan u isticmaalin biyaha in laga kasameysto baraf , diyaarinta cuntada, marka ilkaha lacadayanayo, in lagu dhaqdo gacmaha, in lagu qabeysto, ama qababka kale ee dadka ama xaywaanada guri joogta ah ay u isticmaalan biyaha.waxaa la ogol yahay in loo isticmaalo musqusha marka lagalayo.

Hanaankan ayaa ah mid sii jiridona ilaa amar dambe!

Wixii su'aal ah ee kusabsan fariintan waa in lagala xariiraa:

Ama

State of Maine laanta u xilsaaran biyaha lacabo, kawac 287-2070 xiliga saacadaha shaqada lagu jiro.

TO BE POSTED IMMEDIATELY.

Spanish

No use el agua

Debido a las condiciones de insalubridad del agua, _____ Se ordena a los consumidores **no usar el agua.** Esto incluye el hacer cubos de hielo, la preparación de alimentos, el cepillado de dientes, el lavado de manos, el baño diario, o cualquier otra actividad que requiera el uso de agua por personas o animales. Sí se permite descargar el sanitario. ¡Esta orden permanecerá en vigencia hasta nuevo aviso!

Cualquier pregunta sobre el particular debe dirigirse a:

al _____

o al

Programa de Agua Potable del Estado de Maine al 287-2070 en horario de trabajo.

PARA SER PUBLICADO INMEDIATAMENTE.

Do Not Use Order

DWP SOPID#: DWP0061 Maine Drinking Water Program
(Spanish translation provided by City of Portland, Minority Health Program Aug 2013)



Boil Water Order (abbreviated – for customers)

should be sent to residents and media

Note: State's template can be [found here](#)



[INSERT CITY] – Due to the possibility of unsafe water, a **Boil Water order has been ordered** for areas including [insert cities or zip codes].

Optional (*include reason*) – Ex: The order is due to a drop in water pressure throughout the Maine distribution system following a momentary power outage.

Residents are directed to Boil All Water for **one minute at a rolling boil** before drinking, making ice cubes, washing foods, brushing teeth or in any other activity involving consumption of water. This Order shall remain in effect until further notice.

Many pets will be unaffected by consuming water under a Boil Water Order but some may be affected. As a precautionary measure, it is recommended to **include your pet in the Boil Water Order**. For specific guidance on your individual pet, we recommend you contact a veterinarian.

Questions regarding this notice should be directed to [insert contact name] at [ABC Water District] or to the State of Maine Drinking Water Program at 207-287-2070 during normal business hours: [insert business hours].

Boil Water Order (detailed – for media/info)

should be sent to residents and media

Note: State's template can be [found here](#)

The [ABC Water District] issues a **Boil Water Order for all customers** in [location] as a result of possible unsafe water. The Boil Water Order is in effect for all customers until further notice.

Customers **must**:

- Bring water to a rolling boil for 1 minute.
- Allow the water to cool before using.
- Store the cooled water in a clean container with a cover.
- Discard any uncooked food or drink (and ice) that was previously prepared with water.

Customers **must use boiled water** that has cooled **or bottled water** for:

- Drinking
- Preparing food and baby formula
- Brushing teeth
- Making ice
- Washing fruits and vegetables
- Giving to pets

(cont'd on next page)

Many pets will be unaffected by consuming water under a Boil Water Order but some may be affected. As a precautionary measure, it is recommended to **include your pet in the Boil Water Order**. For specific guidance on your individual pet, we recommend you contact a vet.



The order is in effect until [ABC Water District] and the State of Maine Drinking Water Program are confident there is no longer a public health concern. We will provide the next update at [date or timeframe]. Customers will be notified immediately when the order is lifted.

Tests results from [date] showed [contaminant] at [levels/amount]. The State of Maine Drinking Water Program is working closely with [ABC Water District] to find the contamination source and fix the problem.

[Insert quote from System Public Information Officer – instill ratepayer and customer confidence]

To correct the problem, we are [describe corrective action (i.e., introduction of chlorine)].
[Give dates or time estimate for duration of the order, if possible].

There have been [Number or No] illnesses reported related to the community's drinking water.

If you are concerned about your health or your family, call your health care provider or the [local health officer/department].

[Include any required EPA Health Effects Language for specific contaminant or violation.]

[If applicable: ABC Water District customers may pick up (alternative water supply, bottled water) at (location and time).]

Please share this information with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (i.e., apartments, nursing homes, schools, and businesses).

For more information:

- Go to [ABC Water District's website] or call [phone]. Mail inquiries should be sent to [name], [ABC Water District], [Address]
- Or contact the State of Maine Drinking Water Program at 207-287-2070 during normal business hours.
- *[If applicable, include local health officer/department contact.]*

TO BE POSTED IMMEDIATELY.

Arabic

امر بغلي الماء



ونظرا لاحتمال تلوث المياه،
نرجو من المستهلكين بغلي الماء لمدة دقيقة واحدة قبل الشرب، او صنع مكعبات الثلج، او غسل الأطعمة،
او تنظيف الأسنان أو عمل أي شيء آخر تتطلب استهلاك المياه.
يظل هذا الأمر ساري المفعول حتى إشعار آخر!

اي اسئلة بخصوص هذا الإعلان ينبغي أن توجه إلى:
في

أو إلى
برنامج مياه الشرب بولاية ماين على الرقم
2070-287 خلال ساعات العمل الرسمي.
ليتم نشرها فوراً.

Boil Water Order

DWP SOPID#: DWP0061-G

Maine Drinking Water Program (Arabic translation provided by City of Portland, Minority Health Program Aug 2013)

French

AVIS D'ÉBULLITION DE L'EAU

En raison d'un risque d'eau non potable, il est ordonné aux consommateurs de / du _
de **Faire Bouillir Toute Eau** à gros
bouillons pendant une minute, avant de la boire, de préparer des glaçons, de nettoyer
des aliments, de se brosser les dents ou pour toute autre activité impliquant la
consommation d'eau. Cet avis restera en vigueur jusqu'à nouvel ordre !

Les questions concernant cet avis doivent être adressées à :
au

ou auprès du
State of Maine Drinking Water Program, (*Programme d'eau potable de l'Etat du
Maine*)
au 287-2070 pendant les heures ouvrables
À DIFFUSER IMMEDIATEMENT.

Boil Water Order

DWP SOPID#: DWP0061-G

Maine Drinking Water Program (French translation provided by City of Portland, Minority Health Program Aug 2013)

Somali

🏠 Kar Kari biyah 🏠



Sababa laxariira surta galnimada biyaha oon nadif ahayn, _____ ayaa macaa misha waxaa lagula talinayaa in aay **is kar kariyaan biyaha** haldaqiiqa kahor in ta aysan cabin, kasameysan baraf, kumeyrin cunada, u isticmalin nadifinta ilkaha ama qababka oo la xariira isticmalka biyah. Hanaankan ayaa ah mid sii jiridona ilaa amar dambe!

Wixii su'aal ah oo kusabsan farintan waa in laga xariiraa:

Ama laxariir laanta
State of Maine u xilsaaran biyaha lacaba kawac telfonka
287-2070 saacadaha shaqada
TO BE POSTED IMMEDIATELY

Spanish

🏠 Orden de hervir el agua 🏠

Debido a las condiciones de insalubridad del agua, _____ se ordena a los consumidores **hervir el agua** manteniendo el hervido por un minuto antes de usarla para beber, hacer cubos de hielo, lavar alimentos, cepillarse los dientes o cualquier otra actividad que requiera del consumo de agua. ¡Esta orden permanecerá en vigencia hasta nuevo aviso!

Cualquier pregunta sobre el particular debe dirigirse a:
_____ al

o al
Programa de Agua Potable del Estado de Maine al
287-2070 en horario de trabajo.
AVISO PARA SER PUBLICADO INMEDIATAMENTE.

Boil Water Order

DWP SOPID#: DWP0061 Maine Drinking Water Program
(Spanish translation provided by City of Portland, Minority Health Program Aug 2013)

Rate Increase Notice

should be sent to residents

[INSERT CITY] - Effective [date], the [ABC Water District] of the City of [insert city] will increase the minimum water rate to [insert new rate] per billing cycle.



Customers with a minimum bill, which is for [insert number] gallons, or less, during the billing cycle, will be charged [insert rate] plus any fees and taxes. For customers using more than the [insert number] gallon minimum, an additional amount of [insert amount] per [insert number] gallons will be charged. The increases will be reflected on all billing starting [insert date].

The [organization name] uses its best efforts to control costs in order to keep rates as low as possible. This rate increase allows for ongoing upgrades of the water filtration and sewer treatment system. These upgrades ensure our system will continue to satisfy the mandated requirements and regulations while allowing us to maintain and improve services to meet the needs of our community.

If you have any questions about the new rate or new policies, feel free to contact our office at [insert contact information].

Personnel Crisis (disgruntled employee, termination)

to be sent to internal organization and media (if needed)



Effective [insert date], [John Smith] who was working as [insert title] is no longer employed at [ABC Utility Corp.] He/she is no longer associated with [ABC Utility Corp.] and therefore is no longer authorized to handle any duties previously associated with their role.

Any projects that [Smith] was involved with will now be handled by [insert employee name] to ensure a seamless transition. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us via phone or email.

Unexpected Crisis *(natural disaster, accident, etc.)*

***should be sent to residents ***

On *[insert date]* there was an unforeseen incident that took place in *[city, location, etc.]*. Without warning, *[Insert incident. Ex: the main drains overflowed, etc.]* which caused *[insert result. Ex: the nearby streets and homes are flooded, etc.]*.



We have mobilized our entire organization in order to remedy the situation. In the meantime, we recommend residents to take the following steps (*sample bullets below*):

- Do not drink water. Boil under further notice.
- Stay informed by visiting our website and/or social media pages
- Avoid the areas of...

The safety of and well-being of our residents is our first priority and we will continue to work until the matter is resolved. We will continue to provide additional updates as they become available on our website *[insert website]* and social media pages. Thank you for your patience during this time.

Construction Notification

should be sent to residents

[INSERT CITY] - Effective *[date]*, the *[ABC Water District]* of the City of *[insert city]* will be performing maintenance and/or construction in your area.



We will be (*ex. performing maintenance on road _____, replacing hydrants from XYZ to XYZ, etc.*) from *[insert date]* to *[insert date]*. We ask for your patience and cooperation with posted speeds and work zones during this time.

Any questions should be directed to *[insert contact information]*.

Job Openings

to be sent internally and to local residents



This email is to notify all interested candidates about a job opening in the capacity of *[insert job title]* in the *[insert location/department]*.

Listed below are the core competencies and requirements for this position:

1. Competency/Requirement
2. Competency/Requirement
3. Competency/Requirement
4. Etc...

Interested applicants should send their resumes to *[email]* by *[insert date]* for consideration. Staff are welcome to recommend their friends and family members should they prove to be competent and eligible.

[ABC Water Company] is an equal opportunity employer. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, non-disqualifying physical or mental disability, national origin, veteran status or any other basis covered by appropriate law. All employment is decided on the basis of qualifications, merit, and business need.

Essential Worker Designation

should be sent to local residents



This notice is to inform residents that effective immediately, all employees within the *[ABC Water District]* are performing duties that are considered essential. Therefore, they are granted essential worker designation.

Employees are responsible for critical functions within the state of Maine and should have access to facilities and/or resources afforded to essential workers and be exempt from any restrictions imposed as pandemic control measures. They should be allowed to commute to work as deemed necessary and provided any assistance reserved for essential personnel.

In the interest of the organization and community, it is critical to assure continued operations, as safe conditions allow.

Any questions should be directed to *[insert contact information]*.

Source Water Protection

to be sent residents of source protection areas



Dear Customer,

You are located within our source water protection area and maintaining your septic system is of the utmost importance to public health and safety. Source water protection areas are portions of land with the biggest potential impact to the water supply.

Because you live or own land in a source/drinking water protection area, your actions impact the safety of the water supply, and the health of those who drink it. Any activity that contaminates ground or surface water is a violation of Maine law.

It is critical for residents to understand the threats to our water sources as well as steps you can take to protect your community's water. Therefore, we have prepared a document that includes information on the following topics:

- Threats to surface water and ground water.
- Septic system maintenance tips.
- Common household chemicals and hazardous waste.
- Fuel use and storage.
- Safe land and animal care.
- Emergency contact information.

To access the Safe Home Program document, visit <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/environmental-health/dwp/wrt/documents/safeHome.pdf>

Any questions should be directed to *[insert contact information]*.

Pandemic Press Release

should be sent to residents and media

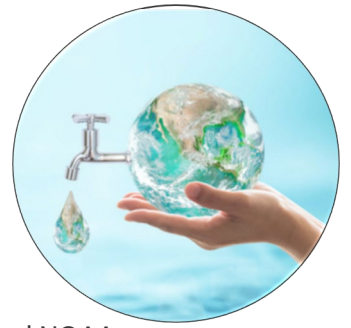


In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, certain restrictions are being enforced to ensure the safety of our residents. *[ABC Water District]* is taking the appropriate steps to ensure water and wastewater services are uninterrupted during this time.

Please note that we are taking all precautions necessary to protect public health as well as our employees. Office hours may be affected or reduced; however, bills can still be paid by *[insert XYZ means]*. We ask for your cooperation during these unprecedented times. If you have any questions or need to contact a representative, please call *[insert contact information]*. You can also find hours of operation and the latest updates on our website *[insert website address]*.

Water Conservation Order and Voluntary Conservation Order

to be sent residents and media



Much of Maine is currently experiencing moderate to severe drought conditions, as shown in the most recent United States Drought Monitor and NOAA Northeast River Forecast Center (NERFC) Precipitation Departures Maps. Unfortunately, surface and groundwater resources won't likely be recharged until at least mid to late September, when the annual fall rains typically arrive.

The [ABC Water District name] strongly encourages residents to take voluntary water conservation measures in order to address water quantity deficits until natural recharge occurs. Below are some recommendations:

Outside Water Use:

- Avoid watering lawns.
- Water garden plants only when necessary, either early in the day (before 9AM) or late.
- In the evening (after 5PM) to avoid water loss by evaporation.
- Keep grass a bit longer than usual to promote soil moisture retention and help it.
- Develop a deeper root system.
- Avoid washing cars and other vehicles.
- Instead of using water to clean walkways, decks, or driveways, use a broom.
- Cover swimming pools when they are not in use to prevent evaporation.

Inside Water Use:

- Take shorter showers (approximately 5 minutes or less); avoid baths.
- Turn off water while brushing your teeth or shaving.
- Wash only full loads of laundry and dishes.
- Collect and reuse clean household water (e.g., water from cooking can be used to water plants).
- Fix any leaks you may find around the house, including leaky toilets, which can use up to 200 gallons of water per day.

If you experience any extreme water shortages during this time, notify your local fire department, as they may be able to draw from alternate water sources (if available) for fire suppression and other needs. Any questions, please contact [insert contact information]. We appreciate your cooperation during this time.



Media Contacts Template

should be sent to residents and media

Below is an example template for collecting media contacts information and deadlines.

| Media Organization | Contact Name & Position | Phone # | Email Address | Deadline/Lead Time |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|----------|------------------|---------------------|
| Local Newspaper | John Doe | 123-4567 | jdoe@123news.com | 1 week |
| Local Radio | Jane Smith | 765-4321 | jsmith@radio.com | 24 hours |
| Local Television | Jane Doe | 123-6789 | jdoe@tv.com | 48 hours |
| Internal Website Coordinator | John Smith | 987-6321 | webcoord@org.com | 24 hours /immediate |

In Summary

Media takes many forms: traditional media, newspapers, and social media. It's only a matter of time before we may be confronted by one or all of them. The good news is that the media can be one of your best allies. Embrace these media forms and use them to your advantage to distribute information, clear up rumors, make announcements, and more.

Use all the resources and tools provided above as a guide when you need to interact with the media. In addition to this guide, keep the conversation going and share best practices within your organization. The more you can learn from each other, the better.

In the end, we're all in this together. We hope you find this guide beneficial. If you have any comments or questions, please direct them to MWUA at 207-623-9511.

Glossary of Terms

Active Audience – a group of listeners or spectators that are participating.

Advertising: Paid communication; information placed in a communication delivery vehicle by an identified sponsor that pays for time or space. Advertising is a controlled method of delivering messages and gaining media placement.

Advertorial – an advertisement that imitates editorial format.

Advocacy – the act or process of supporting a cause or proposal.

Anecdote – a usually short narrative about an interesting or funny event or occurrence.

Audience – a group of listeners or spectators.

Aware Audience – a group of listeners or spectators that know that something is happening or exists.

Awareness – knowledge and understanding that something is happening or exists.

Brand Authority – the image or what comes to mind when someone is thinking about a particular organization or product.

Brochure – pamphlet or booklet containing descriptive or advertising material.

Buy-in – acceptance of and willingness to actively support and participate in something.

Catalogue – a complete enumeration of items arranged systematically with descriptive details.

Channel – a fixed or official course of communication.

Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) – an annual water quality report distributed to customers.

Credibility – the quality or power of inspiring belief.

Crisis communication – Protecting and defending an individual, company or organization facing a public challenge to its reputation. These challenges can involve legal, ethical or financial standing.

Crisis Response Team (CRT) – the group of people responsible for responding to crises or emergencies.

Earned Media – an unsolicited article or review written about your organization.

Editorial – a newspaper or magazine article that gives the opinions of the editors or publishers.

Emergency – an unforeseen combination of circumstances or the resulting state that calls for immediate action.

Emergency Response Lead – the director or person in charge during an emergency.

Emergency Response Plan (ERP) – a set of written procedures for dealing with crises that lessen the impact of the event and support recovery.

Ethics – a set of moral principles or values.

Feedback – the transmission of evaluative or corrective information about a message previously sent.

(cont'd on next page)

Glossary of Terms

Jargon – the technical terminology or characteristic idiom of a special activity or group.

Latent Audience – a group of listeners or spectators that are unaware of something.

Lead Times – the time between the beginning of a process or project and the appearance of its results.

Media – a medium of cultivation, conveyance, or expression.

Media relations – Mutually beneficial associations between publicists or public relations professionals and journalists as a condition for reaching audiences with messages of news or features of interest (publicity). The function includes both seeking publicity for an organization and responding to queries from journalists about the organization.

Maintaining up-to-date lists of media contacts and a knowledge of media audience interests are critical to media relations.

Message – a communication in writing, in speech, or by signals.

Newsletter – a small publication containing news of interest chiefly to a special group.

Noise – any sound or preconceived notion that interferes with someone receiving a message how it was intended.

Online Footprint – the areas on the web that are covered by something.

Owned Media – the content or information that belongs to a particular organization.

Paid Media – content or information that an organization pays for or to distribute.

Passive Audience – a group of listeners or spectators that are aware of, but not actively participating in something.

Pitch – the presentation of something for consideration.

Podcast – a audio program available for automatic access/download over the internet.

Public Information Officer (PIO) – the person responsible for communication with the public, media, and other organizations during an emergency or crisis.

Public Relations (PR) – Public relations is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics.

Publicity – an act or device designed to attract public interest.

Receiver – the person that a message is sent to intended or not.

Return on Investment (ROI) – an evaluation of what must be done to implement a plan or project compared to what is gained from it.

RPIE – an outline of steps involved in a public relations campaign. Research, Programming, Implementation, Evaluation.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) – process of increasing or maximizing the traffic to a website by working to make sure the website appears high on the list of results returned.

Sender – the person who distributes a message.

Social Media – forms of electronic communication through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content.

Sponsor – a person or organization that pays for or plans and carries out a project or activity.