

Water Safety Plans: CDC's Role

CDC's Global Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Team works to improve access to safe drinking water through the implementation of Water Safety Plans (WSPs).

A WSP is a holistic, systematic, and integrated management approach used to identify and prioritize potential threats to water quality at each step in a specific system's water supply chain—from catchment to consumer—and implement best practices to mitigate those threats and ensure drinking water quality.

WSPs are a key component of the framework for safe drinking water described in the World Health Organization's Guidelines for Drinking Water Quality (3rd edition).

Growing Worldwide Application of WSPs

Communities in almost every region of the world have implemented WSPs, including Africa, North America, South America, Asia, Europe, and the Western Pacific. In the Latin America and Caribbean Region, pilot WSPs—many with the participation of CDC—have taken place or are in progress in the following locations:

- Buenos Aires, Argentina
- Tarija, Bolivia
- Vicos, Brazil
- Linden, Guyana
- San Pedro Sula, Honduras
- Spanish Town, Jamaica
- Mabouya Valley, St. Lucia
- Dolores, Uruguay

In addition, CDC is engaged with various partners, including WHO, the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), the International Water Association (IWA), and the Inter-American Society of Sanitary and Environmental Engineers (AIDIS) in the Latin American and Caribbean Water Safety Plan Network, a regional network to support implementation of WSPs.

WSP Objectives and Benefits

A WSP aims to help drinking-water providers and other stakeholders improve water quality and consistently meet established health-based targets by

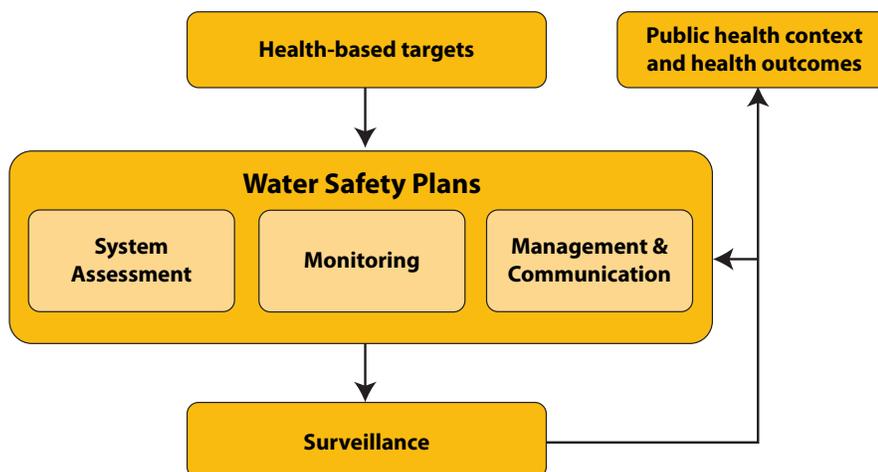
- controlling the contamination of source waters through managing activities in the watershed;
- optimizing the removal or inactivation of contaminants during treatment; and
- preventing recontamination during distribution, storage and handling.

The WSP approach to ensuring a safe water supply is flexible, accessible, and serves to

- identify opportunities for low-cost improvements to operations and management practices that can enhance water safety;
- improve efficiency and reduce expenses;
- improve stakeholders' understanding of the complete water supply chain and its vulnerabilities;
- improve communication and collaboration between key stakeholder groups, such as water providers, consumers, regulatory authorities and commercial, environmental and health sectors; and
- help substantiate and prioritize capital improvement needs to help leverage financial support.



Framework for Safe Drinking Water



Adapted from WHO Guidelines for Drinking Water Quality

WSP Resources

For more information on Water Safety Plans (including examples of completed WSPs), visit the WSPortal: <http://www.wsportal.org>.

To download the 3rd Edition of the World Health Organization's Guidelines for Drinking Water Quality, visit: <http://www.who.int/wsportal/guidelines/en>. (Chapter 4 describes the principles of the WSP approach.)