

EPA's Water Laboratory Alliance: A Powerful Resource for State Primacy Agencies

Overview

The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) launch of the Water Laboratory Alliance (WLA) marks a dynamic effort to equip the nation's Water Sector with a means to process a surge of drinking water samples during an emergency event. The WLA is comprised of laboratories across the country with expertise in responding to water contamination incidents such as natural, accidental, or intentional contamination occurrences.

The launch of the WLA coincided with the second phase roll-out of EPA's Environmental Response Laboratory Network (ERLN). The WLA is an integral part of the ERLN and focuses on water; the ERLN also addresses other environmental matrices, including air and soil.

How is the Water Laboratory Alliance an opportunity for state primacy agencies?

While state drinking water primacy agencies cannot themselves become members of the WLA, primacy agencies will benefit from the WLA in several ways:

- First, primacy agencies will benefit as laboratory capability and capacity within their states expands. This will ensure that drinking water systems are more prepared to respond effectively to contamination incidents.
- Second, primacy agencies will have access to WLA tools and resources, such as EPA's Compendium of Environmental Testing Laboratories (Lab Compendium). In the event of a drinking water contamination incident, agencies could use the Lab Compendium to help utilities identify WLA member laboratories that could help with analysis of water samples.
- Primacy agencies also will have access to WLA training programs on topics ranging from new analytical methods to coordinating incident response.

Did you know?

There is no limit on the number of laboratories within a state that can apply for membership.



How will state and water utility laboratories, as well as water utilities, benefit from the WLA?

State laboratories, and other public health and environmental laboratories – both public and commercial – that become members of the WLA will be provided with critical resources and support that strengthens their capabilities before, during, and after a potential contamination incident.

Specific benefits include having access to:

- **Emergency response exercises**
- **Water security-related training opportunities**
- **Laboratory support for contaminant analyses exceeding in-house capabilities or capacity**
- **Access to validated analytical methods for unregulated contaminants of concern to the Water Sector**

State and utility laboratories nationwide will receive multiple benefits by becoming members of the WLA. For water utilities, the more WLA member laboratories present in a given state, the easier it

Did you know? Utilities can access the WLA whether or not their laboratory is a WLA member.

WLA member laboratories can identify themselves as having been designated a WLA member laboratory, which can add to laboratories' credibility, especially when pursuing governmental opportunities.

Did you know? Providing support during a contamination incident is completely voluntary; when a WLA laboratory is contacted, it can choose to provide services or not provide services, depending on its circumstances.

How can laboratories become WLA members?

State, utility, public health, environmental, and commercial laboratories become members of the WLA by first applying to be part of ERLN. For detailed information on becoming a member of the WLA/ERLN, go to www.epa.gov/erln/join.html. In addition to completing and submitting the ERLN application, laboratories must register themselves in the EPA Laboratory Compendium (go to www.epa.gov/compendium).

Did you know? There are no fees to apply or to become a member of the WLA.

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Tell Your State Labs to Become Members Today!**

will be for utilities to have access to the analytical capabilities and capacities offered through the WLA. In the event that any utility experiences a serious contamination incident or is unable to process routine regulatory samples due to natural disasters, such as earthquakes or hurricanes, the WLA member laboratories can be leveraged.

How to get more information about the WLA

For additional information on the WLA, please contact WLA@epa.gov or see <http://cfpub.epa.gov/safewater/watersecurity/wla.cfm>.