

# Preparing for Extreme Weather Events: Workshop Planner for the Water Sector

*Recently the U.S. has experienced a number of extreme events from heavy precipitation and flooding events to long periods of drought, wildfires, and winter storms. According to NOAA, the U.S. saw more billion dollar weather disasters in 2011 than any other year, and it's expected that these events will become more frequent and more intense in the future. **Is your drinking water or wastewater utility prepared?***

EPA's *Preparing for Extreme Weather Events: Workshop Planner for the Water Sector* helps drinking water, wastewater and stormwater utilities prepare for extreme events by providing materials needed to plan, facilitate and conduct an adaptation planning workshop.

After choosing a scenario, users are guided through five development steps (pictured below), customizing provided templates to develop a workshop that fits their utility, objectives and audience. The Workshop Planner takes the guesswork out of the design process, allowing a user to successfully conduct and facilitate a workshop without outside assistance. These workshops create a forum to openly discuss extreme event adaptation while bringing utility and community partners together.

**What is an extreme event?**  
An extreme event is any event outside of a utility's normal planning threshold. For example, this could be a drought longer than the drought on record, or a 100-year flooding event. Researchers project that the probability of these storms will increase and could occur every 3-20 years. A utility in Waynesboro, TN has had two 100-year floods and a 500-year flood since 2003. Previously, they have not experienced a flooding event since the 1960s.



**Why invite outside stakeholders to your workshop?**  
The entire community will be impacted by extreme weather events, especially if those events result in a service interruption. Utilities should consider inviting community partners to ensure a robust discussion and to explore collaborative adaptation partnerships. These individuals could include watershed managers, land use planners, and local and state government representatives.

All of the materials included on the Workshop Planner are customizable and are structured to allow the audience to:

- Understand the connection between climate change and extreme events,
- Learn the adaptation planning process,
- Discuss the potential impacts to the utility from more frequent and intense extreme events,
- Determine how potential adaptation options could be implemented in a utility or community and
- Develop actions that can be taken immediately to become better prepared for and more resilient to extreme events.

The following five extreme event scenarios are included; scenarios can be easily modified or combined:



Download the Workshop Planner at <http://www.epa.gov/climateredyutilities>  
Email [CRWUhelp@epa.gov](mailto:CRWUhelp@epa.gov) with questions or feedback.