RIWARN: Overview, Evolution & Future Goals

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Narragansett Bay Commission
NBC is a quasi-public agency which oversees the two largest WWTFs in Rhode Island:
- Bucklin Point in East Providence
- Field’s Point in Providence

Service area: 10 municipalities
360,000 people served including 8,000 businesses & industrial customers.
Field’s Point WWTF

- Avg. dry weather flow of 45.5 MGD
- Hypochlorite for Disinfection
- 65 MG CSO Tunnel – 2008
- Mixed of industrial, medical, food service & residential input
Bucklin Point WWTF

- Avg. dry weather flow of 23.9 MGD
- UV for Disinfection
- Mixed of industrial, medical, food service & residential inputs
Agenda

- Overview:
  - What is a WARN?
  - History of WARN Initiative
  - Importance of WARNs
  - Membership benefits
  - Logistics

- Evolution of RIWARN

- National Status & Future Goals
What is a “WARN?”

- A network of utilities helping utilities during natural or man-made emergencies
- A mutual aid & assistance agreement among public & private utilities
- Lending of personnel & equipment to prepare for, respond to, and/or recover from an emergency
- Participation is voluntary
Who’s Involved?

- Utility owner/operators
- Professional association representation
  - (EPA, WEF, AWWA, etc.)
- State water and wastewater primacy agency
  - (State health, environmental management, etc.)
- State emergency management and/or homeland security agency (State EMAC coordinator)
- US EPA region representation
Threat Assessment

- National Infrastructure Preparedness Plan (NIPP)
  - Taking an “all hazards” approach to risk management
  - Sector resiliency is a common thread
  - Identified 17 CI/KR sectors – water/wastewater sector
  - Primary goal is to maintain a resilient infrastructure by exploring and expanding the implementation of mutual aid agreements in the water sector.

- 8 major water organizations
- Goal: encourage the creation of intrastate mutual aid & assistance networks
- Provides for greater water sector resiliency against natural or manmade incidents
- WEF – One of the organizations that became committed to the “Utilities Helping Utilities” concept and continues to encourage its members to discuss mutual aid and assistance with their peers
The WARN Action Plan

Utilities Helping Utilities

- Outlines 10 key steps in the formation of a WARN

- Includes sample agreement that satisfies NIMS and comparative assessment of existing WARN programs

- Recognized by DHS as model
10 Steps to Develop a WARN

1. Identify interest in starting a program
2. Form an Initial Leadership Team
3. Prepare a kickoff session
4. Establish a Steering Committee
5. Identify a mission for the program and goals for the Steering Committee
6. Review use of state regions
7. Identify mutual aid and assistance activation criteria
8. Draft an agreement
9. Create facilitation tools
10. Maintain the program
April 2006 (3 states)
May 2007 (6 states)
January 2008 (20 states)
October 2008 (31 states)
July 2012 (48 states)
The “WARN Ultimatum”
Importance of a WARN

- Establishes an agreement and protocols to access specialized resources such as knowledgeable water and wastewater utility personnel or utility specific heavy equipment.
- Provides a forum for establishing and maintaining emergency contacts.
- A WARN can facilitate utility training.
- Helps fill the need for personnel and resources BEFORE the arrival of government aid.
Benefits of Joining WARN

- Zero Cost
- Zero Obligation
- Enhanced Access to Specialized Resources
- Increased Preparedness & Coordination
- Rapid Aid & Assistance
How Does it Work?

- Requesting Member
  - Provides communication, food & shelter
- Responding Member
  - Provides equipment and supervisory personnel
- Reimbursement rates – FEMA schedule
- Payment
  - Responding member sends bill within 90 days
  - Requesting member pays bill within 45 days
- Records – 3 years.
Mutual Aid and Assistance in the Water Sector

WARN is one of three possible mutual aid/assistance mechanisms

Water Emergency Occurs

Utility responds

WATER UTILITY:
- Assesses impact of emergency
- Determines if resources are sufficient
- Deploys available resources
- Identifies need for mutual aid/assistance

Activates

Mutual Response Agreements with local/neighbor utilities (access to other local utility resources, per agreement)

Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network (WARN) (access to public and private signatory utilities)
Organized and facilitated at county, state’s regions and statewide levels.

Statewide Mutual Aid Agreement for all resources (law, fire, medical, public works, etc.)
Organized and managed at county, state’s regions and statewide levels.

WARN does not require a declaration and includes both public and private utilities.

Mutual Aid and Assistance Alternatives

During an emergency, a utility needs to determine the best alternatives to address its response needs. Alternatives could include three possible mutual aid or assistance mechanisms: contacting neighboring utilities with whom they have pre-written and established agreements; using public agency statewide mutual aid and assistance programs; or accessing the water/wastewater mutual aid and assistance program formally known as WARN.
Resource Typing

✓ Common terminology approach to emergency response

✓ Specific for the water & wastewater sector

✓ Common terminology used for emergency situations, personnel and equipment reimbursement
RI WARN - Timeline

• 2007
  • Rhode Island became the second WARN State in New England

• 2008
  • Narragansett Bay Commission received EPA Environmental Merit Award for dedication to the WARN initiative
  • Launched the www.riwarn.org website, funded by RI DOH and modeled after TX WARN
RI WARN – Timeline, cont.

- 2008
  - EPA-funded ½ day Tabletop Exercise (New England Mutual Aid – Flood Scenario)

- 2009
  - EPA-funded ½ day Tabletop Exercise (New England Mutual Aid – Earthquake Scenario)

- 2011
  - EPA-funded ½ day training on Water Sector Incident Command System (ICS) and National Incident Management System (NIMS)
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
New England Region
Environmental Merit Award
presented to
NARRAGANSETT BAY COMMISSION

in gratitude and appreciation for your exemplary leadership and tireless efforts on behalf of New England’s environment

April 2008
Status of RIWARN

- Active Steering Committee
- Operational Plan
- New Website
- 21 Member Utilities
  - 13 Water
  - 4 Wastewater
- Associate Member Agencies
  - RI DEM
  - RI EMA
  - RI Department of Health
  - ASRWWA
Future Goals for RIWARN

- Develop online inventory of resources
- Increase membership
- Work with EPA and AWWA to help develop a New England Interstate WARN Agreement
- Train more utility members on basic ICS
Summary

- All emergencies are local and require a local response capability.
- Participation in a WARN agreement will enhance your utility’s preparedness and overall resiliency against any disaster.
- In a basic sense, WARN is a low or no-cost action that helps ensure the continuity of operations of the water infrastructure vital to the well being of every community.