



85th Annual Conference & Exhibits

MiWARN – Michigan’s Water
and Wastewater Response
Network

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BA83

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a better Michigan through
better water

“Michigan Ice Breaker”



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WARN Background

- The events of 9/11, Hurricane Katrina and Rita in 2005 and severe flooding in New England and the Midwest in 2007 showed there was a need for water and wastewater systems to share resources to overcome disasters.
- Jackson, Mississippi floods in 2022 reinforced the need for intra-state and interstate aid agreements.

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WARN Mission

- The mission of WARN is to provide expedited access to specialized resources needed to respond to and recover from natural and human caused events that disrupt public and private drinking water and wastewater utilities.

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EPA's Support of WARN's

- Promote the establishment of intrastate mutual aid agreements.
- Support individual WARN's by providing tools and technical assistance.
- Support Department of Homeland Security Requirements for compliance with the National Incident Management System.



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So what is MiWARN?

- Water and Wastewater Agency Response Network (WARN) is a state-wide network of utilities and public works agencies in Michigan assisting one another to respond to and recover from major emergencies
- Part of the National WARN through EPA – intrastate and interstate
- Mutual Aid Assistance Network – To share resources and to assist each other in the form of personnel, equipment, material and supplies in the event of an emergencies that disrupt utility services
- Participation is voluntary
- There is no obligation to respond
- There is no cost to join



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Who Guides MiWARN?

- The MiWARN Steering Committee exists to create and maintain a formal system for utilities and public works agencies state-wide that provide mutual aid to one another during major emergencies

Who Can Join MiWARN?

- Any public or private:
- Water System
 - Wastewater System
 - Public Works Agency



MiWARN has 8 Regions



- 54 members across the 8 Regions
- We are looking for members who would be willing to lead regional sections
- Regional Leads help coordinate regular meetings within their Region and provide feedback to the Steering Committee regarding regional needs
- Contact Tim or I if you may be interested



WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF MiWARN?

- There is no cost to join
- Expedites arrival of aid during an emergency by providing a single agreement that can be utilized by all member utilities statewide.
- MiWARN agreement contains indemnification and worker's compensation provision to protect participating members and provide reimbursement protocols
- Provides access to drinking water and wastewater professionals with specialized training and resources.
- Reduces administrative conflicts by providing an approved agreement that a requesting and lending utility can use during an emergency
- Enhances emergency preparedness and coordination
- Access to emergency training opportunities

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FEMA Reimbursable Activities

- It is important to understand how the FEMA programs work and understand how they apply to mutual aid in advance
- Some key considerations for FEMA reimbursement include:
 - The assistance is requested by the FEMA Applicant
 - The work performed is directly related to the disaster and is otherwise eligible for FEMA assistance
 - The entity can provide documentation of rates and payment for services (in the MiWARN database)
 - The MiWARN agreement is signed and was in effect **prior** to the disaster
 - Support during the first 72 hours of the emergency

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Common Questions – Part 1

- How are requests for assistance made?
 - These can be made in writing or verbally directly to MiWARN members or through the website network
 - Requests must be made between authorized MiWARN members
 - Make sure your community authorized member data is up to date with MiWARN!
- What can be requested?
 - Requests can be made for labor/personnel, equipment and material supplies needed for emergency
- Am I required to send assistance?
 - No member is required to assist
 - If you are able to assist, the responder defines what resources it is able to send and when
 - If sending resources undermines your own operations, you do not have to send any resources
- How do I track the resources I sent?
 - Resources sent should be tracked via National Incident Management System (NIMS) documentation (allows for potential FEMA reimbursement)

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Common Questions – Part 2

- Can I recall my resources if I need them back?
 - Yes. Resources sent by the responder remain under the control of the responder and can be called back at any time.
- What happens if equipment you send gets damaged or stolen?
 - The mutual aid agreement addresses this:
 - “In the event the Responding Member’s equipment is damaged during the Period of Recovery that is not caused by carelessness, negligence or operator error on the part of the Responding member, the Requesting Member shall reimburse the Responding Member for the repair or replacement of the damaged equipment.”

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During the Emergency, the Requesting Member is responsible for.....

- Providing food and shelter for respondents
- Communicating, planning and status information to responding members
- Permits and licensing
- Reimbursing the responding member for – material and personnel costs plus equipment costs on minimum rate as detailed by FEMA schedule of equipment rates

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Possible WARN Events in Michigan

- Snow and Ice Storms
- Wind Storms and Tornadoes
- Floods
- Acts of Terrorism
- Watermain Breaks
- Sewer Sinkholes

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Recent Events

- Numerous events over the past 10 years where WARN was involved or could have been involved (Michigan and Nationally):
 - Dexter Tornado - 2012
 - Super Storm Sandy in New Jersey – 2013
 - Grand Rapids Flooding – 2013
 - Rochester Hills Tornado – 2014
 - Upper Peninsula Flooding – 2018
 - Midland County Dam Failures - 2020
 - COVID Face Mask distribution – 2020/2021
 - Battle Creek Watermain Break – 2023
 - Lower Peninsula Tornado Outbreak – August 2023

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Additional WARN Resources

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mY60rFDvoyl>
- [Mutual Aid and Assistance for Drinking Water and Wastewater Utilities | US EPA](#)

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MiWARN Summary

- MiWARN is for all sizes of Water and Wastewater systems.
 - Smaller systems have pooled resources in the past to help on larger requests
- MiWARN is not expensive. You only pay for the services you receive in an emergency and there is no membership fee.
- There is no legal cost in signing the MiWARN membership agreement as all agreements have had legal review and standard templates developed.
- You are not obligated to send resources at any time and you control your resources at all times.
- MiWARN membership does not preclude Systems from participating in other mutual aid agreements or utilizing resources from contractors or associations.
- MiWARN meets all State and Federal requirements

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NOT A QUESTION OF IF, BUT WHEN



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THANK YOU!

- For further information, please visit the Michigan WARN website at:
www.miwarn.org
- To sign up, please see us in person or contact us directly.
 - wjernberg@grcity.us
 - tneumann@mrwa.net

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