

Doug Johnson



Security Rules Coming Soon

The Chemical and Water Security Act of 2009

In November 2009, the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 2868, the Chemical and Water Security Act of 2009. This bill requires the U.S. EPA to establish security programs for most drinking water and wastewater facilities. WWD Managing Editor Clare Pierson spoke with Doug Johnson, water industry director at Emerson Process Management, about what municipalities and utilities can expect from this bill and how Emerson is prepared to help.

Clare Pierson: How much of the bill's designated responsibilities will fall on the EPA versus municipalities/utilities?

Doug Johnson: The EPA has to establish security standards for municipalities and water systems that serve more than 3,300 people. Complying with those requirements will fall on municipalities. The EPA also, as I understand, has to assign these municipalities with risk categories ranging from Tier 1 to Tier 4—Tier 4 signifying the highest risk and Tier 1 the lowest.

Pierson: What is the primary reason or motive behind the passing of the bill?

Johnson: A few years ago, Congress specified in an Appropriations bill that the Department of Homeland Security was to issue security regulations for certain facilities that stored chemicals; yet water and wastewater plants were largely exempted from this. This new bill is an attempt to remedy that. It is also a response to the world we live in today. Security is an issue where you will never be "done" because there will always be

more sophisticated attacks coming out. There is an ever-growing list of programs and viruses that can invade unprotected computer systems in water/wastewater facilities.

Pierson: What is the scope of this bill, and how much of an impact will it have on water systems around the country?

Johnson: There is a definite focus on the destructive potential of chemicals stored on site. Municipalities will have to begin looking at optimizing chemical use at facilities, as well as the removal and disposal of chemicals. Another big issue is access to unmanned facilities, such as pump stations. Plant operators and managers need to have the capability and training to remotely handle the controls and communications better.

Process security takes many forms, one of which is monitoring the distribution system for contaminants and ensuring that pure, clean water is delivered to people regardless of unforeseen events. A few scenarios would be something as deliberate as a terrorist plot to inject poisons into the system, or as unintentional as a large power outage that disrupts water supply.

Our company offers predictive intelligence technology that helps monitor the health and predict failures of critical pieces of equipment in a water plant, giving plant personnel the time and information they need to ensure continued operations. A lot of water/wastewater systems currently do not have these systems in place, so this bill will definitely impact them.

Pierson: Are there any consequences for not complying with the new requirements?

Johnson: It probably won't be much different than the consequences for current regulations; that usually means fines or legal action. It is an issue in which the public and media are extremely interested, so I don't foresee too many people dragging their feet with compliance.

Pierson: How do companies like Emerson position themselves to help municipalities with these new requirements?

Johnson: Emerson wants to be at the forefront of security solutions, and because of our history and focus on the power and water industries, we are. We have provided control systems to support critical infrastructures since we began operations. Municipalities will soon be under federal requirements to take action in this area. Let's face it: This is not an area where you want amateurs doing the legwork. **WWD**

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