



How to facilitate coordination between individual operators and emergency response

Goal:

- Help connect individual water/wastewater system operators and potentially other personnel with utilities experiencing labor shortages.

Background:

- CoWARN is a utility-led organization that works to connect water/wastewater utilities with each other in the event of an emergency. The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment assists to administer CoWARN under direction from the CoWARN steering committee, which is made up of utility representatives. If a CoWARN member experiences an emergency, they can “activate CoWARN” and send a request for help out to the network. Other utility members will receive the notification and determine if they can respond. All full members sign a mutual aid agreement that covers general liability, workers compensation, reimbursement, etc. There currently isn't a way for individual operators to sign up with CoWARN and assist with needs. The following proposed approach creates a way for individual operators to engage with CoWARN and connect with utilities in need and select which emergencies they would be able to respond to.

Approach:

- Individual operators will be set up under one associate member account, which means they will not sign the mutual aid agreement, but they will receive emails when CoWARN is activated.
- Utilities will need to negotiate workers compensation, general liability, pay, and other logistics as if they are hiring an individual contractor.

How it works for the operators:

- If/when a full CoWARN member activates the network and requests help, an email blast will go out to everyone in the network- including to each of these associate member water/wastewater personnel.
- The water/wastewater personnel will then be able to evaluate the situation and determine if they can respond given their expertise, availability, and location. If they choose to assist, they will need to contact the requesting member directly to offer their services and figure out logistics (e.g. payment terms).
- Associate members do not have the ability to request assistance.
- The CoWARN administrator will add an associate member [signup sheet](#) to CoWARN main page and the [Water Quality Control Division department page](#). Once operators sign up using this online form, they will be added as an associate member.

