



County-Level Tabletop Exercises in Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection

For the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP), the Horsley Witten Group, Inc. (HW) developed a one-day training program consisting of a half-day Incident Command System (ICS) and National Incident Management System (NIMS) refresher training, followed by a facilitated tabletop exercise. The training and tabletop exercise bring together local drinking water and wastewater service providers and other emergency responders to discuss steps to be taken now to better prepare for a future water sector-specific incident. HW specifically tailored the ICS and NIMS refresher training for the water sector, and purposely designed the tabletop exercise to encourage discussion among response partners from the local, county and State levels. The overarching goal of the program is to foster a better understanding of the roles, responsibilities and capabilities of the partner agencies/organizations that would respond to an incident involving the water sector, and to begin the networking process between water and wastewater utilities and their response partners prior to an emergency.



HW will conduct the training program in each of the 67 counties in Pennsylvania. To date, participant feedback is overwhelmingly positive for those trainings already administered. One participant, from a county emergency management agency, related that not soon after attending the training program he was faced with locating potable water for a retirement home when its water system failed. Using the knowledge gained and the relationships formed during this 1-day training program, he quickly mitigated the incident before it expanded into a larger public safety problem.

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