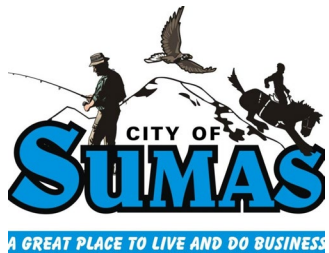




EMERGENCY RESPONSE, DISASTER PREPAREDNESS: EXCERPTS FROM A CASE STUDY – SUMAS, 2021



Office of Drinking Water, Sumas Public Works



Why Are We Learning About Disasters?



2021 Flood Case Study

Lessons Learned from Nov. 2021 Floods



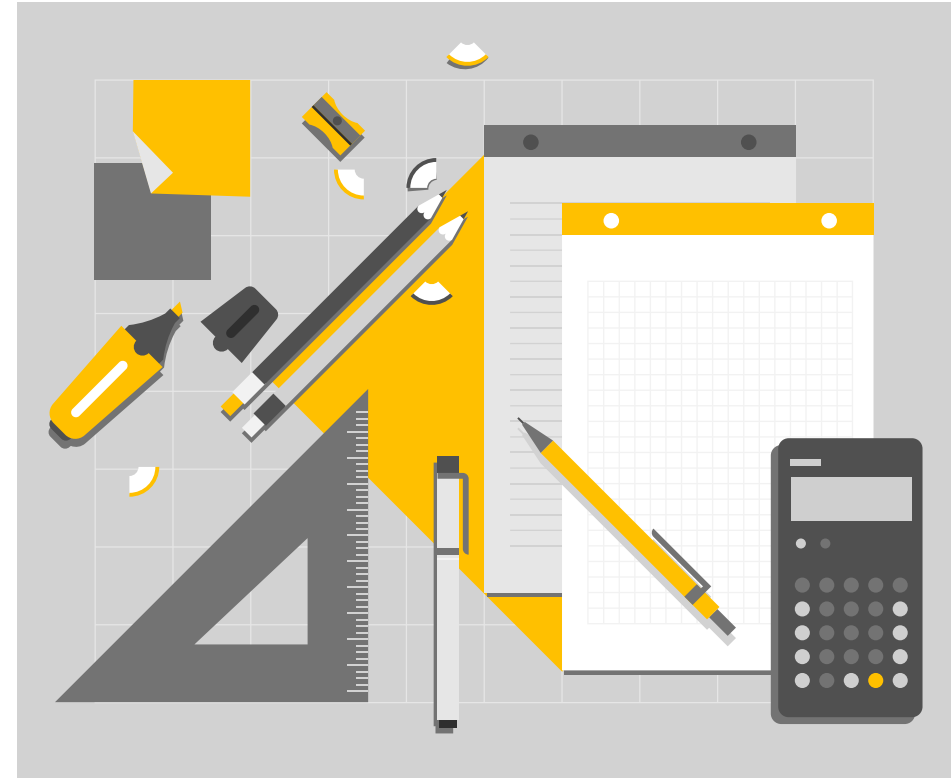
Photo: City of Sumas Staff

- **Conduct yearly maintenance:** exercise valves, flush pipes, spray grass, and put reflectors on valves to see them at night.
- **Train new operators:** have them walk the system and exercise valves/flush so they learn the system quickly.
- **Know your partners:** communication between partners
- **Cross train:** energy, water and wastewater allowed for an effective utilization of staff. Have strong contacts. Sumas had two mechanics on call.
- **What changes/improvements are you planning?**

What DOH Does During an Emergency

- Assist with boil water advisories
- Assist with public messaging and media
- Link external agencies together
- Engage more resources
- Technical assistance

We also encourage emergency response planning BEFORE emergencies happen.





The DOH Response Process



Informal

- Reach out to the Office of Drinking Water anytime.
- We can provide technical assistance, help troubleshoot, or help you activate the formal process.
- Call ODW's Emergency Pager number if there's a pressure outage after hours:
1-877-481-4901.

- It never hurts to engage the informal process first.

Formal

- Utility, City, and County exhaust their resources. Then State and Federal.
- A formal chain of command gets established – Incident Command.
- State EOC works with DOH and the utility.

How Can Your Utility Get Help?



Photo: Sumas staff

- Ask for it.
- Start with the County.
- If you don't ask, they may not realize that you're having a problem.
- Communicate informally often.
- Call ODW's Emergency Pager number if there's a pressure outage after hours:
1-877-481-4901.
- Plan. Plan. PLAN!!



WA WARN

Photo: Sumas staff

WA WARN: Utilities Helping Utilities



Photo: WA WARN

- Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network.
- Organization of utilities that help other utilities respond to emergencies.
 - Equipment
 - Personnel
- Utilities sign the WARN standard agreement which allows them to share resources.
- A single agreement provides access to all member utilities statewide (currently 193 members in WA).
- No cost to become a member.

<https://wawarn.org/>

WA WARN Benefits:

- Increased emergency preparedness and coordination.
- Access to specialized resources.
- Connection with people, borrowed equipment, or even a strike team to set up your paperwork for FEMA.
- FEMA may ask if you've exhausted WA WARN resources.
- Using WA WARN may help maximize insurance payouts.



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What have you done to prepare for emergencies?