

FAQs on Mutual Aid and Assistance

NEW HAMPSHIRE
PUBLIC WORKS
MUTUAL AID



Participation will assure that members are prepared to assist each other when emergencies or disasters strike. The following are some frequently asked questions about what mutual aid is and how it works.

What is mutual aid and assistance?

- Mutual aid and assistance is one member helping another based on a written agreement.

What is the purpose of mutual aid and assistance?

- It establishes an agreement and protocols for sharing resources among members statewide that is in place before disaster strikes.
- It provides a forum for establishing and maintaining emergency contacts.
- It provides access to specialized, certified, and knowledgeable member personnel, heavy equipment, tools and supplies used by members.

Why is mutual aid and assistance important?

- Member resources are specialized.
- Members must be self-sufficient and able to fill the gap before arrival of any governmental aid.
- Road restoration is key to disaster response.

What are the benefits of a mutual aid and assistance program?

- Prompt and effective response.
- Low cost to participate (\$25/year), akin to a low cost insurance policy to access resources when needed.
- In case of a federally declared emergency, it facilitates FEMA reimbursement since reimbursement is contingent upon a pre-existing, signed mutual aid and assistance agreement.
- Increases emergency preparedness and coordination.
- Provides a single agreement to access resources statewide.
- Expedites arrival of aid. Administrative items and protocols and all the paperwork are already worked out in advance for you.
- Agreement contains indemnification and worker's compensation provisions to protect participating utilities.
- Provides reimbursement protocols.
- Does not require any disaster declaration to activate, which means utilities can request aid at almost any time (even for small scale events).

How does a member use their mutual aid agreement during an emergency?

- Initial access may be made directly to other members or through a list serve and/or website.
- Members are able to match the equipment, skilled labor, and other resources that they need.

Are members required to respond and send resources?

- There is no obligation to respond.
- The needs of your own community always come first.

My community is too small, so I have nothing to offer.

- Any assistance can be helpful to a system in need.
- Small systems may not have the equipment, but they have certified and knowledgeable personnel.

My community is too large. I will always be the one helping and no one can help me.

- Not true. It's not just about equipment but personnel too, including administrative and secretarial assistance.
- When a major emergency hits hard, a large system will need all the help they can get, even if it comes from several different smaller systems.

What happens if a member sends resources and needs them back?

- Under no circumstances is a member to send resources if it impacts their ability to manage daily operations or response to its own emergency.
- It is up to the lending member to determine what resources to send.
- Resources remain under the authority of the sending member and as such can be recalled.

How can I find out more information about the NHPWMA?

- Additional information about the program can be found at www.t2.unh.edu/ma. There you will find program information, agreement, forms, inventory lists, FEMA forms, and a list of participating communities.

Questions?

If you have any questions about mutual aid or the NHPWMA please contact :

Amy Begnoche

LTAP Director

UNH Technology Transfer Center

(603) 862-1362

amy.begnoche@unh.edu

