



South Carolina
Office of Regulatory Staff

THE WATER WELLSPRING

A Flowing Source of Information for Water and Wastewater Utilities

Spring 2013

2012 Annual Reports

Utilities whose fiscal year ended on December 31, 2012, are reminded to file their annual report no later than April 1, 2013. Letters were mailed on January 29, 2013, advising utilities that the PSC regulations require that the report must be completed and submitted on a yearly basis. If the utility company has a fiscal year ending other than December 31, 2012, the report is due three months after the end of the utility's fiscal year; however, utility representatives must notify the ORS in writing of the utility's fiscal end date.

The 2012 Water and/or Wastewater Annual Report form is available in a PDF-fillable format at the Office of Regulatory Staff web site at www.regulatorystaff.sc.gov under Water/Wastewater – Forms and Resources page. Water and/or wastewater companies having annual operating revenues greater than or equal to \$200,000 must complete the Water and/or Wastewater Annual Report for Class A and B Companies. Water and/or wastewater companies having annual operating revenues less than \$200,000 must complete the Water

and/or Wastewater Annual Report for Class C Companies.

Please note that there are numerous tabs in the Excel workbook. All appropriate forms should be completed. Three (3) copies of the required information should be completed; retain one copy for your files and return the original and one copy to the South Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff, 1401 Main Street, Suite 900, Columbia, South Carolina 29201. Upon receipt, the Office of Regulatory Staff will forward one copy to the Public Service Commission of South Carolina.

Failure to submit the Annual Report may result in a Rule To Show Cause filed against the utility.

If you have any questions or need an extension to file that is less than 30 days after the due date, please contact our office with your request. If the utility needs an extension to file that is greater than 30 days after the due date, a letter of request must be submitted to the Public Service Commission.

Water/Wastewater Workshop A Success



Dawn Hipp, Director of Telecommunications, Transportation, Water/Wastewater, gives her presentation on billing innovations.

The workshop that was held on January 31 offered a variety of speakers on various topics. The theme of the workshop was “Managing Water Production and Disposal”. Topics included billing innovations, customer account security and privacy, energy conservation and preparedness, sanitary sewer overflows/advisories, and rate application preparation/asset management. Special speakers included PSC Chairman David Wright and ORS Executive Director Dukes Scott, who welcomed attendees. Other speakers included staff from the Department of Health and Environmental Control, the ORS, and the State Energy Office. If you are interested in viewing the presentations, they can be found on the ORS website under the Water and Wastewater tab.

Boil Water Advisory or Boil Water Notice?

Customers may not realize there is a difference between a boil water notice and a boil water advisory. Sonya Johnson, Water Program Manager for SCDHEC Region 3 EQC, offered these explanations: “An advisory is more for precaution when an event has occurred which could have possibly contaminated the drinking water. It has not been confirmed by lab testing; rather, it may be due to line break where dirt or debris has entered the distribution piping or pressure dropping below 10 psi, no water, or loss of pre-treatment at a surface water plant. A boil water advisory can be issued by the Department or the owner or operator of a public water system, notifying the users of the water system that the water **MAY BE** contaminated and to boil the water.

A Notice is confirmed with laboratory testing that a sample has been analyzed as positive and that there is a threat to public health. Particularly with routine monitoring, in the case of any fecal positive (E.coli) or repeat samples continually coming back positive even after treatment, a boil water notice can be issued by the Department or the owner or operator of a public water system, notifying the users that the water **IS** contaminated and to boil the water.”

She also suggested various ways to inform the customers of the boil water advisory or notice including:

- Group Email (include staff, board members, council)
- News Media TV/Website
- Phone Notification
- Reverse 911
- Door hangers
- Posting signs on stakes
- TEXT
- Alert Radio
- Utility Website

Advise customers as soon as possible when the utility is aware of possible contamination and be prepared for customer calls and concerns. Quickly correct the problem and keep the customers updated during the process of making the repairs. Most importantly, advise customers when the notice or advisory has been lifted.

The Audit Corner

Does Your Utility Have An Asset Management Plan?

What is an Asset Management Plan?

A written plan showing how to manage infrastructure capital assets while providing adequate service at the lowest life-cycle costs.

What is the lowest life-cycle cost?

The lowest life-cycle cost refers to rehabilitating, repairing or replacing an asset at the lowest possible cost that will enable a utility to provide satisfactory service.

What are the benefits of having an Asset Management Plan?

- Prolonged asset life
- Proper asset cost recovery
- Setting rates on accurate Plant-in-Service
- Meeting service expectations and regulatory requirements
- Reducing operating costs and capital expenditures

What are best practices for Asset Management?

- Maintain adequate continuing property records
- Capitalize items properly
- Implement a preventative maintenance plan
- Secure proper source documents for assets
- Pay property taxes and secure title to all assets
- Establish appropriate asset retirement plan



Is an Asset Management Plan a requirement?

- A written plan is recommended by the ORS as an efficient and effective way to account for, maintain, and retire capital assets.
- NARUC and the ORS require maintaining continuing property records and a work order system, both integral parts of asset management.

Sources - http://water.epa.gov/infrastructure/sustain/asset_management.cfm
NARUC Uniform System of Accounts for Water and Wastewater Utilities.

How Small Systems Can Develop An Effective Asset Management Program

The January 2013 issue of *Opflow* includes an article highlighting the benefits of an asset management program for small systems. This five-step program will determine if the assets are working properly or need maintenance to prolong their use.

Step 1: Create a program by maintaining all plant records and create an inventory of the assets. Include information such as age, condition, and location of inventory to keep track of the records.

Step 2: Inventory the assets to determine if any replacement or repairs are needed.

Step 3: Prioritize assets to determine if there are multiple pieces of the same equipment, the function of the equipment, and the remaining useful life.

Step 4: Develop a plan to determine when the current assets should be replaced and the amount of money needed to replace them.

Step 5: Implement the plan and review it frequently for needed updates.

Maintaining a utility's assets contributes to the overall financial impact by reducing repairs and providing quality service to the customers.

Cite: Copeland, A. (2013, January). Can a small system develop an effective asset management program? *Opflow*, 39(1), 6-7.

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Published by the South Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff
1401 Main Street, Suite 900
Columbia, South Carolina 29201
Phone: (803) 737-0800
Fax: (803) 737-0801
Hannah Majewski, Editor
Willie J. Morgan, P.E., Co-Editor

Submit all articles or suggestions to: hmajews@regstaff.sc.gov

C. Dukes Scott, Executive Director
Dan F. Arnett, Chief of Staff
Dawn M. Hipp, Director of Telecommunications, Transportation, Water/Wastewater
www.regulatorystaff.sc.gov