



## Water sector is first critical infrastructure to measure security

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**There are eighteen industries or market segments defined by the U.S. government as critical infrastructure; the water utilities sector is the first to measure security progress under the U.S. Infrastructure Protection Plan**

The water sector is set to become the first of the U.S. eighteen critical infrastructure and key resource sectors to develop a metric and launch a tool to gauge security progress under the [National Infrastructure Protection Plan](#) framework. "We've got a lot of great stories and anecdotes about utilities that are really doing a lot to safeguard not just the hazardous materials they have, but to enhance their 'all hazards' security posture," said L. Vance Taylor, manager of security policy for the Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies. "But there's nothing that's been developed to date that allows us to get a sectorwide measure of these [efforts]."

CO's Daniel Fowler [writes](#) that today, Tuesday, drinking water and wastewater utilities will be able to access the [tool](#) and fill out the twenty-two questions that comprise the metric. "Those of us in the water sector want to make sure that we are doing the right thing to protect our utilities and to do everything to minimize the impact of any natural disaster or terrorist attack," said Billy Turner, chairman of the Water Sector Coordinating Council and president of the Columbus, Georgia, Water Works.

Developed as part of a collaboration between government representatives from such agencies as DHS and the EPA and members of the Water Sector Coordinating Council, the tool's questions range from general -- "Have you integrated security and preparedness into budgeting, training, and manpower responsibilities?" -- to more specific -- "For what period of time does your utility have backup power?"

"We sat down and said 'what works here for measuring?'" said Jim Caverly, director of the partnership and outreach division in DHS's Office of Infrastructure Protection. "So we jointly did that." According to Caverly, the various sectors committed to developing metrics as part of their involvement with the National Infrastructure Protection Plan. "It's not mandatory in the sense that there is ... a legal requirement that requires them to do that or a legislative requirement, but it is a commitment that they've signed up to do," Caverly said.

DHS expects the other sectors to develop their metrics by the summer of 2009. "Not all sectors will have a 'tool,' but all sectors will have in essence the information framework that allows you to do the measurement," Caverly said. The water sector had already begun developing a metric when DHS approached it about creating one. "They showed the way," Caverly said of the water sector. "They had reasons to be moving out on what they're doing and those reasons fit nicely with the things we wanted to do. So they're ahead of the curve."

DHS is now encouraging the other sectors to use the water sector's process and model as a framework for creating their own metric, Caverly said. Water Utilities First to Measure Security Progress Under Infrastructure Protection Plan. For four weeks -- beginning today -- water utilities will have the opportunity to fill out the online questionnaire. By December, the Water Information Sharing and Analysis Center -- which created the online tool -- plans to issue a report based on the submissions.

Taylor said WaterISAC is the water sector's "operational arm." "After doing a lot of analysis ... we'll come up with a report that shows the results of the survey and that tells our story and that report is going to get pushed out to every single person that participated in the process," said Taylor, who is also WaterISAC's manager of security policy and helped create the tool. "So every utility that participated is going to get a copy. It's going to be posted on WaterISAC and it's going to be made available to the public, federal partners and everyone that was involved in this process," he said.

Taylor said the water sector can not make every utility complete the questionnaire, but noted the sector is leaning on national wastewater and drinking water associations to get their members to participate. "WaterISAC will ensure that all information that gets reported for public consumption is made anonymous and reported in aggregate form, meaning that there will be no utility attribution," Taylor said. Turner said there are about 160,000 drinking water systems and approximately 16,000 wastewater systems in the country.