



Capacity, Management, Operation & Maintenance

CMOM IN WISCONSIN 6. OVERFLOW EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN



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Overflow Emergency Response Planning is the sixth of the eight elements of a Capacity, Management, Operation & Maintenance (CMOM) Program.

Unanticipated collection system emergency events are going to happen, and the better prepared you are, the more efficient, effective and less stressed your response will be. A CMOM program should have an Overflow Emergency Response Plan with written procedures for responding to various collection systems emergencies. Detailed records of emergencies and responses should be documented. The plan should be regularly reviewed and revised in response to the adequacy of past emergency actions.

No one wants to see a neighbor's basement, a friend's basement, your own basement with sewage in it, no matter how diluted it may be. Indeed, a **“royal flush beats a full house”**! Make that your collection system slogan. If there is anything to motivate you to develop and implement an effective CMOM Program, it is to reduce basement back-ups to zero in your community. Part of doing that is having an Emergency Response Plan that is well thought out and results in very timely

and effective emergency responses. Your neighbors, friends, and residents will thank you.

Emergency Capability: Check those items which you have in place:

Alarm System and Routine Testing

When equipment failure or high wastewater flows occur, especially at lift stations, it is critical (1) you have adequate alarm systems in place to notify the proper collection system personnel of the problem and (2) your alarm systems (visual, audible or dialer) are working so that (3) your response is expedient. Alarm systems should be regularly tested to ensure their reliability. All lift station should have an alarm system of some kind. Most should be telemetered.

Emergency Equipment

Emergency equipment such as back-up generators, portable pumps, alternative power sources, pump trucks, should be either on-site or quickly/readily available for emergency operation. In cases where portable equipment is used, the capacity of holding pipes and wet wells should be known so that placement of portable equipment can be prioritized to minimize sanitary sewer overflows and basement backups.

Emergency Procedures

As part of an emergency response plan, written detailed procedures should be established for all known emergencies that potentially could occur, such as SSOs, basement backups, power outages, lift station failures, sewer blockages, force main breaks, severe rain events and flooding. Emergency response situations should be routinely practiced as part of employee training.

It is highly advisable to have a well established procedures for responding to and dealing with residential basement back-ups. Good communications and advisory information is important for residents experiencing a sewer back-up. Well document each basement back-up event.

Mutual Aid Agreements

Having a signed mutual aid agreement on file prior to an emergency can greatly facilitate planning and prioritizing by agencies responding to your requests for help. Consider participating in the Wisconsin Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network (WISWARN). See <http://www.wiswarn.org>

Communications/Notifications (DNR, Internal, Public, Media)

During emergencies, communications are critical. It should be very clear to all response personnel what roles they have and who contacts whom. There should be an internal communication procedure as well as who will be notifying and communicating with external agencies, the public and the media. It is also very important that you have

Lessons Learned

Plan. Act. Review. Do (Re-Do) What worked and did not work during the emergency? Were any mistakes made? What went well? What could be improved? Use information gathered during the review to revise procedures for future emergencies. Keep getting better at your emergency responses.