



Emergency Planning—Water Treatment Plant Supply Chain Continuity

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Frequently Asked Questions

1. How can we prepare for water treatment supply chain disruptions?

- o Evaluate what chemicals and supplies are critical to your operation.
- o Coordinate with your materials supplier and transporter. Encourage them to take staff protective measures to assure functionality and service.
- o Identify alternate sources of materials and supplies and establish contact with them now.
- o Maintain an inventory of available parts. Purchase spare parts now for all critical treatment equipment.
- o Consider ordering chemicals more frequently and keeping larger amounts of chemicals on-site. For example, if you typically reorder when levels reach 25 percent of capacity, you could reorder at 50 percent.
- o Make sure to date your chemical inventory and practice safe storage and handling according to EPA, WISHA, OSHA and other requirements. If you use temporary storage be sure to clearly label and have the Safety Data Sheet on the container.
- o Review or develop mutual aid agreements with neighboring utilities. Coordinate with your mutual aid partners to identify resources that other nearby utilities may have on hand.
- o Join [WAWARN](#).

2. We're about to run out of a critical chemical, material or spare part and are unable to get more from our regular supplier. What are some general steps we can take?

- o Check with alternate suppliers you identified during emergency planning.
- o Contact your mutual aid partners to see if they can help.
- o Contact [WAWARN](#) if you are a member.
- o Certain SMAs, PUDs and larger systems that order in larger quantities may be able to assist small systems. Contact your [DOH regional office](#) for information.
- o As a last resort, contact your local EOC and ask for help. The process for doing this is on the Washington Military Department's Emergency Management Division website at mil.wa.gov/logistics-and-resources. Use the correct form (213RR).
- o Be specific about what you need! For chemicals give the name, strength and amount you need and state that it is for drinking water treatment.
- o If you are unable to maintain normal operation due to lack of chemicals, contact your [DOH regional office](#) to discuss whether a health advisory is needed.

3. What are other steps we can take if a specific water treatment chemical isn't available?

- o If you experience **hypochlorite** shortages, consider switching from dry to liquid, or vice versa. Contact your regional office to find out if you need to submit documents for approval. If you use household strength (6-8 percent) switch to industrial (12.5 percent). Be aware that higher strength hypochlorite degrades more rapidly than lower strength and produces unwanted disinfection by-products when stored for long periods

(especially at elevated temperatures). Dilute or adjust dose and be aware of the range limitations of your feed pump.

- o If you use **NSF-certified salt** for on-site generation and experience a shortage, consider temporarily switching to food grade salt. Another option is to switch to liquid hypochlorite. You will need to find the appropriate solution concentration and feed pump setting. Be aware of the range limitations of your feed pump.
 - o For **chlorine gas** shortages consider temporarily switching to hypochlorite, either bleach or dry (calcium hypochlorite). Contact your [regional office](#) to find out if you need to submit documents for approval.
 - o For **filter aid polymer**, ask your supplier for the names of other utilities that use the same product and see if you can borrow some. Another option: switch to a similar NSF-certified product.
 - o For **fluoride** chemical shortages it's o.k. to stop adjusting fluoride levels for a short period. Make sure to let your customers know about the disruption. You must also include this information in your annual consumer confidence report.
 - o If you use liquid **alum** switch to dry. If you use dry, switch to liquid.
- 4. We normally use X percent hypochlorite and can only get Y percent. How do we adjust our dose?**
- o We have a spreadsheet available. Contact your [regional office](#) for assistance. Be aware of the range limitations of your feed pump.
- 5. We can't get alum and want to switch to ACH. What should we do?**
- o If you use liquid, consider switching to dry alum. If you use dry, consider switching to liquid. If you have other changes in mind consider the impact on the chloride-sulfate mass ratio and the potential impact on lead release in the distribution system. Contact your [regional office](#) to discuss.
- 6. We can't get our normal pH adjusting chemical. What should we do?**
- o Contact your [regional office](#) to discuss options.

For more information

More emergency resources are available on our [Drinking Water Emergencies webpage](#).

Our publications are online at doh.wa.gov/drinkingwater.

Contact our nearest regional office from 8 AM to 5 PM, Monday through Friday. If you have an after-hours emergency, call 877-481-4901.

[Eastern Region](#), Spokane Valley 509-329-2100.

[Northwest Region](#), Kent 253-395-6750.

[Southwest Region](#), Tumwater 360-236-3030.



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