

EGLE Community Water Supply COVID-19 Q & A

Stay Home, Stay Safe Executive Order (EO)

	Question	Answer
1	How should systems approach water shutoffs while we the Stay Home, Stay Safe Executive Order is in place?	Please refer to Executive Order 2020-28 Restoring water service to occupied residences during the COVID-19 pandemic for more information about water shutoffs and restoration.
2	What is the responsibility of the utility in areas where seasonal residents want service restored during the Stay Home, Stay Safe Executive Order?	Please refer to Executive Order 2020-28 Restoring water service to occupied residences during the COVID-19 pandemic for more information about water shutoffs and restoration.
3	Should cross connection program activities continue under the Stay Home, Stay Safe EO?	Backflow prevention is imperative, especially during a pandemic. EGLE expects communities to continue meeting Act 399 requirements including Part 14. Supplies must balance the safety of their water system with reducing spread of the virus.
4	Should supplies conduct annual hydrant flushing?	Water supplies should continue to operate their systems as necessary to meet service expectations. Water supplies should consider the potential impacts to their systems and staff to decide whether the value of these activities warrants taking action now versus waiting to a later date.

EO 2020-28: Restoring water service to occupied residences during the COVID-19 pandemic

	Question	Answer
1	Is the restoring water service guidance available on the EGLE website a good resource to provide after a water main break?	Yes, the guidance on Flushing Your House Plumbing System When Water Services are Restored would be a good resource for customers after a water main break. Similar concerns exist when pressure is lost in the system as those experienced when water has sat idle for an extended period of time.
2	Are there grants available for water line replacements under the EO 2020-28?	The Water Restart Grant Program provides limited funding to assist communities with restoring water service to homes. Communities interested in accessing the funding should email EGLE-RestartGrants@michigan.gov .

3	Where do we send the report due on April 12, 2020 under the EO?	Reports should be sent to EGLE-Assist@michigan.gov
4	Does the report due 4/12 have a required format?	There is no required format for submittal, however the following information must be provided to EGLE-Assist@michigan.gov : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water Supply Serial Number (WSSN) • System name • County • Population served • What efforts have been made to determine which occupied residents do not have water service? • Have shutoffs been suspended? • Has service been restored? • Number of structures that are still disconnected due to non-payment. • Number of structures that are still disconnected due to other reasons.
5	How many water restorations are being addressed by communities across the state?	A recent press release announced that water reconnection reports are available online and provides a link to the summary document.
6	What is the water supply's obligation if a resident does not want water service restored to their home?	Water supplies must offer and provide water service restoration. If a resident does not want service restored, it is recommended that the water supply retain documentation of the offer and that the resident declined restoration.

Continuity of Operations

	Question	Answer
1	Is there a recommendation regarding operator staffing? Should staffing be reduced to the absolute minimum?	Water system operators are critical to ensuring people can comply with the social distancing recommendations and the Stay Home, Stay Safe Executive Order. Consistent with the Order, water supplies should consider staffing levels and protocols to determine how to keep their staff safe while providing this critical service to their community.

Sampling

	Question	Answer
1	Has EGLE considered modifications to the required number of bacteriological samples a system needs to collect?	EGLE is not currently considering a reduction to the total number of samples required. However, some water systems may need to adjust their sampling sites due to access issues during the pandemic. In cooperation with the district engineer, sampling sites can be temporarily changed, and/or the system could potentially rebalance the number of sites versus the frequency of collection. Guidance on selecting temporary sites is available at Michigan.gov/CommunityWater under “ COVID-19: Information for Water Operators. ”
2	Has EGLE considered modifications to the sampling requirements related to lead and copper?	No. It is recommended that water supplies prepare for sampling while the Stay Home, Stay Safe Executive Order is in place. Actions such as ordering bottles, contacting sampling participants, and reviewing sampling plans can be done now in preparation for sampling within a potentially shortened window of time.
	If a Stage 2 DBPR sampling site is inaccessible, is it acceptable to go to a nearby address to collect the sample? Are there guidelines for selecting a nearby site? Is it acceptable to delay the sampling until later in the quarter?	Some site flexibility can be accommodated. Alternate sites should be as close to the routine location as possible and represent the same water quality. Contact your EGLE district office to discuss options and get approval for use of an alternate site. Guidance is available on the EGLE website. Samples must be collected during the supply’s designated month and cannot be postponed until later in the monitoring period.
	What is the best way for water supplies to order bottles from the State lab?	Bottles can be ordered from the EGLE Laboratory by phone at 517-335-8184 or by submitting a completed Requisition for Water Sample Units by email to DEQ-RRD-DW-Bottles@michigan.gov . Requests can also be submitted by FAX or mail. Visit the EGLE Laboratory website for all bottle request options.

Operator Training and Certification

	Question	Answer
1	How can I continue training and earn CECs while the social distancing recommendations are in place?	There are over 150 CEC-approved online training courses available. Visit Michigan.gov/EGLEoperatortraining for a list of these courses.
2	Will the fall testing cycle remain the same?	There is currently no plan to change the fall drinking water certification exam scheduled for November 4, 2020.
3	Are there currently any delays in processing certification renewal applications?	Drinking water certification renewals continue to be processed. Processing may be slightly slower than usual due to less frequent processing/pick-up of physical mail.
4	Due to COVID-19, many CEC-approved courses have been cancelled or delayed. Will certification renewal deadlines be extended to allow time to find/take other courses in place of those cancelled?	Certifications scheduled to expire on April 15, 2020 have been granted an extension through July 15, 2020, allowing three additional months to meet CEC requirements. Please note the subsequent renewal deadline will remain April of 2023.

Enforcement Discretion

	Question	Answer
1	Is EGLE allowing exceptions to regulatory requirements during the COVID-19 outbreak?	Generally, no. Drinking water is an essential service and critical to maintaining health and hygiene, particularly during a pandemic. However, EGLE understands regulatory/enforcement flexibility may be necessary under certain circumstances. EGLE has established a process by which regulated entities can request enforcement discretion. Visit Michigan.gov/EGLE for information about the process for submitting requests .

Other

	Question	Answer
1	Will the weekly webinars be available to view for later reference?	A copy of the presentation will be available on the “COVID-19: Information for Water Operators” page at Michigan.gov/CommunityWater .
2	How can I ensure that I will receive the announcements for the weekly update?	EGLE is emailing invitations to community water supply administrative contacts and operators in charge. These individuals may forward the invitation to other water supply personnel as needed.
3	During COVID-19, can a system delay sending lead service line notifications to homes determined to be served by, or likely served by, a lead service line?	No. The requirement to notify residents within 30 days that their home is served by a lead service line is still effect. Homeowners should receive, in a timely manner, the information they need to protect themselves from potential exposure to lead in drinking water.
4	Have you heard anything on the EPA Lead & Copper Rule changes? Have the changes been delayed?	EGLE is not currently aware of any changes to EPA’s plans/timeline for revising the federal Lead and Copper Rule.
5	Do you have any results on the concentration of Coronavirus in wastewater? Is there anywhere to see other plants’ results?	We do not currently have results from wastewater facilities. There are many studies underway both inside and outside Michigan.

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