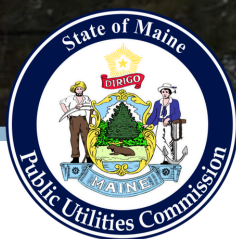




# STRAIGHT FROM THE TAP

Quarterly Newsletter For Maine Water Systems

Created in partnership by:



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## Treatment Change Application

### New in 2026

The DWP plans on switching to an electronic submission format for Treatment Change Applications to streamline the process as a whole. It will ensure easier submission for water systems, and better tracking and processing.

This is currently being tested and evaluated for efficacy. If you, or a system you know is interested in helping pilot this form, let us know! Reach out to our engineering section or your inspector to get involved.

### What requires a Treatment Change Application?

New construction, addition, or alteration involving the source, treatment, or storage of water in any system.

### When is a Treatment Change Application not necessary?

Minor or basic plumbing modifications, sediment filters, cartridge filter for secondary contaminants, ion-exchange one-for-one change out, bladder tank change out, atmospheric storage tanks, adding service lines, pump replacement.

### How to start the Treatment Change Application Process:

Contact your PI and submit the Change Application. Takes ~30 days for approval.

# Capacity Issues: Staffing

Water utilities are facing challenges in many staffing areas. With nearly 30% of water utility workers being close to retirement age, staffing has become a big concern.

## What are some things you can do to help attract and retain workers?

- Offer good benefits
- Increase pay
- Work-life balance
- 4-day work week
- Look into apprenticeship programs
- Cover the cost of training and licenses
- Minimize burnout with planning and limit unplanned overtime
- Offer a bonus for things such as:
  - Longevity
  - Staff referrals that lead to a hire staying for 6-months or more
  - Staff that train new hires that stay for 6-months or more.



## For help with recruitment:

### Check out this guide ✨

Use the guide to educate guidance counselors as well as vocational and technical schools in your area about the water industry

## DWSRF Awards

The DWP Engineering Team has reviewed the 2026 DWSRF Capital Improvement Loan Applications and released the draft [primary project list](#) and [backup project list](#) in December of 2025.

Total available funding for 2026 remains uncertain due to the Continuing Resolution currently in place for the federal budget. If Congressional earmarks are permitted to be taken from the SRF Program in 2026 and the project funding budget is reduced, some projects may be moved to the backup list. We will continue to update the lists as additional information becomes available.

A public meeting to review the 2026 Intended Use Plan will be held virtually in March.

Award letters for projects on the primary list are expected to be issued once funding is finalized and following completion of the IUP public comment period. For more information about Maine's DWSRF program please visit our [DWSRF webpage](#). ✨



## Worried about over-collecting revenue?

Consumer owned water utilities that worry about over earning a small amount for a short amount of time



need not worry. If you over earn by 7-10% (depending on annual operating revenue) it would likely need to be for 3 consecutive years to warrant any PUC involvement. If that

happens, a public hearing on excess would need to occur, but there is no need to pay the money back.

For more information, click here:

[35-A M.R.S. §6112](#)

## Selling Utility Land?

Utilities selling or leasing land should request authorization from the PUC. If the property is necessary or useful for a utility to perform its duties, the Commission will make a determination if the sale can be authorized.

If a utility sells the land without approval and the land is found to be necessary or useful, the sale could be void.

In addition, if the property was acquired for a drinking water source or to protect a water source, the utility may need to engage in additional steps to inform the customers and municipalities before the potential sale.

For a chart to determine which rules apply to your situation, [click here.](#)



## Cybersecurity: Your Inbox Is the Front Door – Lock Out BEC!

Business Email Compromise (BEC) is a sophisticated cybercrime where the attacker sends an email that **looks like it's from a trusted contact**, with the intent to deceive the receiver into clicking a link or sharing sensitive information and/or money. The DWP is aware of multiple BEC attacks against the Maine water sector. Fortunately, none have wreaked the sector-wide havoc they're capable of due to the vigilance of Maine PWS employees.

The FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) reports that in 2024, 2137 cybercrimes in Maine caused a total loss of over **\$31M**. In this time of heightened cybersecurity threats, please continue to "Think Before You Click," verify any sensitive urgent requests even from a trusted contact, and report any cyberattacks (confirmed or suspected) to your local police department and the DWP.





# Terms and Conditions: Helpful Tips

## Save Time



Updating your terms and conditions (T&Cs) is an important task that often gets put off for too long. One area of the T&Cs that has gotten easier to update is the fees. The fees have historically been spread throughout utility's T&Cs and that makes updating them a daunting task.

The PUC has approved the use of a fee table that shows all the fees to your customers in one location. To do this, when your T&Cs mention a fee, call out where the fee can be found in the table and what it is called instead of putting the fee in the body of the text. This makes updating your fees a simpler, streamlined process.

Ensuring that your fees accurately reflect the cost of providing services allows the cost to remain on the cost-causer instead of being paid by all of the rate payers.

## Know what to do



File your updated T&Cs in the Commission's [Case Management System](#).

You will need to upload a marked-up copy that shows your edits as well as a final (clean) copy for approval.



## FAQ

**Q** When we get a call right before we close, we want to charge the after-hours rate because it will be after-hours when we help them, can we do that?

**A** You should put the after-hours rate starting at the time you need to start charging overtime. If people call 30-minutes before closing and you can't help them until after hours, start "after hours" earlier than your office hours in your Terms and Conditions.

**Q** How closely do we actually need to follow our T&Cs?

**A** You need to follow your T&Cs. This is why using a generic template doesn't work. Your T & Cs should reflect utility practices.

## Helpful Guides on the PUC website



We have guides on how to file your T&Cs and more on our website

<https://www.maine.gov/mpuc/regulated-utilities/water>



# Public Notice

There are 3 types of Public Notices in the Safe Drinking Water Act, each with their own requirements:

**Tier 1 public notices are issued by utilities for things that have immediate exposure risks**

- Nitrate/nitrite, E. Coli, lead AL exceedance, disease outbreak, etc.
- Notify the customers within 24 hours

**Tier 2 public notices are issued by utilities for things that are have a risk when exposed for a long term**

- Most chemical contaminants, most treatment technique violations, etc.
- Notify the customers within 30 days

**Tier 3 public notices are issued in lower risk situations**

- Most monitoring failures, exceeding secondary fluoride standard, etc.
- Non-community systems have 30 days to inform customers.
- Community systems have a year to put in their CCR or otherwise notify customers.



## 10 Required Elements of a Public Notice to Customers



### 01. Description

What is the notice about? Include contaminates and levels



### 02. Date of occurrence

When did the event happen?



### 03. Potential health effects

Federally required language is italicized in the templates



### 04. Population at Risk

Any demographics that are at high risk (elderly, children, etc.)

### 06. Customer Actions



What actions should customers take at this point?

### 07. PWS actions



What is the PWS doing to correct the problem?

### 08. Resolution Date



When was the problem fixed or when is it expected to be fixed?

### 09. Contact information



How can customers reach the water system with questions?

### 10. Spread the word



If applicable, include standard language encouraging customers to share the notice

# Maine Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network

MEWARN is a statewide Water and Wastewater Agency Response Network (WARN) of utilities helping utilities. The mission of the MEWARN is to support and promote statewide emergency preparedness, disaster response and mutual aid for public and private water and wastewater utilities.

**JOIN**

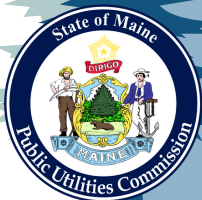
**MEWARN Resources**

## Why join MEWARN?

- No cost and no commitment! There is no fee to join MEWARN, and assistance is provided on a voluntary basis only.
- Access to database of utilities and resources.
- Timely access to resources. MEWARN does not require a disaster declaration, which means systems can get needed resources faster.
- Eligibility for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) disaster reimbursement.
- Developed, managed, and run by water and wastewater systems. MEWARN is established to benefit you to the highest degree possible in terms of giving and receiving aid.
- Both private and public utilities may participate in MEWARN.
- Membership paves the way for interstate mutual aid and assistance. All New England states are implementing WARNs. Eventually, the WARNs will be linked so that member systems may help one another across state lines.

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