

COVID-19 Water System Planning and Open Public Meetings

During the water system planning process, the water purveyor is required to meet important planning elements, including conducting public meetings, prior to receiving approval for the Water System Plan (WSP). During the COVID-19 “Stay Home, Stay Healthy” order, open public meetings must be approached differently while still meeting certain code requirements. In accordance with the Governor’s proclamation [20-28.15](#) the requirement to hold in-person meetings in accordance with RWC 42.30 and RCW 42.56 has been waived and suspended until January 19, 2021 or the end of the COVID 19 State of Emergency, whichever occurs first. Please refer to the [Open Public Meetings Act](#) for additional guidance. If you have any questions, please contact your regional planner.

What are the three WSP requirements that need a public meeting?

- An informational meeting for the water system consumers regarding the key points of the WSP update such as water use efficiency, capital projects, financing, and any changes to rates and development charges.
- Water use efficiency (WUE) goal setting public forum. This must be published and the notice for the meeting must specifically state the Water Use Efficiency Goal(s) will be discussed. You may post the notice on our website to meet the notice requirements at: doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/DrinkingWater/WaterSystemDesignandPlanning/WaterUseEfficiency.
- Adoption of the WSP by the governing body.

Under the Governor’s proclamation what kind of action can be taken at the public meetings at this time?

- Proclamation 20-28.14 no longer limits actions to matters that are necessary and routine or necessary to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak.

How can we hold an open public meeting under the proclamation?

- At a minimum you must provide telephone access and ensure all persons attending the meeting can hear each other at the same time.
- You may also include other electronic, internet or other means of remote access.
- When setting up an e-based meeting, ensure the meeting has no group chat option, but viewers can type in questions to the presenters. This will offer a way to handle public comment.

Where can I find guidance on conferencing services?

- The Municipal Research and Service Center ([MRSC](#)) has compiled great information about free and fee based conference and e-based meeting services at: [mrsc.org/Home/Stay-Informed/MRSC-Insight/April-2020-1/Engaging-in-a-Pixelated-Public-Square](#).
- Department of Enterprises Master Contracts for teleconferencing and web-based meeting platforms can be found here:
 - Software Resellers (06016): [apps.des.wa.gov/DESContracts/Home/ContractSummary/06016](#).
 - Cloud Solutions (05116): [apps.des.wa.gov/DESContracts/Home/ContractSummary/05116](#).
- Washington Technology Solutions Office of Cybersecurity has guidance on best practices and more information meeting security at: [cybersecurity.wa.gov/news/covid-19-resources](#).

More COVID-19 Information and Resources

Stay up-to-date on the [current COVID-19 situation in Washington](#), [Governor Inslee's proclamations](#), [symptoms](#), [how it spreads](#), and [how and when people should get tested](#). See our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) for more information.

The risk of COVID-19 is not connected to race, ethnicity or nationality. [Stigma will not help to fight the illness](#). Share accurate information with others to keep rumors and misinformation from spreading.

- [WA State Department of Health 2019 Novel Coronavirus Outbreak \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [WA State Coronavirus Response \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Find Your Local Health Department or District](#)
- [CDC Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Stigma Reduction Resources](#)

Have more questions about COVID-19? Call our hotline: **1-800-525-0127**. For interpretative services, **press #** when they answer and **say your language**. (Open from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.) For questions about your own health, COVID-19 testing, or testing results, please contact your health care provider.