



Use of the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) to Implement Security Measures at Public Water Systems

Every American needs to be confident that the water they drink from their tap is safe. Ensuring adequate protection of public water system's (PWS) facilities and drinking water sources has been an important goal of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) drinking water program. Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, we have received questions from states about the eligibility of security measures for financial assistance through the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF).

While the events of September 11 have focused attention on this matter, it is important to note that PWSs have always worked to protect facilities from vandalism and have monitored drinking water sources to assess their vulnerability to contamination. EPA encourages state drinking water programs and DWSRF programs to continue to work with PWSs to help them identify their vulnerability to security threats and vandalism and take steps to ensure protection of the public health of their customers. This fact sheet discusses the types of projects that may be fundable through the DWSRF that will help PWSs ensure the protection of their facilities.

What is the DWSRF program?

The EPA DWSRF program provides grant funding to states to allow them to assist public water systems (PWS) to make infrastructure improvements needed to protect public health and ensure compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act. States may use DWSRF monies to provide loans to PWSs for infrastructure improvements and also have the ability to reserve a portion of their grants (i.e., set-asides) to finance other projects and activities that protect sources of drinking water and enhance the technical, financial and managerial capacity of PWSs.

While the primary type of assistance available through the program is in the form of loans, it is important to note that states have the flexibility to use a portion of their grants to provide principal forgiveness to qualified PWSs and may also be able to provide direct assistance through the set-asides.

What can water utilities do to ensure security?

Water utilities can take straightforward, common sense actions to increase security and reduce threats from terrorism. Areas in which to focus attention, as recommended by American Water Works Association, the Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies, and other leading professional organizations, include guarding against unplanned physical intrusion, making security a priority for employees, coordinating actions for effective emergency response and

investing in security and infrastructure improvements. A May 2001 article in the Journal for the American Water Works Association also noted counter-terrorism measures PWSs can take in ensuring the protection of their facilities (www.awwa.org/public_ep/may.pdf).

What security measures can be funded through the DWSRF?

States may provide DWSRF assistance to PWSs to allow them to complete vulnerability assessments and contingency and emergency response plans. Many of the types of infrastructure improvements a water system would need to take to ensure security are also eligible for DWSRF funding and may have already been included within the scope of infrastructure projects funded through the program to date. Protection of drinking water sources may also be funded through the DWSRF set-asides. The table below identifies examples of activities that PWSs could take to ensure the security of their systems and indicates if the activity would be eligible through the DWSRF program. However, it is ultimately the state’s decision as to whether they will provide assistance for any one activity.

Security Measures and Eligibility under the DWSRF Program

Type of Activity	Eligible under infrastructure Fund	Eligible under set-asides
General		
Vulnerability Assessments	Yes	Yes ¹
Contingency/Emergency Response Plans	Yes	Yes ¹
Protecting Sources of Drinking Water		
Fencing	No	Yes ²
Security Cameras	No	Yes ²
Security Guards	No	No
Facility		
Security Guards	No	No
Fencing	Yes	No
Security Cameras/Lighting	Yes	No
Motion Detectors	Yes	No
Redundancy (systems and power)	Yes	No
Secure Chemical and Fuel Storage	Yes	No
Lab Equipment	Yes	No
Monitoring	No	No
Enhanced Filtration/Disinfection (for biological agents)	Yes	No

Type of Activity	Eligible under infrastructure Fund	Eligible under set-asides
Enhanced Treatment (for chemical agents)	Yes	No
Distribution System		
Backflow prevention devices in distribution system	Yes	No
Cover finished water reservoirs	Yes	No
Installing security hatches on reservoir/tank access panels and vents	Yes	No
Taking protective measures identified as necessary through a cross-connection control program	Yes	No

1 - Activities to develop assessments and plans may be eligible through set-asides addressing capacity development and technical assistance.

2 - Activities to enact protective measures for sources of drinking water may be eligible through set-asides dedicated to implementing source water protection measures.

What security measures cannot be funded through the DWSRF?

It should be noted that maintaining a human presence can be the most important security measure a PWS can take to ensure that its facilities are protected. The DWSRF program cannot fund operations and maintenance activities for PWSs and therefore could not provide financing for an increased human security presence. Likewise, the DWSRF program cannot provide assistance to help a system purchase the chemicals needed to increase disinfection.

How will states fund projects identified by PWSs?

If a PWS is interested in obtaining financing to implement security measures, the first step in seeking assistance is to contact the state DWSRF representative - who can be found on the Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water website at www.epa.gov/safewater/dwsrf.html.

Typically, any project that will receive DWSRF funding must go through public review as part of development of an annual Intended Use Plan which lays out how the state will implement its DWSRF program over the subsequent year. States do, however, have the ability to include procedures in their programs that can allow them to fund emergency projects. Each state should consider the proposals they receive from PWSs in order to make a determination as to whether the proposed improvement would qualify as an emergency project that should be addressed immediately.

In some cases the types of activities that will need to be implemented may have a longer time horizon. For example, a surface water system may determine that it needs to increase the level of filtration to ensure removal of potential biological contaminants. This type of project, which may require time for design and planning, will be on a longer timeline than a project needed to install adequate security fencing, and would thus more likely go through the traditional process for funding DWSRF projects.

Where can I find more information?

The Agency will continue to work with the drinking water industry to provide information and technical assistance to states and utilities to help during this time. EPA is working collaboratively with the Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies and other groups to develop an Information Sharing and Analysis Center to bolster coordinated notification and response to threats and vulnerabilities. For additional information, you can also visit the following websites:

EPA Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water: www.epa.gov/safewater

EPA Counterterrorism: www.epa.gov/ebtpages/ecounterterrorism.html

EPA Alert on Chemical Accident Prevention and Site Security:

www.epa.gov/ceppo/pubs/secale.pdf

U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention: www.bt.cdc.gov

Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies: www.amwa.net/isac

American Water Works Association: www.awwa.org

National League of Cities: www.nlc.org/nlc_org/site/newsroom/terrorism_response

National Governors Association, Emergency Management and Terrorism:

www.nga.org/center/topics/1,1188,D_854,00.html



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