

SUBCHAPTER L: STANDARDS OF EMERGENCY OPERATIONS
§§291.160 - 291.162
Effective November 8, 2012

§291.160. Purpose.

Texas Water Code, Chapter 13, Subchapter E, §13.1395, prescribes the duties of the commission relating to standards for emergency operations of affected utilities. The statute requires that the commission ensure that affected utilities provide water service as soon as safe and practicable during an extended power outage. This subchapter sets forth requirements and implementation of emergency operation planning of affected utilities as defined in this subchapter. Public water systems must comply with the emergency operations requirements as defined in Chapter 290, Subchapter D of this title (relating to Rules and Regulations for Public Water Systems).

Adopted November 18, 2009

Effective December 10, 2009

§291.161. Definitions.

For the purposes of this subchapter, the following definitions apply.

(1) Affected utility--Any retail public utility, exempt utility, or provider or conveyor of potable or raw water service that furnishes water service to more than one customer:

(A) In a county with a population of 3.3 million or more; or

(B) In a county with a population of 550,000 or more adjacent to a county with a population of 3.3 million or more.

(2) Emergency operations--The operation of a water system during an extended power outage at a minimum water pressure of 35 pounds per square inch.

(3) Extended power outage--A power outage lasting for more than 24 hours.

(4) Population--The population shown by the most recent federal decennial census.

Adopted October 17, 2012

Effective November 8, 2012

§291.162. Emergency Operation of an Affected Utility.

(a) An affected utility shall adopt and submit to the executive director for its approval an emergency preparedness plan that demonstrates the utility's ability to provide emergency operations.

(b) The executive director shall review an emergency preparedness plan submitted by an affected utility. If the executive director determines that the plan is not acceptable, the executive director shall recommend changes to the plan. The executive director must make its recommendations on or before the 90th day after the executive director receives the plan.

(c) An emergency preparedness plan shall provide for one of the following:

(1) the maintenance of automatically starting auxiliary generators;

(2) the sharing of auxiliary generator capacity with one or more affected utilities;

(3) the negotiation of leasing and contracting agreements, including emergency mutual aid agreements with other retail public utilities, exempt utilities, or providers or conveyors of potable or raw water service, if the agreements provide for coordination with the division of emergency management in the governor's office;

(4) the use of portable generators capable of serving multiple facilities equipped with quick-connect systems;

(5) the use of on-site electrical generation or distributed generation facilities;

(6) hardening the electric transmission and distribution system serving the water system;

(7) for existing facilities, the maintenance of direct engine or right angle drives; or

(8) any other alternative determined by the executive director to be acceptable.

(d) Each affected utility that supplies, provides, or conveys surface water to wholesale customers shall include in its emergency preparedness plan provisions for the actual installation and maintenance of automatically starting auxiliary generators or distributive generation facilities for each raw water intake pump station, water treatment plant, pump station, and pressure facility necessary to provide water to its wholesale customers.

(e) The affected utility may use the template in Appendix J of §290.47 of this title (relating to Appendices) to assist in preparation of the plan.

(f) An emergency generator used as part of an approved emergency preparedness plan must be operated and maintained according to the manufacturer's specifications.

(g) The executive director may grant a waiver of the requirements of this section to an affected utility if the executive director determines that compliance with this section will cause a significant financial burden on customers of the affected utility. The affected utility shall submit financial, managerial, and technical information as requested by the executive director to demonstrate the financial burden.

(h) An affected utility may adopt and is encouraged to enforce limitations on water use while the utility is providing emergency operations.

(i) Information provided by an affected utility under this subchapter is confidential and is not subject to disclosure under Texas Government Code, Chapter 552.

(j) Affected utilities that are existing as of November 1, 2011, shall submit the emergency preparedness plan to the executive director no later than February 1, 2012.

(k) Affected utilities that are existing as of November 1, 2011, shall implement the emergency preparedness plan approved by the executive director no later than June 1, 2012.

(l) Affected utilities which are established after the effective date of this rule must have emergency preparedness plans approved and implemented prior to providing water to customers.

(m) An affected utility may file with the executive director a written request for an extension, not to exceed 90 days, of the date by which the affected utility is required under this subchapter to submit the affected utility's emergency preparedness plan or the date the affected utility is required to implement the plan.

(n) If an affected utility fails to provide a minimum of 35 pounds per square inch throughout the distribution system during emergency operations as soon as it is safe and practicable following the occurrence of a natural disaster, a revised emergency preparedness plan shall be submitted for review and approval within 180 days of the date normal power is restored. Based on the review of the revised emergency preparedness plan, the executive director may require additional or alternative auxiliary emergency facilities.

Adopted October 17, 2012

Effective November 8, 2012