Rhode Island

Water loss is a particularly important issue in Rhode Island, where approximately 89% of the population is served by public water suppliers. The US Geological Survey (USGS) estimates that in 2015 (the most recent year available), Rhode Island's public water suppliers withdrew an average of about 97.46 million gallons of water per day for treatment and distribution to customers. Those public water suppliers face enormous challenges when it comes to replacing and repairing their systems. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently found a 20-year capital improvement need of more than $833 million for Rhode Island's water systems to continue to provide safe drinking water.

The agency with jurisdiction over water loss reporting is the Rhode Island Water Resources Board (WRB). Utilities are required to submit for approval a Water Supply Systems Management Plan. Such plans must include an estimate of "non-account water" and establish a goal to "minimize non-account water and to strive to achieve and maintain less than 15% non-account water." The plans must also include a comprehensive plan and schedule for the detection and repair of leaks. Greater than 15% non-account water is considered excessive, triggering a requirement for an immediate leak detection survey. Water suppliers are also encouraged (but not required) to establish a long-term goal of reducing non-account water to 10%.

Rule Reference: Water Supply Policies for Rhode Island, State Guide Plan Element 721, September 1997

RIWRB Rules and Procedures for Water Supply System Management Planning - http://sos.ri.gov/documents/archives/regdocs/released/pdf/WRB/WRB_2370.pdf

U.S. Geological Survey's "Estimated Use of Water in the United States County-Level Data for 2015", September 28, 2017- https://www.sciencebase.gov/catalog/item/59a96d18e4b07e1a023db323

EPA's "Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Survey and Assessment, Sixth Report to Congress", March 2018 - https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2018-03/documents/sixth_drinking_water_infrastructure_needs_survey_and_assessment.pdf