Cybersecurity Readiness

New Requirements and Funding for New York's Drinking Water & Wastewater Systems

October 2026

SECURING THE FUTURE OF NEW YORK WATER UTILITIES

In March 2026, the NYS Department of Health (DOH) and Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) amended cybersecurity standards to strengthen digital procedures and protocols for drinking water and wastewater systems. Cybersecurity protects the operational technology (OT) and information technology (IT) systems that manage critical infrastructure and protect sensitive data. In New York State, water and wastewater systems ("water utilities") use OT and IT systems to control water treatment and distribution, to protect customer information, and to track inventory. These water utilities are increasingly at risk of being manipulated by **hackers**, who exploit OT/IT system vulnerabilities like default passwords, unsecured remote access, and outdated security practices.

> WATER UTILITIES ARE AT RISK OF BEING MANIPULATED BY HACKERS, WHO EXPLOIT ... DEFAULT PASSWORDS, UNSECURED REMOTE ACCESS, AND OUTDATED SECURITY PRACTICES.

As the digital landscape continues to evolve, water utilities must stay ahead of emerging security and privacy risks. The new DOH drinking water regulations and DEC wastewater regulations advance water utility safeguards against cyberattacks and breaches, protecting NYS water systems and networks from unauthorized access and usage.

Syracuse University College of Engineering & Computer Science
Environmental Finance Center

ACCELERATING ACCESS TO FUNDING
in EPA Region 2

NEW YORK STATE WATER RESOURCES INSTITUTE
Cornell University

DEC & DOH Requirements for Utilities

VISIT DOH & DEC WEBSITES

Access regulations, guidelines, and resources online.

DOH Cybersecurity for Public Water Systems

DEC Wastewater Cybersecurity Resources

FOR WASTEWATER

According to NYS DEC, wastewater utilities must:

- Complete cybersecurity training courses as part of required training hours every 5 years. **Operators have until January 1, 2027 to be in compliance.**
- State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) permittees must orally report incidents within 24 hours & submit written report in 30 days
- Require Publicly Owned Treatment Works (POTWs) to include a cybersecurity Incident Response Plan (IRP) in emergency response planning and establish procedures for access control and authentication

IS YOUR WATER UTILITY PREPARED TO RESPOND TO A CYBER THREAT?

Check out the NYS EFC Cybersecurity Hub for no-cost guidance and support, so you can interpret and implement DEC and DOH cybersecurity regulations and best practices.

FOR DRINKING WATER

NYS DOH's cybersecurity requirements apply to community drinking water systems serving more than 3,300 people, with some provisions for utilities that serve more than 50,000 people.

Effective immediately, drinking water utilities must:

- Report cybersecurity *incidents* within 24 hours
- Complete minimum of one hour of cybersecurity training for utility operators once every 3 years

Effective January 1, 2027, utilities must:

- Report cybersecurity *vulnerabilities* that impact compliance within 48 hours
- Annually review and update cybersecurity vulnerability assessments (CVA)
- Integrate an incident response plan (IRP) into the emergency response plan (ERP)
- Establish a cybersecurity program outlining personnel, activities, and policies and procedures

Additional provisions for utilities that serve >50,000 customers include: (eff. Jan 2027)

- Designating personnel to monitor and log network activity,
- Designating personnel to implement the cybersecurity program,
- And certifying the cybersecurity program every 5 years along with the ERP.

NYS EFC Cybersecurity Hub

https://efc.ny.gov/cybersecurity-hub

A LANDMARK CYBERSECURITY FUNDING PROGRAM

Funding Opportunities

The SECURE Grant Program (Strengthening Essential Cybersecurity for Utilities and Resiliency Enhancements) offers **$2.5 million** in funding for clean water and drinking water systems in NYS. SECURE hosts two competitive grants — the **Assessment Grant** and the **Implementation Grant** — for eligible municipalities and municipal entities, tribes and qualified authorities.

	Assessment Grant	Implementation Grant
	Supports utilities in assessing and reporting cybersecurity vulnerabilities and mitigation strategies.	Supports utilities in deploying cybersecurity and privacy upgrades.
Funding Limit	$50,000 0% match	$100,000 Up to 20% net costs
Eligible Activities	✓ Third-party risk assessment ✓ Penetration testing ✓ Network reviews ✓ Asset inventories ✓ Implementation roadmaps	✓ Security equipment ✓ IRP and Continuity of Operation Plans ✓ Deployment of other cybersecurity measures ✗ Subscription-based software products

HOW TO APPLY

Details on future funding cycles can be found on the Cybersecurity Hub on the NYS EFC webpage at https://efc.ny.gov/cybersecurity-hub.

Once open, apply online via the NYS EFC Portal at https://portal.efc.ny.gov/.

- ***Note:*** *Implementation Grant Applicants are required to submit a completed cybersecurity assessment report that addresses system risks and mitigation priorities.*

ADDITIONAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF): State administered program that can fund cybersecurity practices and measures for wastewater utilities.

https://www.epa.gov/cwsrf/supporting-cybersecurity-measures-clean-water-state-revolving-fund

Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF): State administered program that can fund cybersecurity practices and measures for drinking water utilities.

https://www.epa.gov/dwsrf/supporting-cybersecurity-measures-dwsrf

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG): Federal program from NYS Homes and Community Renewal (HCR) that can support cybersecurity improvement efforts for water utilities, particularly for smaller, low-to-moderate income communities.

https://hcr.ny.gov/community-development-block-grant

NEED HELP NAVIGATING REGULATION CHANGES AND FUNDING OPTIONS?

*ACCESS EXPERT GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT AT **NO-COST***

CONTACT THE NYS EFC COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE TEAMS

These support teams are coordinated by NYS EFC in partnership with the New York State Departments of Environmental Conservation, Health, and State, as well as the Division of Homes and Community Renewal.

efc.ny.gov/cat

REQUEST HELP TODAY FROM THE SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENTAL FINANCE CENTER

Our team of experts offer a full range of services that are available at no cost to communities throughout NYS. Learn more and request help today by visiting our website.

efc.syr.edu

LEARN MORE BY VISITNG EPA'S CYBERSECURITY RESOURCE PAGE FOR THE WATER SECTOR

The EPA's Cybersecurity Resources for Drinking Water and Wastewater Systems assists utilities with assessment, planning, and response. Learn more by visiting their website.

epa.gov/cyberwater

Accelerating Access to Funding, led by the Syracuse University Environmental Finance Center (SU-EFC), delivers expanded assistance and customized solutions to communities throughout U.S. EPA Region 2, leveraging the expertise and resources of our team of providers. Understanding that communities all have unique challenges and needs, SU-EFC brings together a team of experts to offer tailored solutions that align with the goals of your community. Together, we provide comprehensive support to address water infrastructure needs, set priorities, develop shovel-worthy projects, and apply for federal and state funding.

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