



**Public Utility District No. 1  
of Thurston County**

**Commissioners**

Linda Oosterman – District 1  
Russell E. Olsen – District 2  
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April 23, 2014

To: Participants in the DOH Sponsored Small Water Systems Workshop  
From: John Weidenfeller, Washington WARN (WAWARN) Member

Subject: Washington Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network (WAWARN)

## **I. WAWARN: Utilities Helping Utilities**

1. **What is WA WARN?** WAWARN is a Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network that allows water and wastewater systems to receive rapid mutual aid and assistance from other systems in an emergency. Utilities sign the WARN standard agreement which then allows them to share resources with any other system in Washington that has also signed the agreement.
  - ✓ **See the website <http://www.wawarn.org/> - All of the links mentioned on this memo can be found on this web site.**
  - ✓ [Announcing WAWARN mutual aid website service](http://www.wawarn.org/documents/Announcing-WAWARN-Mutual-Aid-Website-Service.pdf)  
[\[http://www.wawarn.org/documents/Announcing-WAWARN-Mutual-Aid-Website-Service.pdf\]](http://www.wawarn.org/documents/Announcing-WAWARN-Mutual-Aid-Website-Service.pdf)
  - ✓ EPA has developed a new video to increase water sector awareness of the Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network (WARN) initiative and attract new members to existing WARNs. Entitled "WARNs in Action", the video illustrates the types of events in which the mutual aid networks have been utilized and emphasizes the importance of water sector coordination during an emergency. Interviews with WARN representatives provide detail on particular benefits of WARN, explaining how the programs have reduced response time and saved utilities money during emergencies.
2. The video can be found on the WARN Home tab of the [Office of Water's Mutual Aid and Assistance webpage](http://water.epa.gov/infrastructure/watersecurity/mutualaid/index.cfm). [\[http://water.epa.gov/infrastructure/watersecurity/mutualaid/index.cfm\]](http://water.epa.gov/infrastructure/watersecurity/mutualaid/index.cfm)

## **II. How to Join WAWARN**

If your utility has **not** filled out the membership application:

1. Click on [Membership Application](http://www.wawarn.org/membership/) to register your utility as a member and you will receive a confirming email. [\[http://www.wawarn.org/membership/\]](http://www.wawarn.org/membership/)
2. After confirming your email, return to WAWARN, login and complete your full [Utility Profile](http://www.wawarn.org/members/login.php). [\[http://www.wawarn.org/members/login.php\]](http://www.wawarn.org/members/login.php)
3. Have your Mutual Aid Agreement signed either online or via paper copy. Submit paper copy to WAWARN, C/O Water/Irrigation, 2301 Fruitvale Blvd. Yakima, WA 98902.
4. Download the materials and attend local training provided by WAWARN on activation procedures.

For more information, please contact your regional or statewide chair (contact info on [Committees page](http://www.wawarn.org/committees/)) [\[http://www.wawarn.org/committees/\]](http://www.wawarn.org/committees/)

### **Key Documents:**

[Mutual Aid Agreement - PDF](http://www.wawarn.org/documents/warn-mutual-aid-agreement.pdf) [\[http://www.wawarn.org/documents/warn-mutual-aid-agreement.pdf\]](http://www.wawarn.org/documents/warn-mutual-aid-agreement.pdf)

[WAWARN Operational Plan](http://www.wawarn.org/documents/WA-WARN-Operational-Plan-Final.pdf) [\[http://www.wawarn.org/documents/WA-WARN-Operational-Plan-Final.pdf\]](http://www.wawarn.org/documents/WA-WARN-Operational-Plan-Final.pdf)

[WAWARN Brochure](http://www.wawarn.org/documents/wawarn-brochure.pdf) [\[http://www.wawarn.org/documents/wawarn-brochure.pdf\]](http://www.wawarn.org/documents/wawarn-brochure.pdf)

## **III. About WAWARN**

Based on other AWWA models, WAWARN is designed to provide a utility-to-utility response during an emergency. The wawarn.org web site does this by providing its members with emergency planning, response, and recovery information before, during, and after an emergency. As the nationwide WARN system expands, it will become easier to provide mutual aid to other states as needed.

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Frequently Questions Are Below:

**1. How does a utility get assistance during an emergency?**

The WAWARN member who needs help identifies the resources needed to respond. The WAWARN member can either directly contact a fellow WAWARN member who has the necessary resources or use a state specific process of requesting aid.

Through the WAWARN Web site, a member can request emergency equipment (pumps, generators, chlorinators, evacuators, etc.) and trained personnel (eg. treatment plant operators) that they may need in an emergency.

**2. Are member utilities required to respond and send resources?**

There is no obligation to respond. It is up to the lending utility to determine if resources are available.

**3. What role does the Agreement play?**

During an emergency, the process and procedures to give and receive assistance are governed by articles in the WAWARN agreement. The agreement covers issues such as requesting assistance, giving assistance, reimbursement, workers' compensation, insurance, liability, and dispute resolution.

**4. How is WAWARN different from an existing statewide mutual aid program managed by emergency management?**

WAWARN agreements do not require a local declaration of emergency. Statewide programs do not include private utilities; WAWARN agreements do. Statewide agreements are managed by the state emergency management agency; WAWARN is managed by utilities.

**5. The WAWARN program provides its member utilities with:**

- A standard omnibus mutual assistance agreement and process for sharing emergency resources among members statewide.
- The resources to respond and recover more quickly from a disaster.
- A mutual assistance program consistent with other statewide mutual aid programs.
- A forum for developing and maintaining emergency contacts and relationships.
- New ideas from lessons learned in disasters.

**6. WAWARN Benefits**

- No cost to become a member
- Increased emergency preparedness and coordination
- Enhance access to specialized resources
- A single agreement provides access to all member utilities statewide
- Provides access to resources during an emergency without pre-contractual limitations or retainer fees
- Signatories have a pre-established relationship under which they are able to share resources during an emergency at the discretion of each participating agency
- Is consistent with the National Incident Management System (NIMS)
- Provides a list of emergency contacts and phone numbers
- Reduces administrative conflicts
- Agreement contains indemnification and workers' compensation provisions to protect participating utilities, and provides for reimbursement of costs, as needed
- Increases hope that recovery will come quickly

There are two sides to the **WAWARN.org** web site. The public side is open to anyone to view. This side gives basic information about WAWARN and how to join.

The second side, the resource database, is only open to members who have signed the agreement, and it is free!