For more information, please contact Ohio EPA's Division of Drinking and Ground Waters at (614) 644-2752 or visit our Security Web site:

www.epa.ohio.gov/ddagw/security.aspx

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Fall 2007
In addition to writing an emergency preparedness plan, it is essential for public water systems to practice and update it in order to:

- familiarize staff with procedures and the structure of the plan;
- train staff on how to use the plan and help them further develop problem solving skills;
- evaluate it to ensure its effectiveness; and
- identify additional training needed to help staff be effective when using the plan.

Emergency response plans should be reviewed by all staff and updated every year to ensure that content is current. You may also want to modify the plan after training, an emergency event, when personnel changes or if the layout of the facility changes.

It’s important to update your plan at least annually regardless of the size of your public water system. If an emergency situation were to occur, you will be under stress and may not have the time or resources to find new phone numbers or different chemical and equipment suppliers.

There are four types of exercises in which the emergency preparedness plan is practiced. The type of training exercises used can be tailored to the needs of the system.

- Orientation sessions are used to introduce new or updated information to staff expected to be familiar with the plan.
- Tabletop exercises are used to practice responses to an emergency scenario prepared ahead of time. The exercise can include a single or several steps to respond to the emergency. Responses are verbal.
- Functional exercises are used to practice and simulate actions in the plan for a prepared emergency scenario.

Fundamental emergency response training for your system’s staff may include:

- learning about hazards and protective actions in the workplace;
- communication procedures;
- location and use of common equipment; and
- evacuation and accountability procedures.

Practicing and updating an emergency preparedness plan is important for all systems, not just large ones. Remember to anticipate, prepare and practice!