



Asset Management and Potable Reuse Tool Kit

February 21, 2023

*Florida's trusted source of
clean wastewater and
protectors of the
environment.*

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Communication Action Plan

Moments of Opportunity

FWEAUC's member utilities lead the way at the state, regional, and local levels to deliver innovative and reliable wastewater solutions. This unique position offers FWEAUC's member utilities, in partnership with legislators, regulators, and educators, the opportunity to share customized and timely messaging with a variety of audiences.

Introducing proactive statewide moments of opportunity will support FWEAUC's member utilities by increasing awareness of important issues facing the industry, providing a unified voice, and showing the impact utilities have on Floridians and our state's natural resources.

The chart below highlights at-a-glance moments of opportunity for FWEAUC and its member utilities. These moments should complement, not compete with the statewide utility efforts.

Month	Issue/Topic	Audience	Approach
January/ February (or committee weeks)	Key Issues (TBD each year)	Legislators	One-on-one meetings with Legislators
March (or following Session)	Legislative wins impacting users/customers	Customers/ Key Audiences	Media event at the capitol to discuss outcomes of legislation - unveil FWEAUC policy statement for Asset Management and Potable Reuse Send Session updates to Utilities for dissemination to key audiences.
TBD	FWEAUC Board meetings	FWEAUC members	Templated update capturing Board business that can be shared with current FWEAUC members featuring updates on agenda items.
May	Hurricane Season Prep	Media/ Everyone	Show and tell. Show a wastewater treatment plant and tell audience what has been done to prepare. This can be done in partnership with a local utility and include a statewide message.
June	World Environment Day	Media	Focus: How utilities across the state are protectors of the environment-Local appeal with a statewide approach?
TBD	Wastewater Professionals Appreciation Day	General Public	FWEAUC to proclaim Wastewater Professionals Week and provide a tool kit to utilities with ideas and resources to honor these professionals. This effort will elevate the profession and assist with recruitment efforts.

Crisis Communications Best Practices

For the millions of Floridians who rely on clean, safe, and affordable wastewater, FWEAUC has the responsibility to have a crisis communications strategy in place to be prepared for a variety of statewide issues that can arise. Understanding best practices, roles and responsibilities, audiences, and procedures will assist the organization with transparency and being recognized as a trusted source of clean wastewater and a protector of the environment.

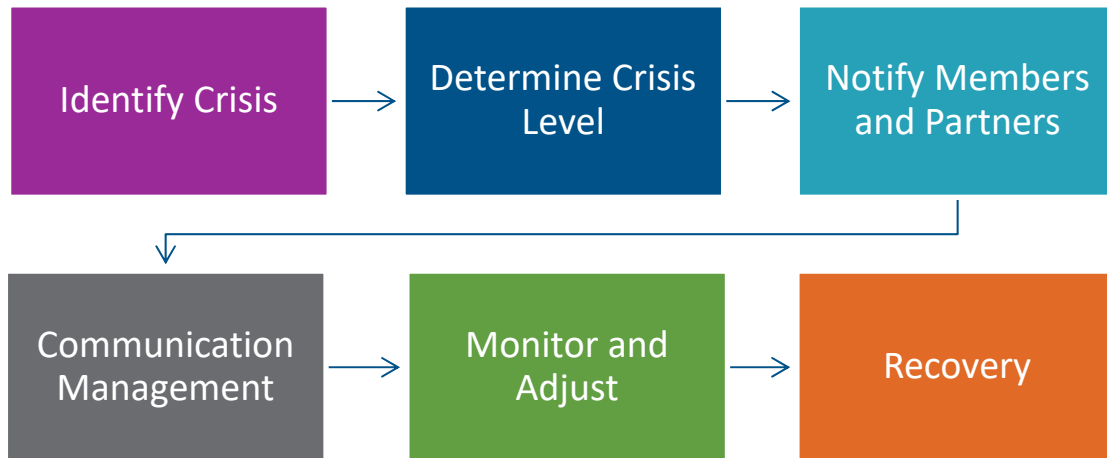
The following are best practices that apply to all crisis situations.

- **Time is of the essence.** It's important to get ahead of the issue so FWEAUC can control the message. Delays in communication can come across as non-transparent.
- Sometimes you may have to respond before all information is available. Make sure to **balance timeliness with accuracy.**
- Communicate with **one, clear and consistent voice.** Stick to your key messages and talking points.
- Your spokesperson designation sets the tone for crisis communication.
- Avoid censoring criticism. Avoid a defensive tone.
- **Express empathy.** Acknowledge the feelings people might experience (for example, "This is a stressful time.").
- **Be helpful.** Provide relevant, up-to-date information using simple, easy-to-understand phrasing. Share official, verified information that provides clear direction and aligns with other authorities' messages.
- **Use plain language.** Use words that are easy to understand, free of jargon and acronyms to meet the needs of people of various age groups, education levels, cultural backgrounds, etc.
- **Avoid clichés.** These are phrases that have become meaningless through repeated use.
- Promote action. Highlight **specific things people can do** to take charge of their situation and stay safe. Keep this information simple to avoid overwhelming audience members.
- **Promote collaboration.** Emphasize teamwork and the importance of a whole-community effort for effective disaster response and recovery. Share information and reference community partners.
- **Conduct practice regular drills,** tabletop exercises, and other opportunities to test and refine the overall crisis response.
- **Protocols are key** to efficient implementation and resolution.
- Communicate frequently in predictable intervals.

Roles and Responsibilities

The best time to prepare for a crisis is before it happens. By understanding the crisis communications process and establishing a team with clearly defined roles and responsibilities, FWEAUC will be positioned to respond to a variety of crises in a timely and efficient manner.

Overview of the crisis communications process:



Each year, the FWEAUC board will appoint members to serve in crisis communications leadership positions. The chart below will be updated each year as appropriate.

Role	Responsibility	Appointee
Identify Crisis	Become aware of or identify a crisis and contacts the board president	FWEAUC members
Determine Crisis Level	Assess the situation and determine if FWEAUC will become engaged in the crisis and in what capacity	Board President, Public Messaging Chair and other board members as needed
Develop/Issue a Holding Response Statement	Craft a holding statement using basic information while further information gathering, and verification occurs	Public Messaging Chair or their designee. This individual will be the point of contact.
Information Gathering	Gain additional information including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What happened and where? ▪ When did this happen? ▪ Who is involved? ▪ How did it happen? 	Public Messaging Chair or designees

Role	Responsibility	Appointee
Verification of Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What is currently being done? <p>Verify information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do you have all the facts (to the best of your knowledge)? ▪ What other information do you need to put the event into perspective? ▪ Has the situation been confirmed? ▪ Was your information source(s) credible? ▪ Is information consistent from several sources? 	Public Messaging Chair or designee
Notification of Members	Prior to release of follow up statement, FWEAUC members will be notified by email as to the council's position	Board President or designee
Notification of Partners	If needed, FWEAUC partners will be notified by email related to the council's position	Board President of designee
Communication Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Issue statement ▪ Provide updates to board president ▪ Identify if additional messages are needed to resonate with other audiences 	Public Messaging Chair of designee
Monitor and Adjust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monitor crisis and provide updated/adjusted messaging as needed ▪ Maintain crisis inquiry log. This will assist with follow up and serve as an opportunity to build relationships with statewide media 	Public Messaging Chair of designee
Recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Update members and partners when the crisis moved from response to recovery ▪ Provide a summary for the crisis and the council's response ▪ Debrief on the effectiveness and efficiency of the response ▪ Acknowledge and thank all those involved in the crisis 	Public Messaging Chair of designee

Fact Sheets

WASTEWATER ASSET MANAGEMENT

FLORIDA WATER ENVIRONMENT ASSOCIATION UTILITY COUNCIL (FWEAUC)

Wastewater infrastructure includes things you see each day and some things you may not see, like:



WATER RECLAMATION FACILITIES



SEWER PIPES



MANHOLES



VALVES



PUMP STATIONS

And, while you may not think about the wastewater you produce every day or until there is an issue with your service, customers should always know that utilities are proactively taking steps to reduce issues before they arise.

LEARN THE TERM:

WASTEWATER ASSET MANAGEMENT

Wastewater asset management is the term used for proactively maintaining, replacing, upgrading, and securing our critical wastewater infrastructure to keep the utility running.

Asset management is especially important because it makes utilities more **resilient** and able to serve their customers more quickly following natural disasters. In Florida, there are unique environmental challenges such as hurricanes, high annual rainfall, and sea level rise that can have significant impacts on a utility's infrastructure. Flooding from storm surge or severe rainfall events can cause stormwater to infiltrate the wastewater system resulting in system overflows. Proper asset management helps a utility to **proactively** identify potential vulnerabilities within a system before a problem occurs and can also reduce the amount of time needed for a system to be brought back online.

While it is not possible to eliminate these problems completely, utilities follow these proactive approaches to **increase resiliency, reduce the number and severity of issues, and ensure the long-term viability of a community's wastewater system.**

CUSTOMER BENEFITS:

- ✔ Reliability
- + Resiliency
- \$ Affordability

INVESTMENT INTO THE FUTURE

Providing utility services to any community is a large and complex task. In fact, a new water reclamation facility or other infrastructure can cost a community tens of millions of dollars. However, the cost of proper asset management is far less than replacing or rebuilding a facility.

By investing in proper asset management, Florida utilities are minimizing maintenance expenses and operational costs, ultimately enhancing customer affordability and reliability.

HOW CUSTOMERS CAN HELP

Customers can help with their own asset management and help reduce outages or increased maintenance costs (which may be passed to the customer in their rates) by:



Being mindful of what is put down a drain, such as food debris, fats, oils, and grease



Never flushing any type of wipes or other items down the toilet



Never disposing of medicine down the drain or in the toilet

These are harmful to the utility system and can clog pipes and pump stations, requiring expensive repairs and maintenance, and contaminants like pharmaceuticals can be difficult to remove during the water reclamation process.

LEARN MORE:

For more information on how UTILITY NAME is helping to provide exceptional value to their customers, please call NUMBER, email EMAIL ADDRESS, or follow UTILITY NAME on social media at INCLUDE SPECIFIC UTILITY SOCIAL MEDIA HANDLES.

POTABLE WATER REUSE

FLORIDA WATER ENVIRONMENT ASSOCIATION UTILITY COUNCIL (FWEAUC)

Our drinking water is consistently supplied by Florida's surface waters and groundwaters. The demand for these two water sources continues to grow, impacting their natural ecology. Every day, nearly 1,000 people move to the state of Florida, putting an increased strain on the supply of the state's most precious resource: **drinking water.**

Each day, about **1.5B** gallons of wastewater travels through sewers and pipelines to one of Florida's **~2,100** wastewater treatment plants

From there, **900M** gallons of "reclaimed water" are created for use each day in safe, non-drinking applications such as:

- Residential irrigation
- Recharging drinking water aquifers
- Power plant cooling
- Restoring wetlands
- And more
- Aesthetic fountains

• Recharging drinking water aquifers

• And more

While Florida is a national leader in the use of reclaimed water, much of the state's drinking water still ends up being used for irrigation, which puts an added burden on our available water supply.

With technological advancements, there are now several innovative ways to purify a portion of the 1.5 billion gallons of wastewater that goes through treatment facilities every day. This is an opportunity for utilities to get the most value out of our reclaimed water and provide a new source for the production of safe drinking water.

RECYCLING OUR MOST PRECIOUS RESOURCE


Reclaimed water has emerged as a viable alternative water supply resource, and in many places, reclaimed water will help ensure the sustainability of Florida's environmental ecosystem while supplying the community's drinking water needs.

WHAT IS POTABLE WATER?


The water that we use to drink and prepare food is called potable water. Potable water has been treated to meet and/or exceed state and federal standards for safety. Potable water is treated extensively to remove microorganisms, bacteria, toxic chemicals, viruses, and fecal matter. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection estimates Floridians consume about 64 billion gallons of potable water every day from fresh and salty water sources with varying levels of treatment that include underground aquifers, lakes, rivers, and, in some places, even the Gulf of Mexico via Tampa Bay.

WHAT IS POTABLE WATER?

There are two types of potable water reuse processes that can take reclaimed water and make it safe for consumption:



Indirect Potable Reuse
Uses an environmental buffer, such as a lake, river, or a groundwater aquifer to help "filter" the water before it is treated at a drinking water treatment plant.



Direct Potable Reuse
Involves the treatment and distribution of water without an environmental buffer.

INVESTMENT INTO THE FUTURE

Potable reuse provides a **safe and sustainable** drinking water source and also **reduces environmental stressors** that have negative impacts on our natural ecology.

The process of sending reclaimed water to a treatment facility for advanced purification is expensive, but it can be far less costly than wasting the water, pumping it in from afar when it becomes scarce, and impacting groundwater and aquifer levels. If water is not recycled and ultimately becomes scarce, utility rates may increase as the utility's cost to supply water will increase.

WHAT CUSTOMERS SHOULD KNOW

Every year, water utilities are required to perform thousands of tests to ensure drinking water is safe and of the highest quality. Through innovative solutions to recycle water, utilities across Florida are able to thoroughly and efficiently treat water, ensuring it is safe and clean to drink. These solutions allow utilities to keep rates for consumers down in the long run and ensure our most precious resource is conserved for generations to come.

Utilities/cities/counties listed below have begun testing treatment methods for potable reuse applications in their communities:

- ▲ JEA
- ▲ Hillsborough County
- ▲ City of Clearwater
- ▲ City of Tampa
- ▲ City of Plant City
- ▲ City of Altamonte Springs
- ▲ Palm Beach County
- ▲ City of Daytona Beach

Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) is currently modernizing their current indirect potable reuse regulations and developing new direct potable reuse regulations to establish common and reliable treatment requirements that all utilities can follow.

POTABLE REUSE CUSTOMER BENEFITS:

- \$ Affordability
- ♻️ Sustainable Impacts
- 💧 Safe Water Source

LEARN MORE:

For more information on how UTILITY NAME is helping to provide exceptional value to their customers, please call NUMBER, email EMAIL ADDRESS, or follow UTILITY NAME on social media at INCLUDE SPECIFIC UTILITY SOCIAL MEDIA HANDLES.

Graphic Assets



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Never disposing of medicine down the drain or in the toilet

CUSTOMER BENEFITS:



Reliability



Resiliency



Affordability



WATER RECLAMATION FACILITIES



SEWER PIPES



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VALVES



PUMP STATIONS

POTABLE REUSE CUSTOMER BENEFITS:



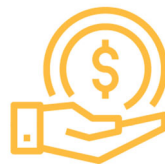
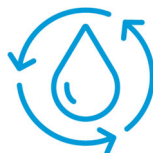
Affordability



Sustainable Impacts



Safe Water Source





**Florida Water
Environment
Association**

UTILITY COUNCIL

wef Member Association