



POLICYMAKER PRIMER:

PUBLIC WORKS AND RESILIENCY



WHAT IS RESILIENCY RELATED TO PUBLIC WORKS?

The ability to successfully adapt to difficult or challenging issues impacting the nation’s infrastructure. Most infrastructure is planned, developed, funded, built, and maintained by state and local governments. What can we do to prepare for, mitigate and protect from disasters? Design infrastructure, systems, and communities to withstand, adapt to, and recover from natural disasters, extreme weather events, economic fluctuations, or other challenges.

Resilient public works design, build, and maintain infrastructure that continues to function effectively during disruptions, ensuring the safety of residents, and preserving essential services during times of crisis. Resiliency emphasizes preparedness, flexibility, and sustainable practices to promote long-term viability and responsiveness in the ever-changing landscape of public works.

- **Custodians of America’s Infrastructure** – High-quality, modern, well-maintained infrastructure is the backbone of any successful society. Public Works Professionals (PWP) design, implement, operate, and maintain all types of infrastructure worth trillions of dollars. Transportation, water supply and treatment, flood control, fleets and facilities, and communication infrastructure are the underpinnings of our national security, our quality of life, and our economic competitiveness in the world.

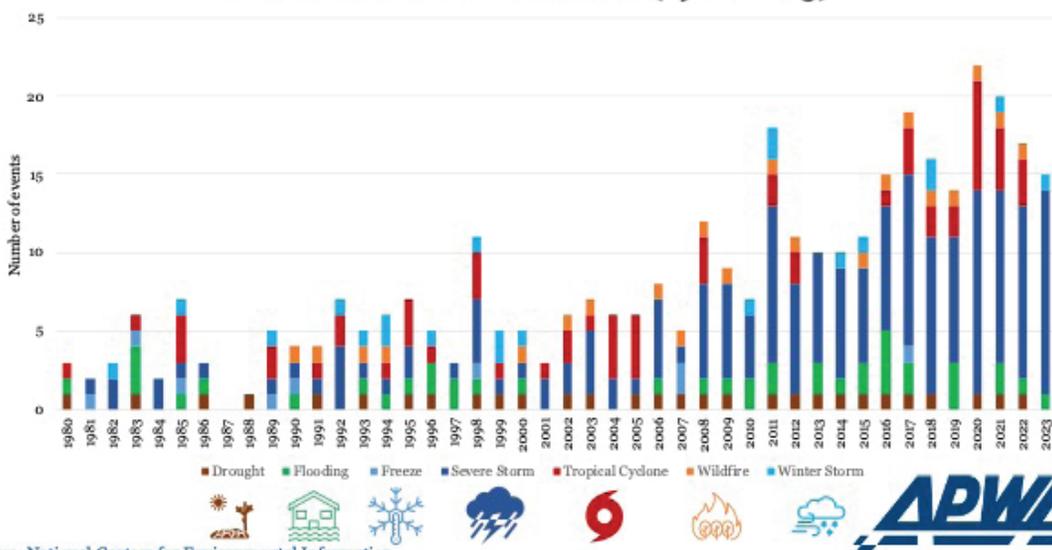
- **Emergency response professionals** – For APWA, leveraging innovation and research to mitigate negative impacts from climate change is paramount to protecting the nation’s critical infrastructure. PWPs are first responders and lead efforts to plan, mitigate, respond to, and recover from man-made and natural disasters; including witnessing the losses caused by these events plus the economic toll on our communities.
- **Leaders in developing sustainable solutions** – PWPs are responsible for transportation systems, government buildings, and utility operations. They understand the importance of building resilient infrastructure that is and able to withstand the increasing challenges of climate change and severe weather.

BUILD FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCY

- PWPs consider problems and solutions holistically - evaluating economic viability, environmental impacts, and life cycle costs. ***It is important that solutions address current challenges and advance the quality of life for all, and for future generations.***
 - APWA supports the use of tools such as asset management and the Envision Rating System for Sustainable Infrastructure.
- While there will always be catastrophic disasters impacting our communities and citizens, pre-planning and preventive mitigation

measures go further to protect our assets and provide the greatest return on investment. People and businesses depend on PWPs to provide clean water, efficient transportation networks, flood mitigation, and other key infrastructure elements.

U.S. Billion-Dollar Disasters (1980-2023)



PUBLIC WORKS PROFESSIONALS ARE FIRST RESPONDERS

- PWP's are first responders to man-made and natural disasters and lead efforts to plan, mitigate, respond to, and recover from natural disasters. PWP's witness the losses due to these events and the human and economic toll on our communities.
- As with other first responders, APWA's *Emergency Management* policy supports investment, tools, and resources to satisfy the public works mission to build stronger and more resilient communities.

PUBLIC WORKS PROFESSIONALS PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT AND OUR COMMUNITIES

- PWP's plan, design, enhance and maintain our communities, transportation systems, water quality measures, and green space in a manner that reduces pollution.
- APWA's *Water Resiliency* policy calls for designing and operating water and wastewater systems for efficiencies and to minimize energy consumption and harmful emissions with a watchful eye for upcoming impacts of contaminants such as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS).
- In alignment with APWA's *Water Resiliency* policy, PWP's design, operate, and manage municipal waste and landfills to maximize natural resource conservation; reduce, reuse, and recycle materials; and minimize the release of pollutants.



Drought Flooding Hail Hurricane Severe Storm Tornado Outbreak Wildfire Winter Storm/Freeze

RESILIENCE

** Policymaker Primers supplement APWA's official Public Policy Priorities, providing additional information and context for issues tangential to emergency management, transportation, and water resiliency.

The American Public Works Association (APWA) represents over 32,000 public works professionals across North America, dedicated to providing essential, high-quality equitable and sustainable services to millions of people in rural and urban communities, both small and large.

APWA members serve in the public and private sectors, providing expertise to the local, state, and federal government levels. Working in the public interest, our members plan, design, build, operate, and maintain, and oversee our vast infrastructure networks essential to our economy, environment, safety, and way of life.

APWA collaborates with all levels of government and supports federal investment in our shared infrastructure. APWA is opposed to unfunded mandates and any effort to impede the appropriate use of public right-of-way, and strongly encourages industry to partner with public works, and all state and local government entities.

**APWA Government Affairs
Policymaker Primer**

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