



Safe and Reliable Water: It's Up to You!

Regulatory Requirements for Utilities

BOARD ROLE

As a governing body of a public utility, you are accountable for the performance of the utility. Understand all applicable laws and regulations to ensure that your utility is in compliance. States may have more stringent requirements than that SDWA, so be aware of additional standards such as requirements for chlorination and minimum pressures.

KNOW YOUR UTILITY

Learn about your utility's past and current operations to understand its growth. Consider where your community is going to better understand what may be needed from your utility.

HOW TO START

Engage with your utility's operators, directors, and staff to best understand the workings of your utility. The people working on the system daily will provide insight for decision making.

Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974

The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) of 1974 authorizes US EPA to set national health-based standards for drinking water to protect against naturally occurring and human-made contaminants. These standards include maximum contaminant levels and treatment techniques to reduce contaminants to levels that minimize health risks. US EPA grants "primacy" to states, giving state drinking water programs authority to implement the SDWA if they adopt standards at least as stringent as those set at the federal level. Public water systems, in turn, are responsible for treating and testing their water to ensure contaminants do not exceed these standards.

The SDWA was amended in 1996 to include requirements for Capacity Development to ensure utilities have the technical, financial, and managerial capacity to keep their systems in compliance. The amendments also provide guidelines for operator certification and emphasize the importance of keeping consumers informed about water quality and how to protect sources of drinking water.

American Water Infrastructure Act of 2018

The American Water Infrastructure Act (AWIA) further amends the SDWA to outline additional requirements, including updating state capacity development strategies to encourage public water systems to develop Asset Management plans and provide training to assist system operators with implementation. Asset Management programs must be designed to answer these five core questions:

- What Is the Current State of the Utility's Assets?
- What Is the Utility's Required Sustained Level of Service?
- Which Assets Are Critical to Sustained Performance?
- What Are the Utility's Best "Minimum Life-Cycle Cost" CIP and O&M Strategies?
- What Is the Utility's Best Long-term Financing Strategy?

Why does this matter?

Utility boards are responsible for the performance of the utility, including providing safe, reliable drinking water at an appropriate cost. As a board member, you have the responsibility to ensure:

- utility staff are properly trained and certified to operate the utility in your community.
- utility infrastructure is the right fit for the community's system.
- infrastructure and assets are well maintained to avoid system breakdown.

Learn more about the [Safe Drinking Water Act](#) and the [American Water Infrastructure Act](#).

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