

COVID-19 NJ Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Water Quality / Division of Water Supply & Geoscience

The COVID-19 threat to public health in New Jersey remains low, but in anticipation of additional cases in our State, NJ Officials have been diligent in preparing for and preventing the spread of the virus.

To foster preparedness and in an effort to keep our regulated groups as up to date as possible on information provided by the CDC and the NJ Department of Health, the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) will be sharing resources and information as available. As this is an evolving situation, guidance and information is being updated frequently. Please visit the links below regularly.

DEP recommends that your preparedness activities include:

- Updating Emergency Response and Continuity of Operations Plans (especially contact information; modifications to normal work policies and practices).
- Reviewing IT infrastructure, cybersecurity, supply chain (needs and demands), and interdependencies.
- Coordinating with county and local offices of emergency management (OEMs) and health departments as appropriate.

Center for Disease Control Guidance:

Updated guidance general on COVID-19 can be found at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.

Public Water Systems

The following are helpful resources for public water systems with respect to COVID-19:

The American Water Works Association at: <https://www.awwa.org/AWWA-Articles/coronavirus-and-water>

The CDC at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/water.html>

The Water Environment Federation at: <https://www.wef.org/news-hub/current-priorities/coronavirus/>

The World Health Organization at: https://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/en/

ASDWA at: <https://www.asdwa.org/covid19/>

Sewage Treatment Plants

All sewage treatments plants that are local agencies with indirect users are reminded to review the Department's "Guidance for Pretreatment Programs During Emergency Situations" and implement emergency procedures as appropriate. The guidance is available at <https://www.nj.gov/dep/dwg/pdf/emergency-guidance-for-pretreatment.pdf>. As stated in the guidance, in extreme emergencies as an option of last resort, local agencies have the authority to require indirect users to reduce or cease discharge until such time as normal treatment works operations are restored.

Additional information for wastewater treatment systems can be found at: <https://www.wef.org/news-hub/wef-news/the-water-professionals-guide-to-the-2019-novel-coronavirus/>.

- “Implementing the Hierarchy of Controls for Wastewater Worker Protection”: <https://www.wef.org/globalassets/assets-wef/news-hub/coronavirus/wastewater-worker-safety-controls.png>.
- Webinar, “Updates on Novel Coronavirus for Water Professionals”, hosted by Water Environment Federation’s Disinfection and Public Health Committee: <https://www.wef.org/resources/online-education/webcasts/ArchivedWebcasts/CoronavirusWebcastArchive/>.

Wastewater treatment plants that receive wastewater from Significant Indirect Users (SIU) should also make contact with SIU dischargers to ensure SIU effluent quality is monitored and maintained to prevent any disruptions to the wastewater treatment plants.

Sludge Generators

Sludge generators and management sites should prepare to have adequate storage in case of disruption of sludge management operations. The Interactive Sewage Sludge Management Tool, available at https://www.nj.gov/dep/dwq/sew_sludge_mapping.htm, is a map that provides the user the ability to physically locate New Jersey’s sewage sludge management systems and understand their capabilities, acceptance criteria and contact information.

Treatability of Coronaviruses

For more information regarding considerations and recommendations for water and wastewater treatment with respect to coronaviruses, please visit: <https://ideas.stantec.com/white-papers/considerations-for-water-and-wastewater-treatment-related-to-the-recent-outbreak-covid-19>

NJDEP NOTIFICATION

Please notify the NJDEP Hotline (1-877-WARN DEP or 1-877-927-6337) for any significant impacts to your infrastructure and/or compromises to the operations of your facility.

Any problems impacting, or having the potential to impact, water quality, or loss of pressure must be reported within 6 hours to the NJDEP hotline at 1-877-WARN DEP (1-877-927-6337). (N.J.A.C. 7:10-2.4(b))

At this time, there is no relaxation regarding sampling and electronic reporting as required by any permit, rule, regulation or statute. Permittees are expected to maintain monitoring and electronic reporting compliance with permit conditions. Any deviations or inquiries associated with that notation should be forwarded to the appropriate NJDEP Enforcement office for follow up. The Department will continue to evaluate this as the situation evolves.

Any non-compliance with permit limitations, anticipated or unanticipated bypass, or violation as outlined in 7:14A-6.10, must be reported to the NJDEP Hotline within 2 hours of the event or knowledge of the event, or 24 hours depending on the nature of the violation (refer to NJAC 7:14A-6.10).

The Department also urges any wastewater facility experiencing non-compliance or anticipating such non-compliance to contact downstream drinking water purveyors and their local department of health. Facilities should contact the NJDEP if they need assistance determining what downstream facilities should be contacted.