

# ACWA JPIA COVID-19 PANDEMIC FAQs Business Continuity/Continuity of Operations



## **Are water and wastewater workers considered essential?**

Yes, Department of Homeland Security and California Office of Emergency Services have identified water and wastewater systems as critical infrastructure. Therefore, all employees needed to effectively operate, manage, and support the agencies Mission Essential Functions are considered essential.

### ***Information/Resources:***

[Cal OES Critical Infrastructure Protection](#)

## **How do I determine Mission Essential Functions for my agency?**

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) states that a “Continuity Plan” should identify the components, processes, and requirements that ensure the continued performance of the organizations essential functions. A Continuity Plan should identify and prioritize the Mission Essential Functions (MEFs) of the utility. Generally, MEFs for a utility are a limited set of the utility’s functions that need to be continued throughout, or resumed rapidly following, a disruption of normal operations.

The reasons that a function may be essential are:

- The loss of the function would result in a threat to public health, safety, or will result in widespread system disruption.
- Irreparable damage to infrastructure or business will occur if the function is not performed.
- The function must be performed to adhere to federal, state, or local law.

The Water Research Foundation (WRF), in partnership with the EPA and The American Water Works Association (AWWA), developed the Business Continuity Planning for Water Utilities: Guidance Document, training video, and template to assist water utilities in the development of their plan.

### ***Information/Resources:***

[WRF Business Continuity Planning for Water Utilities: Guidance Document](#)

[WRF Business Continuity Plan Training: Video Modules](#)

[WRF Continuity Plan Template](#)

This fact sheet is not intended to be exhaustive. The discussion and best practices suggested herein should not be regarded as legal advice. Readers should pursue legal counsel or contact their insurance providers to gain more exhaustive advice.

<https://www.acwajpia.com/covid-19-info/>

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