

Is the City's Water Supply Safe From a Bioterrorism Act?

Most bioterrorism experts agree that reservoirs are an unlikely target for bioterrorists.

It would be extremely difficult for a bioterrorist to contaminate drinking water supplies to cause widespread illness.

There are several reasons . . .

First of all, huge amounts of water are pumped daily from our reservoirs, most of which is used for industrial and other purposes; very little is actually consumed. Thus, anything deliberately put into the water supply would be greatly diluted.

Secondly, methods already in place to filter and clean the drinking water supply are considered effective against most biological agents. Chlorine, for example, protects drinking water from other water-borne bacteria and would neutralize most biological agents.

Third, the Sunbury Municipal Authority has implemented a comprehensive security program, as required by the Bioterrorism Act, to monitor facility grounds, buildings and water is sampled daily.

The public awareness component of the Municipal Authority program is an additional measure to ensure that your drinking water is safe.

Bottom line, it is impossible to guarantee that anyone is completely safe from a Bioterrorism act, but with your assistance we can significantly decrease the probability of such a threat.

SUNBURY
MUNICIPAL AUTHORITY
462 South 4th Street
Sunbury, PA 17801

Drinking Water Security

Public Awareness Program

SUNBURY
MUNICIPAL AUTHORITY



Public Health Security and Bioterrorism and Response Act

On June 12, 2002, the federal government passed the **Public Health Security and Bioterrorism and Response Act** (H.R. 3448), also known as the Bioterrorism Act.

The Act required that all community public water systems serving 3,300 people or more conduct a vulnerability assessment and prepare or revise an emergency response plan to address system vulnerabilities.

The public awareness program is just one component of a comprehensive water security program implemented by the Municipal Authority to ensure the safety and stability of the city's water system.

Until recently, contamination of water with biological, chemical or radiologic agents generally resulted from natural, industrial or unintentional man-made accidents. Unfortunately, recent terrorist activity in the US has forced the water utilities to consider the possibility of intentional contamination of US water supplies as part of an organized effort to disrupt and damage important elements of our national infrastructure.

The primary goal of this guidance is to help detect and deter suspected terrorists threats against public utilities. Even though a threat to your drinking water system may seem unlikely, it is important that you report any suspicious activity.

It is not the intent of this guidance to generate unnecessary concern, but rather to increase public awareness, through common sense, and institute a method for reporting suspicious activity.

Recognizing Suspicious Activity

Actions to Consider

Signs of terrorist activity may include:

- Person or persons who convey an unusual interest in the city's water supply system.
- Someone bragging or talking about plans to tamper with hydrants, the filtration plant or reservoirs.
- Suspicious person(s) taking photographs or videos of the water filtration plant or grounds.
- Someone acting suspiciously near a hydrant, or in the proximity of the filtration plant or reservoirs.
- A vehicle with hazardous material parked near a hydrant or in the proximity of the filtration plant.
- Someone unfamiliar loitering near or around the filtration plant or reservoirs.
- Abandoned vehicles near or around the filtration plant.

Reporting Terrorist Activity

If you believe you have information that would help authorities, do not take any action other than to inform the Sunbury Municipal Authority or the Sunbury Police Department as soon as possible.

To report any suspicious activity:

- Call the Sunbury Municipal Authority at 570-286-5858.

- Call your police non-emergency number at 570-988-4539 to report any behavior or event that seems to be outside the norm or is frightening but does not immediately endanger lives or property.

- Call your local FBI field office. To find your local office, go to <http://www.fbi.gov/contact/fo/fo.htm> or check inside the front cover of your local phone book.

You can also contact the FBI by submitting a tip on their Web site, <http://www.fbi.gov>.

Call 911 for life-threatening emergencies only!

Information to Provide When Reporting a Suspicious Activity

When reporting suspicious activity, it is important to provide the most accurate description possible of the persons, situation, vehicles involved, and what made you concerned.

Remain calm and provide the following information:

- Your name and address;
- A brief description of the event - what happened, when, where, and who was involved;
- Description of the suspect: sex, race, age, height, weight, hair color, clothing, distinctive characteristics such as beard, mustache, scars, or accent;
- Description of the vehicle if one was involved: color, make, model, year, license plate, and special features such as stickers, dents, or decals;
- Where the suspicious person is or may have gone.