

WATrac Frequently Asked Questions

What is WATrac?

WATrac (Washington System for Tracking Resources, Alerts, and Communication) is a web-based application serving the Washington healthcare system by providing two distinct functions: 1) daily tracking of agency status and bed availability and, 2) incident management and situational awareness during a disaster response.

How is WATrac used during a disaster response?

The system provides a means for notifying healthcare partners of emergency incidents and for supplying situational updates throughout the event. During an incident, the daily facility status and bed tracking feature not only provide emergency medical services (EMS) and hospitals with patient transport information, but they also automate the process for obtaining bed counts for statewide updates. Command Center, for on-line chat and conferencing, provides an easily accessible tool for real-time communication within agencies and among healthcare partners.

What are the computer requirements?

WATrac is web-based and will run on any computer with an internet connection, standard web plug-ins, and Adobe Flash Player. Pop-ups must be allowed for the site. Apple computer users with the standard Safari browser can download a version of Adobe Flash Player to access most features in WATrac; iPhone, iPad, and other mobile device users will have more limited access.

Is WATrac HIPAA compliant?

The system meets HIPAA security requirements by providing 128-bit encryption for all transmitted data. Access to data is controlled by user permission groups, and strong passwords can be required. The HIPAA requirement for recording who views, updates, or edits records is met only by the Patient Tracking module. All other modules and features in WATrac are not HIPAA compliant.

How is data back-up accomplished?

The WATrac application and data resides on servers in Minneapolis with back-up servers containing duplicate data in Chicago. This service includes dynamic redirection in the event of a server failure.

What costs are associated with WATrac?

The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) and participating regions support statewide implementation using federal funds. This includes funding for staff, training, and yearly support and maintenance to host the data on remote servers.

How is WATrac managed and administered?

WATrac is managed by the DOH. A statewide User Group and Steering Committee, made up of representatives from healthcare, fire/EMS and public health, provides direction and input for the use, development, and implementation of the WATrac system.

The Northwest Healthcare Response Network (NWHHRN) co-chairs the Statewide WATrac User Group, supports the WATrac Steering Committee, and provides system administrative support for agencies all across Washington State.

Who has access to WATrac?

Full system access is currently available to hospitals, EMS, tribal health, community health centers, public health, nursing homes, and in-home service providers throughout Washington. Additional access is being guided by the Statewide WATrac User Group, WATrac Steering Committee and by resources and staff availability.

Is training available?

Yes! The Northwest Healthcare Response Network provides training to partners across the entire state of Washington in cooperation with the DOH. Online user training tutorial documents and videos are also available in the WATrac Document Hub Module. Additional information on WATrac training is available by contacting NWHHRN at WATrac@nwhrn.org or by visiting <https://nwhrn.org/what-we-do/watrac/>.

For further information contact the Network:

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WATrac Features Overview

My Agency	Allows agencies to update their current status (e.g. hospital Emergency Department Diversion), and share information regarding their ability to maintain normal operations during a response with statewide healthcare agencies.
Bed Availability	Allows agencies to update their current status (e.g. hospital Emergency Department Diversion), and share information with statewide healthcare agencies regarding their ability to maintain normal operations during a response.
Regional Status	Displays bed availability, agency status, specialty availability as well as providing access to specific information about each agency. By making selections from the type of data they wish to see, (e.g. Region 3, hospitals, ICU beds, etc.) a user can define which data is displayed on the screen.
Specialty Availability	Displays real-time availability of surgical specialists for trauma patient care in Washington. The module helps improve the ability to more rapidly transfer patients to the closest appropriate care.
Report Writer	Provides users with two types of reports to extract data from the system. PDF and Excel formats are available for printing, exporting or saving the reports. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ad Hoc Reports for creating custom reports. • Standard Reports are pre-created with fields and display options defined. The user is able to make additional choices from provided filter boxes.
Alert Manager	Allows specified WATrac users to send emergency notifications, bed updating requests, mass casualty incident (MCI) activations, etc., to agencies, distribution lists and individuals by email, pager or text message. Alert templates can be created and saved for future use and a scheduler will automatically send and complete alerts.
Document Hub	A library for healthcare preparedness information. It supports document sharing among all users (e.g. plans, contact lists, best practices); assignment of viewing rights; and auto delete to keep information current. Documents can be downloaded, printed or saved to disk.
Emergency Contacts	Users are able to create, search, categorize and print directories of contact information using Emergency Contacts. People or agency contacts can be created and categorized. Existing agencies and users can be added by conducting a search.
Command Center	This online chat feature provides a tool for communication between groups of individuals in diverse locations. Real-time instant messaging and document sharing provide a location for agencies to coordinate assets. In non-critical situations, it can be used for general discussion or conferencing.
Survey Builder	Survey Builder facilitates data gathering from healthcare partners at a regional and state level. For planning it could be used to locate resources, assess vulnerabilities, or to define levels of capability. During a response, Survey Builder could be used to gather information about patient census, resource levels and surge capacity.
Patient Tracking	During a Mass Casualty Incident, Patient Tracking can be activated to document the location of victims, beginning at the scene or at the point of definitive care through any transfers and to final discharge.