



MISSISSIPPI STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Date: 4/1/2020

To: Officials and Operators of Public Water Systems

From: MS State Department of Health
Bureau of Public Water Supply

In response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Bureau felt the need to provide an update regarding the operational concerns and or processes that have been modified in the ongoing response.

Mississippi Public Health Laboratory – Environmental Sampling:

All essential laboratory services required for the state's public water systems are still available and will continue to be provided as needed throughout the pandemic response. The process for submission of samples has not changed, and the courier service from the county to the central office is still in operation. The individual county health departments have taken steps to reduce the flow of people at their locations to minimize contact with individuals. However, if there are instances where you feel safety is a concern, we suggest calling ahead with those county offices to arrange a brief exchange for the drop-off of samples or obtaining bottles for sample collection.

Operator Certification and Continuing Education Unit (CEU) Hours:

With the COVID-19 response, many operators have been expressing concerns about obtaining the necessary CEUs needed to renew their certification. While the number of operators finding themselves lacking the required number of CEUs is small at this time, there are training opportunities available online that have been approved by the department. These include: www.aypotech.com, www.ceuplan.org, www.wateroperator.thinkific.com, and Sun Coast Learning Systems through MS Rural Water Association. If circumstances prevent utilization of these resources prior to your certification expiring, please contact the Bureau for assistance and guidance. Please see the operator training

calendar for updates at <https://msdh.ms.gov/> under “Meetings and Calendars” for any training cancellations or new trainings that are now or will be available.

Performing Operator Duties:

In previous correspondence, it was noted that by federal guidance and through an executive order from the Governor Reeves that operators and their employees could not be prevented from carrying out their duties in the operation of their water supplies. Considering the seriousness of the situation that the nation, state, and local governments are facing and its associated impacts, your system should have a plan for continuity of operations. In the event that personnel are unable to continue to work due to illness, vital services must continue. Please ensure that your water system is prepared to carry on operations if personnel become compromised due to illness. Additionally, operations personnel should be reaching out to the local county Emergency Operations Center to inform officials of your status as a utility and obtaining any needed credentials to ensure freedom of movement of personnel to maintain the water system.

For other updates visit our website.

MS State Department of Health www.HealthyMS.com
or <http://HealthyMS.com/covid-19>

Bureau of Public Water Supply emergency/after hours (769)-798-4258

Normal business hours 8am-5pm (601) 576-7518