



DO'S AND DON'TS TO HELP NAVIGATE CHANGES TO NY-ALERT

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AHH spring. A time when a young man's fancy turns to thoughts ofCHANGES TO THE NY-Alert SYSTEM! You heard me right. The NY-Alert system is changing this spring, probably, maybe early to mid summer, but it is going to change. As of the end of January, which is when this article was written, we don't know much at all about the new system. What we do know is you will have to create a new user name and password, and yes, the password will most likely need to be changed every 90 days. I know. I've already voiced concern to DEC but, unfortunately, it's out of their hands. The system will look different. The information required to be submitted will be the same, with possibly a few more details. Among the things we don't know is how registered notifiers with active accounts will be integrated into the new system. Rather than dwell on the known's and unknown's, I've put together a few do's and don'ts, based on our experiences helping you with NY-Alert, to help you navigate the change.

DO attend training that will be offered. Whether it's NYRWA, DEC or NYWEA that's doing the training, GO. And pay attention. Attending training will make the guidance documents found online clearer and easier to follow.

DO create your new account as soon as possible after it becomes available. Remember each registered notifier has to have his/her own e-mail address. You cannot use a common e-mail address.

DON'T wait until you have a spill to try and set it up, or worse, think you can report using the old system. The excuses used for not reporting via NY-Alert will not fly with the new system. Take my word on that one.

DON'T let someone else register you as a notifier or set up your account. This just doesn't work. I've seen it too often where a superintendent registers someone, then creates the account, only to leave without sharing the account information. It's your responsibility to manage your own account. Remember, the excuses used for not reporting via NY-Alert will not fly with the new system. Take my word on that one.

DON'T have just one person register as a notifier. You still have to submit the spill notification within two hours of your becoming aware of it. If you happen to be a one man show (yes Virginia, there are one man shows out there) you should be concentrating on gathering the resources needed to deal with the problem, not worrying about trying to submit the notification. You should have,

at a minimum, two notifiers, one of which is not directly involved with remediating the problem. A clerk, board member or mayor/supervisor, would be someone you can give the basic information to and they can submit the notification while you take care of the problem. You have to submit a follow up notification once the event is over. That's when you can supply a more detailed account of the event.

DON'T think just because you have never had a spill you can put off registering. Keep Murphy's Law in mind. The time to register is not when you have a spill. Remember, the excuses used for not reporting via NY-Alert will not fly with the new system. Take my word on that one.

DON'T think just because you don't have a treatment plant that you don't need to register. Publically Owned Sewer Systems (POSS), the artist formerly known as satellite systems, are required to register. Remember, the excuses used for not reporting via NY-Alert will not fly with the new system. Take my word on that one.

DO (AND THIS IS A BIG DO) follow up after you have submitted your notifier agreement and **ACTIVATE YOUR ACCOUNT!!!!** This has been the single biggest problem we have encountered with NY-Alert. Registrations and notifier agreements were filled out, signed and submitted but, for one of several reasons we will not get into, the individual accounts were not activated. It is your responsibility as a registered notifier to activate your account. Follow instructions, look for confirmation e-mails with directions for activating your account, and don't dilly dally. Log into your account often, even if you don't have to report a spill. If you can't access your account call either DEC or NYRWA. We will help resolve any issues. Remember, the excuses used for not reporting via NY-Alert will not fly with the new system. Take my word on that one.

Electronic reporting of sewer spills has been a requirement since 2013, and the advent of the Sewage Pollution Right to Know (SPRTK) law. NY-Alert has been the required reporting tool since the beginning. Times change and now it's time to change reporting tools. There have been many issues, mistakes and missteps associated with the NY-Alert process. Let's learn from them and not repeat the past. Above all, when in doubt, **CALL!** NYRWA is always available to assist you. As I have said several times already, remember, the excuses used for not reporting via NY-Alert will not fly with the new system. Take my word on that one.

Someone should really talk to that young man. 💧💧