



**American Water Works  
Association**

ANSI/AWWA G420-09  
(First Edition)

The Authoritative Resource on Safe Water®

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*AWWA Standard*

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# Communications and Customer Relations



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Approved by American National Standards Institute Feb. 5, 2010.

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## Committee Personnel

The AWWA Standards Committee on Communications and Customer Relations System, which reviewed and approved this standard, had the following personnel at the time of approval:

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*General Interest Members*

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\* Liaison, nonvoting

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# Foreword

*This foreword is for information only and is not a part of ANSI\*/AWWA G420.*

## **I. Introduction.**

I.A. *Background.* The AWWA Standards Program is designed to serve water and wastewater utilities and their customers, owners, service providers, and government regulators. The standards developed under the program are generally intended to improve a utility's overall operations and service. Among these programs is a specific effort to establish formal management and operations guidelines. These guidelines identify the appropriate practices, procedures, and behaviors whose implementation will provide effective and efficient utility operations, and contribute to the protection of public health, public safety, and the environment.

AWWA's standards process has been used for more than ninety years to produce ANSI-approved standards for materials and processes that are used by the water and wastewater utility industries. These standards are recognized worldwide and have been adopted by many utilities and organizations. Likewise, this performance standard is developed using the same ANSI-recognized formal process. Volunteer standards committees establish standard practices in a uniform and appropriate format.

Formal standards committees have been and continue to be formed to address the individual standard practices for the diverse areas of water and wastewater utility operations. A formal standards committee was created in November 2006 to create this standard for communications and customer relations.

AWWA has developed a series of utility management standards, designed to cover the principal activities of a typical water and/or wastewater utility. Some examples of the individual topics in this series include those for water treatment plants, distribution systems, and source water protection. Others under development include topics such as utility management system, emergency planning, security, and business practices. More topics will be added over time, including those for wastewater utilities.

I.B. *History.* This is the first edition of this standard.

I.C. *Acceptance.* There is no applicable information for this section.

## **II. Special Issues.**

II.A. *Advisory Information on Application of Standards.* This standard includes only those requirements that are limited exclusively to establishing effective

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communications and public relations for operation and management for a drinking water or wastewater utility. Separate standards adopted by the Standards Program will cover in more detail utility programs such as water treatment plant operation and management, distribution systems operation and management, source water protection, utility management system, security practices, emergency preparedness, financial management, and other business systems.

**III. Use of This Standard.** It is the responsibility of the user of an AWWA standard to determine that the products and provisions described in that standard are suitable for and compatible with the user's intended application being considered.

III.A. *Options and Alternatives.* It is anticipated that options and alternatives to this standard may be identified during the pilot process.

III.B. *Modification to Standard.* There is no applicable information for this section.

**IV. Major Revisions.** This is the first edition; as such, there are no major revisions.

**V. Comments.** If you have any comments or questions about this standard, please call the AWWA Volunteer and Technical Support Group at 303.794.7711, Fax at 303.795.7603, write to the group at 6666 West Quincy Avenue, Denver, CO 80235-3098, or e-mail the group at [standards@awwa.org](mailto:standards@awwa.org).



**American Water Works  
Association**

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*AWWA Standard*

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# **Communications and Customer Relations**

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## **SECTION 1: GENERAL**

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### **Sec. 1.1 Scope**

This standard covers the essential requirements to effectively manage communications and customer relations.

### **Sec. 1.2 Purpose**

The purpose of this standard is to define the minimum requirements for establishing an effective communications and customer relations plan for a water and/or wastewater utility. An effective plan enhances the general public perception of the utility through frequent and focused communications with utility customers and stakeholders. Among the many benefits of a communications and customer relations plan are increased understanding and support of sustainable rate structures, greater tolerance for service interruptions, better cooperation to keep construction projects on schedule, and improved response to customer-billing issues, resulting in timely payment of bills.

### **Sec. 1.3 Application**

This standard can be referenced in establishing and maintaining an effective communications and customer relations plan for water and/or wastewater utilities. Because each utility's issues, audiences, and organizational structure are unique,