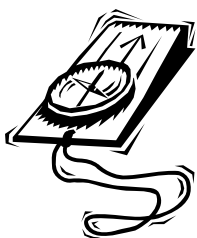


# Introduction

Local officials are almost always those considered ultimately responsible for the success or failure of the water and wastewater systems operated by their communities. Because skillful management protects public health and the environment, as well as the very considerable investments by communities in infrastructure and staffing, this handbook has been designed to help elected, administrative, and managerial officials understand the various legal and technical requirements for the treatment, storage, and distribution of drinking water and the collection, treatment, and discharge of wastewater. The handbook explains federal and state regulations and legal liability for violations; operations and maintenance strategies to ensure compliance and foster plant optimization; and techniques for effective personnel and contract management, public relations, and community education. The handbook also describes the basics of sound financial management and sources of loan and grant assistance for building or upgrading publicly-owned water and wastewater systems.



## Helpful Guidance

To get up to speed quickly, review the chapters on regulations and liability, as well as the glossary and sample reporting form.

Each section of the handbook provides an overview of the “need-to-know” information for local officials. At the end of the handbook is a substantial bibliography and additional resources for local officials who would like to learn more. Included is a sample monthly reporting format designed to help officials gather from their employees the information they need to properly manage their water and wastewater systems. Finally, a comprehensive glossary of common drinking water and wastewater terms is also provided.