

Frequently Asked Questions about Critical and Essential Infrastructure

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We are writing to help provide direction on who is considered **essential personnel in relation to critical infrastructure** in the **drinking water system sector**. We are also including some suggestions and examples that you might find useful in developing field credential information.

- **Are you considered critical and essential?** We want to be very clear that both the state, and [Department of Homeland Security](#) consider the Drinking Water System Sector a part of critical infrastructure and many activities needed to keep them operational, are considered essential business functions.
- **How do I know if my business is in the list of essential businesses?** In the Governor's March 23, 2020, proclamation, there is a link to a [list of general essential business functions](#) that identifies "Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers." In reviewing that list, Health is providing some additional examples to the original list as it pertains to the operations, repair, and analysis activities required to maintain operation of our drinking water infrastructure. That list is below.
- **What type of documentation or credentials should I be carrying with me?** We have included suggestions and template examples on what type of documentation that you and essential personnel, and your partners should consider carrying if in the field, or in transit to and from work. Templates are below.
- **Is my documentation good in all local jurisdictions?** The best answer is we don't know for sure. We hope that these suggestions and templates are a good starting point. Your local emergency management will determine if additional documentation is needed. We encourage you to reach out to the local city or county emergency management office to establish your business entity as an essential part of the critical infrastructure. If your county's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) has been activated, this contact should be made through what is known as the ESF3 (Public Works) desk in the EOCs. Have them help you determine exactly what you might need for proper identification and credentials.
- **What if I am in the middle of a very important capital project for repair or replacement of vital components to my system?** We had a very good example come in this week where a water utility is in the middle of replacing or reconditioning several of their water sources. They had city leadership write specific letters for each of their contractors and consultants to make sure they would be granted access to the project site. Examples are included below.

List of Essential Functions—Employees needed to operate and maintain drinking water infrastructure, including but not limited to:

- Operational staff at water utilities.
- Operational staff at community water systems.
- Workers repairing water conveyances and performing required sampling or monitoring.
- Operational staff for water distribution and testing.
- Operational staff and technical support for SCADA Control systems.
- Chemical suppliers for water treatment.
- Workers that maintain digital systems infrastructure supporting water operations.
- Laboratories and their staff who conduct water quality analysis.
- People involved in issuing health based notifications for water utilities.
- People who support water utilities in responding to emergencies that can threaten public health.
- Suppliers of repair parts and essential equipment.
- Operational staff providing regulatory oversight of water systems.
- Contractors that provide maintenance or repair services for water equipment.
- Backflow Assembly Testers.

Field Presence and Documentation and Credentials:

Identification procedures are intended to provide uniform guidance to law enforcement personnel who are directing access. Suggested identification documents for consideration are listed below. Counties, cities, and towns may adopt and enforce their own identification procedures.

We are providing you an example of an entry/reentry letter template letter for you and your partners to present to local authorities when in the field or in transit to work. The intent is that this can be used by those identified as essential to the operations of our critical infrastructure to demonstrate the need for ongoing ingress and egress to place of business, work, and/or job sites. Examples of who should consider carrying this include:

- Drinking Water utility staff.
- Satellite Management Agencies.
- Contractors and Consultants.
- Laboratory staff (public and private).
- Backflow Assembly Testers.

Suggested Credentials—Pieces of Identification if applicable for Critical Infrastructure Operations/Utility Repairs

- Official photo id from federal, state, or local government.
- Certification Card—For certified water operators, we recommend a copy of your certification card.
 - **Drinking Water operators:** your card is available for printing at the [Green River College Web site](#). You can also download a PDF copy to your mobile device.
- Utility ID badge.
- Other forms of identification at the discretion of law enforcement.

Documentation—Example Template Letter for access—Drinking Water System Sector

[Link to fillable Critical Infrastructure Team Word document.](#)

Critical Infrastructure Team Identification

To Our Law Enforcement Partners:

{Authorized Employee's Name: Insert Name} or Holder of This Letter

Company Information:

This employee/contractor's presence is required on site to operate, maintain and assist in any activities necessary to ensure the safety of the **XXX Company Facility**.

XXX Company has been identified as a component of the national critical infrastructure by the State of Washington and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. This designation requires that **XXX Company** take extraordinary steps to ensure the ongoing and safe operation of the water utility.

Therefore, as authorized, it is requested that employee entry into these secured areas during any declared state of emergency be permitted only under the following conditions:

Authorization Procedure Options -

- 1. Entry through this checkpoint/roadblock has been deemed safe**
- 2. Employee Identification Confirmation:**
 - **Valid Employee ID that has organization name included, or**
 - **Water Operator Certification card, with Picture ID, or**
 - **This letter with organization letter head, explanation of affiliation to the utility, and signed by an official Point of Contact, or**
 - **WA Business Re-entry Program Card**
- 3. This letter displayed on the dashboard of employee's vehicle.**

Sincerely,

Expires December 31, 2020

Verification can be made with **XXX Company @ (555) 555-5555**

Notice of Critical Infrastructure Projects

[Link to fillable Critical Infrastructure Project Word document.](#)

By notice of this letter, please be aware that **INSERT PROJECT NAME** is being designated by **INSERT WATER SYSTEM OWNER** as a critical infrastructure project affecting the public health and safety of our community. This project must be completed in all due haste to **(choose from the following): ensure uninterrupted water supply to our community, address a public health risk with a regulated contaminant, address Department of Health Compliance Order, ensure the safety of water quantity and quality, or other reason**. To the extent allowable by law under any "shelter in place" order or any other order restricting free exercise of business and commerce, the **INSERT WATER SYSTEM OWNER** is directing all parties under contract with **INSERT WATER SYSTEM OWNER** and their subcontractors to continue to fulfill their contractual obligations to complete the project. Please provide copies of this letter to your subcontractors and suppliers supporting these efforts.

Additional note to be added if infrastructure project is funded with federal or state dollars:
Delay or shutdown of **INSERT PROJECT NAME** could also jeopardize funding being used for the project.

Example of Emergency Declaration—Resolution

[Link to fillable Declaration-Resolution Word document.](#)

RESOLUTION NO. -__

CITY NAME, WASHINGTON

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF *CITY, COUNTY NAME* COUNTY, WASHINGTON DECLARING AN EMERGENCY AND WAIVING THE COMPETITIVE BIDDING REQUIREMENTS FOR A PUBLIC WORKS PROJECT.

WHEREAS, RCW 39.04.280(1)(e) provides that the governing body of a municipality may waive the competitive bidding requirement for a public works project in the event of an emergency; and

WHEREAS, RCW 39.04.280(3) defines "emergency" as unforeseen circumstances beyond the control of the municipality that either: (a) Present a real, immediate threat to the proper performance of essential functions; or (b) will likely result in material loss or damage to property, bodily injury, or loss of life if immediate action is not taken; and

WHEREAS, in *MONTH, 20XX* the *CITY NAME* discovered that *STATE THE PROBLEM* ,

WHEREAS, *STATE EMERGENCY AND CITE COUNTY OR STATE EMERGENCY DECLARATIONS. FOR INSTANCE, FOR DROUGHT RELATED EMERGENCIES, CITE THE GOVERNOR'S STATEWIDE DROUGHT DECLARATION ON MAY 15, 2015,*

WHEREAS, the City Council has determined that due to the timing, location, critical function, and need for immediate repair or construction of *IDENTIFY INFRASTRUCTURE THAT IS DAMAGED*, insufficient time may not exist to complete the construction project through the standard competitive bidding process and must therefore declare the situation as an emergency; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has therefore determined that an emergency situation exists and desires to perform the necessary construction of *IDENTIFY INFRASTRUCTURE THAT IS DAMAGED* by directing the Mayor and City Administrator to waive the competitive bidding process and award all necessary contracts on behalf of the municipality to address the emergency situation;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of *CITY NAME* hereby declares that an emergency situation exists with the damage to *IDENTIFY INFRASTRUCTURE THAT IS DAMAGED* and authorizes the Mayor and City Administrator to waive the competitive bidding process and award all necessary contracts on behalf of the municipality to undertake construction.

Introduced, passed and approved this ____ day of *MONTH, 20XX*.

MAYOR NAME, Mayor

ATTEST:

CITY CLERK NAME, City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM: