

**CMOM IN WISCONSIN**

*Capacity, Management, Operation & Maintenance*

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Is CMOM another one of those *four letter words* in your wastewater vocabulary? Does it make you roll your eyes and shake your head. Just another one of those bureaucratic make-work ideas that those environmental regulatory agencies dreamed up? Well, until you run that sewer TV camera down every one of your sewer pipes, you may have another opinion of things. I don't think any of you like having to respond to a basement backed up with sewage, sewage overflowing somewhere, a lift station not working, dealing with a severe grease or debris in a sewer pipe or a wastewater treatment plant hydraulically overloaded and washing out solids. Reactive maintenance and angry residents are stressful.

Many of you have asked, "Exactly what is CMOM?" CMOM stands for **C**apacity, **M**anagement, **O**peration & **M**aintenance and is a holistic way of managing and operating your sewer system. Kind of an asset management, environmental management system and O&M program all rolled into one. For some of you though, CMOM can have another meaning, Crisis Management, O(zer) Maintenance but I hope not. With public infrastructure aging and deteriorating, and public work projects likely to receive more attention in the coming years, it is a time you should be starting to put your sewer system in sight, in mind if it isn't already. Maintaining and

improving the performance of your sewer system is critical in protecting public health and property (eliminating basement backups) and protecting water quality (reducing SSOs) in your communities, not to mention protecting yourself from the work stress an improperly operated and managed sewer system can cause.

True to the intent of these regularly featured In Control articles, having a CMOM program will greatly help keep you In Control of your sewer system and have successful operations of it. Throughout this year and next, you will be hearing and learning much more about CMOM, through webcasts, booklets, pamphlets, checklists and training sessions that we are developing through a USEPA grant we received. This information and education will be geared for our smaller communities across the state which is most of you. The Compliance Maintenance Annual Report (CMAR) too is being revised to include more questions about CMOM and what a CMOM program should entail, which you will see beginning this April in your eCMAR collection system section.

Capacity, Management, Operation & Maintenance (CMOM) consists of eight elements:

- Goals
- Organization
- Legal Authority
- Operation & Maintenance Activities
- Design & Performance Provisions
- Overflow Emergency Response Plan
- Capacity Assurance
- Annual Self-Auditing

So in the next eight installments of In Control through 2009-2010, I will writing about each of these elements of a CMOM program, one at a time, in hopes that you will better understand CMOM so that you will be able to develop a good CMOM program for your own community, not because DNR is telling you so but because it just makes good \$en\$. Many communities in Wisconsin are

already doing so as they recognize the importance of maintaining and rehabilitating their sewer and water infrastructure and assets. While we are very good at building things, often we are not quite so good at maintaining them. The time has come that those “out-of-sight, out-of-mind” sewer systems become “in sight, in mind”.

*“As we say in the sewer, if you are not prepared to go all the way, don’t put your boots on in the first place”*



It’s spring, so get your boots on and lets get to work!