



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



JANET T. MILLS
GOVERNOR

GERALD D. REID
COMMISSIONER

March 24, 2020

To: All Maine POTWs and Satellite Sewer Collection Systems

RE: COVID-19 Guidance

Dear Wastewater Professional,

First, I hope you are all healthy and managing well during the COVID-19 pandemic (pandemic). Now more than ever your efforts to manage Maine’s wastewater infrastructure is sincerely appreciated. Thank you for the work you are doing to protect public health and the waters of the state.

We realize that this may be a very challenging time for you. We expect there may be staffing shortages that will require you to make operational changes and that not every routine task may be able to be accomplished. There may be increased infrastructure malfunctions due to non-flushables entering the system. There may be supply chain interruptions for chemicals, equipment, and supplies. And there may be other challenges that we have not foreseen. The Department’s focus during the pandemic will be to do everything we can to help you keep the collection systems operational and provide the best level of treatment you can with the resources you have, and to ease your minds regarding regulatory issues.

Assistance from your DEP inspector: Our inspectors will contact you via phone or email periodically to check in on any challenges you are facing and to see where we can assist. Please continue to use your inspector as your primary point of contact with the Department. During this time please keep in regular communication with your inspector regarding any issues you are having. We will do our best to help you troubleshoot issues and get you the assistance you may need. We are coordinating our efforts with MeWEA, MRWA, MWUA and the MEWARN.

Attached please find the Department’s COVID-19 Guidance for POTWs and Satellite Collection Systems. This guidance provides a variety of important information.

Please contact me at 287-7700, or brian.w.kavanah@maine.gov if you have any comments or questions.

Sincerely,

BRIAN KAVANAH
Director, Bureau of Water Quality

AUGUSTA
17 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0017
(207) 287-7688 FAX: (207) 287-7826

BANGOR
106 HOGAN ROAD, SUITE 6
BANGOR, MAINE 04401
(207) 941-4570 FAX: (207) 941-4584

PORTLAND
312 CANCO ROAD
PORTLAND, MAINE 04103
(207) 822-6300 FAX: (207) 822-6303

PRESQUE ISLE
1235 CENTRAL DRIVE, SKYWAY PARK
PRESQUE ISLE, MAINE 04769
(207) 764-0477 FAX: (207) 760-3143

Maine Department of Environmental Protection

COVID–19 Guidance for POTWs and Satellite Collection Systems

The priority of wastewater management should be the safety of wastewater collections and treatment staff. This means routine safety from pathogens as well as physical safety in times of reduced staffing. Please see the following links for general and wastewater specific COVID-19 guidance. These sites are continually updated with guidelines, resources, and news on the current state of the situation.

Water Environment Federation: Water Professional's Guide to COVID-19

<https://www.wef.org/news-hub/wef-news/the-water-professionals-guide-to-the-2019-novel-coronavirus/>

Federal CDC: [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2Findex.html)

[ncov/index.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2Findex.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2Findex.html)

World Health Organization (WHO):

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/technical-guidance>

Maine CDC:

<https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/airborne/coronavirus.shtml>

If staffing levels are reduced, routine tasks must be prioritized. The Department recognizes that ensuring proper operation of the collection system, pump stations and the treatment works is the top operational priority. Limited resources should first be devoted to ensuring the wastewater gets to the POTW and the wastewater gets the highest level of treatment possible with the resources that are available. If reduced staffing levels have the potential to impact the quality of your effluent, contact your DEP inspector. Also, continue to report emergencies and/or bypasses (including, but not limited to disinfection issues) to your DEP facility inspector. It is acceptable to either leave them an email or a voicemail if you are not able to reach them by phone. If for any reason your inspector can not be reached and you need to speak to someone, alternative DEP contacts are provided in the attached contact list.

If staffing levels are reduced, compliance with permit requirements may be impacted. The Department recognizes that reduction in staffing levels may impact the ability to fully comply with permit requirements. Again, as noted above, proper operation of the collection system and the treatment works should be the top priority. The Department may exercise enforcement discretion in these instances if all good faith efforts have been made to achieve compliance and you have notified your DEP inspector. Contact your DEP inspector if you anticipate or find that you will be unable to meet any of your license requirements, such as testing, record keeping, or reporting. It is acceptable to either leave them an email or a voicemail if you are not able to reach them by phone.

If testing were to be reduced due to severe staffing shortages during the pandemic, the Department prioritizes tests in this order of importance and ease of completion:

1. Flow	10. pH
2. Settleable solids	11. Nitrogen
3. Total residual chlorine (TRC)	12. Phosphorus
4. Bacteria	13. Groundwater monitoring
5. Total suspended solids (TSS)	14. Single metals
6. TSS % removal	15. Analytical chemistry
7. Biochemical oxygen demand (BOD)	16. Priority pollutants
8. Carbonaceous biochemical oxygen demand (CBOD)	17. Whole effluent toxicity (WET)
9. BOD % or CBOD %removal	18. Mercury

Prepare. The Department strongly urges that your facility management team and staff meet as soon as possible to “table top” various scenarios and devise plans to respond to various staffing or supply shortages. For instance:

- Due to the current increased use of non-flushables, pump station and other clogs are likely to increase. You should do everything you can to impress upon your users that only human waste and toilet paper should be flushed. A DEP press release on this issue is included with this guidance and at this link <https://www.maine.gov/dep/news/news.html?id=2247340> You can promote this to your users in whatever forums you have available. You may also consider increasing frequency of pump station inspections.
- Members of the MEWARN should review mutual aid agreements. Facilities that are not members of the MEWARN may wish to discuss any informal agreements with neighboring facilities, or join the MEWARN now at: <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/environmental-health/dwp/pws/meWARN.shtml>
- Investigate the potential for operator sharing with other facilities in your area now. We also recommended you review the list of Maine contract operators included with this guidance. (This may be most important in smaller facilities with limited staff). The intent here is to provide for some minimal coverage for essential tasks if all staff are out sick.
- Cross train your staff on essential tasks. (Again, this may be most important in smaller facilities with limited staff).
- Ensure that all staff members have DEP inspector contact information.
- Prioritize O&M tasks and assignments and prepare your facility by stocking up on needed chemicals, supplies, PPE, etc. Helpful guidance can be found in this NEIWPC document. http://click.neiwpc.org/neiwpc_docs/9-20-2016%20NEIWPC%20Extreme%20Weather%20Guide%20for%20web.pdf
- Research the availability of other commercial labs should you find yourself in the situation that your staff or your commercial lab is unable to maintain testing scheduling.
- Review your sludge disposal contingency plans.

Certified Operator Availability

If one of your certified operators, including the Operator in Responsible Charge, was not able to renew their license this month due to a lack of training credits, the Department is considering this employee to be certified at their existing certificate level for the duration of the State emergency as declared by the Governor. However, once the emergency is over, operators will need to meet the requirements of the law to qualify for getting their certificate renewed.

NETDMR Assistance

If you are having trouble accessing the NETDMR system to submit your monitoring information, you can either contact your facility inspector, or you can contact the DEP NETDMR administrator Brett Goodrich at 207-287-9034, or mainenetdmr.dep@maine.gov

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Division of Water Quality Management

March 2020

Compliance & Technical Assistance Unit

WASTEWATER CONTACTS

Sterling Pierce	Unit Supervisor	287-4868	sterling.pierce@maine.gov
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Portland Compliance Staff		822-6300 Front Desk	
Stuart Rose <i>Portland Supervisor</i>	Compliance Inspector	822-6345	stuart.m.rose@maine.gov
Matt Hight	Compliance Inspector	822-6321	matt.hight@maine.gov
Fred Gallant	Compliance Inspector	822-6346	fred.c.gallant@maine.gov

Augusta Compliance Staff		287-3901 Front Desk	
Jim Crowley <i>Augusta Supervisor</i>	Compliance Inspector & Pretreatment Coordinator	287-8898	james.r.crowley@maine.gov
David Bowie	Compliance Inspector	287-8806	David.g.bowie@maine.gov
James Knight	Compliance Inspector	441-3840	James.knight@maine.gov
Bill Johnson	Compliance Inspector (OBD)	287-7684	william.johnson@maine.gov

Bangor Compliance Staff		941-4570 Front Desk	
Clarissa Trasko <i>Bangor Supervisor</i>	Compliance Inspector	941-4572	clarissa.trasko@maine.gov
Michael Loughlin	Compliance Inspector	941-4578	mike.loughlin@maine.gov
Kayleigh Sauda	Compliance Inspector	941-4569	Kayleigh.a.sauda@maine.gov
Gary Brooks	Compliance Inspector	561-5704	Gary.r.brooks@maine.gov

Presque Isle Compliance Staff		764-0477 Front Desk	
Bill Sheehan <i>Presque Isle Supervisor</i>	Compliance Inspector	760-3136	bill.j.sheehan@maine.gov
Sean Bernard	Compliance Inspector	760-3135	sean.l.bernard@maine.gov

Augusta Technical Assistance Staff		287-7688 Front Desk	
Judy Bruenjes <i>Technical Assistance Supervisor</i>	Environmental Engineer	287-7806	judy.k.bruenjes@maine.gov
Brett Goodrich	Data Systems	287-9034	Brett.a.goodrich@maine.gov

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Regional Office Contact Information

Portland Office	207-822-6300	888-769-1036
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Augusta Office	207-287-7688	800-452-1942
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Bangor Office	207-941-4570	888-769-1137
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Presque Isle Office	207-764-0477	888-769-1053
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SPILL EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

24 HOUR OIL SPILL 800-482-0777

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS SPILL 800-452-4664

Maine Contract Wastewater Operators

Chuck Applebee - Water Quality and Compliance Services Inc.-380-4261

Acheron Engineering/Clear water Laboratory (contact Andy Wendell)-368-5700

CES (contact Travis Noyes)-989-4824 (Brewer)

Jon Carman-823-6222 (Unity)

Mike Harris-664-4404 (Ellsworth)

James Kiser- 862-4700

Ken Locke-989-5417 (Brewer)

Olver Associates (contact Bill Olver)-223-2232 (Winterport)

Frank Ruksznis-343-0193 (Guilford-Sangerville)

David Smith-827-3970 (Old Town)

Woodard & Curran Engineering 1-800-564-2322

Wright Pierce Engineering-725-8721

*This list is not an endorsement of any firm or operator. It is merely a listing of potential operators/firms that work in Maine and may be able to assist a WWTP in need of an operator. There may be other contract operators the Department is not aware of.

March 20, 2020