Pandemic Mutual Assistance Checklist

This checklist is designed to provide host and responding gas companies’ guidance on how to conduct mutual assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic. This document is based on guidance created by the Electricity Sector Coordinating Council (ESCC).

Gas companies are committed to protecting the people working for them and ensuring gas operations and infrastructure are supported throughout an emergency. The items in this checklist can help provide guidance for mutual assistance efforts while protecting the health and safety of employees, customers, and the public.

To prevent the spread of COVID-19 and to reduce the potential risk of exposure, responding companies are asked not to send any employee that in the past 14 days has returned from a Level 2 or 3 country, had close contact with someone traveling to a Level 2 and 3 country, had close contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19, have experienced cold or flu-like symptoms, or traveled on a cruise ship (check updated federal, state and local advisories for additional criteria to consider).

**Work Practices**

☐ Host companies should minimize movement of crews to different regions in their territory. By assigning the same crews to the same work areas, cross pollination and potential exposures are limited. Note, this may require a company to need additional resources and could impact restoration times.

☐ When information is available, hosts should avoid sending responding crews into areas with significant COVID-19 outbreaks. The host company should work in those areas.

☐ When information is available, the host company should provide full situational awareness of the COVID-19 impact, the number of cases in the community (or region), and what protective measures are in place to responding crews and their company, with regular updates.

☐ Host companies should identify a liaison who can work with each responding company to provide information about local conditions. Consider providing this information in advance of receiving responding crews.

☐ Host companies should try to minimize person-to-person contact for work assignment distribution, material distribution and use drop points.

☐ Host companies will provide “Indoor Work” procedures to responding company prior to personnel deploying. Any discrepancies will be reviewed and agreed upon prior to personnel responding.

☐ Host companies should use technology for onboarding and briefings (e.g., online conferencing services, conference calls) or conduct briefings in the field to prevent large meetings and enforce social distancing when in-person meetings are required. Have safety onboarding on videos that can be distributed to crews in advance, with conference calls for Q&A. Conduct daily briefings remotely where feasible.

☐ If practicable, pre-staging should be avoided unless the threat is imminent.

☐ Host companies should look for opportunities within the make safe and/or restoration process
to execute the function remotely.

☐ Responding Companies should deploy with appropriate PPE (including face shields if possible), and an initial supply of COVID-19 cleaning supplies. The host company will be responsible for resupplying cleaning materials equal to their internal workforce.

☐ If a Mutual Aid employee becomes symptomatic or feels they have been exposed to COVID-19 while deployed, the employee will self-isolate and immediately contact both their Host and Responding company immediate supervisor:

  o Supervisors will report symptoms utilizing the host company’s COVID-19 reporting procedures and following Host company initial directions.

  o Host company will contact responding company POC to review symptoms, travel history, and social interactions. The Responding company will be responsible for determining if the employee should be immediately quarantined or redeployed to the employee’s home work center before quarantining.
General COVID-19 Safety Practices

☐ If you are sick or have a fever or any flu-/virus-like symptoms, report this immediately to your host and responding company supervisor and consult your physician.

☐ Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue, then immediately throw the tissue in the trash.

☐ Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not immediately available use an alcohol based hand sanitizer.

☐ Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

☐ Regularly disinfect your phones and handheld devices as these are some of the dirtiest items we carry.

☐ Regularly clean the interior of vehicles, and limited multiple personnel sharing a vehicle.

☐ Maintain social distancing whenever possible [six (6) feet distance, even more so if possible, from anyone coughing or sneezing]. Avoid shaking hands and touching others.

☐ Use “non-circulating mode” for vehicle air conditioning/heating/ventilation.

PPE

☐ Surgical masks are not required as they do not provide measurable protection and are not recommended by the CDC. Company-issued N95 respirators should be worn if needed based on an inside a building job task and the presence of quarantined or ill people.

☐ If entering a customer’s premises that is known to be quarantined, prior to performing any job function that would require additional hand protection, wear disposable latex or nitrile gloves to prevent touching contaminated surfaces. Remove gloves after use and throw away. For the best protection, put gloves on prior to entering a customer’s home.

Engage customers when you arrive onsite

☐ Use talking points below prior to entry to engage the customer to discuss the social distancing practices that should be followed.

“One of the best ways to protect yourself from exposure to the new coronavirus is by maintaining at least 6 feet distance between you and others, and avoiding handshaking. Do you mind if I follow that procedure with you today?”

“If you are feeling sick today, would you mind remaining in a room other than where I am working? This is a best practice recommendation from my company and I’d like to follow it. If you can tell me where your equipment is located, I’ll do my job and let you know when I’m done.”

Staging Sites

☐ Instead of large staging sites, the host company should have multiple, smaller staging sites to limit contact with/exposure to crews. Design smaller staging sites to allow CDC distancing recommendations to be followed (currently 6 feet of distancing at all times).

☐ Cleaning supplies, hand sanitizer, sanitation supplies, etc. should be available for all crews located at staging areas.
Lodging and Meals

- Host company should establish lodging and dining sites where social distancing can be established, and the host can manage and control access and direct sanitation. Or the host should consider a take-out style meal service to allow workers to eat where adequate social distancing can be maintained.
  - This can include appropriately sized sleeper trailers, tents, renting out entire hotels/motels, or nontraditional spaces for crew-only use.
  - Keep crews that are working together in the same lodging and dining facilities.
  - Have a plan for feeding crews in the event restaurants are closed by government order.
  - Have lodging, dining, and common areas cleaned following CDC guidelines. (See CDC Recommendations.)
  - Cleaning supplies, hand sanitizer/handwashing stations, sanitation supplies, etc. should be available for all crews located at all lodging and meals areas.
  - Provide laundry service, if needed.
  - Minimize travel in large vehicles such as buses by having crews use trucks for transportation between lodging and work sites.
  - Provide necessary supplies to clean vehicles following CDC guidelines. (See CDC Recommendations.)
  - Try to minimize exposure by providing box lunches, snacks, water, etc.

External Outreach and Communication

- Host company should proactively communicate to regulators and government partners that make safe and restoration tasks may be slower due to the new response regime. Establish and disseminate information to customers that restoration times may be longer.

- Host company should proactively communicate with customers about social distancing efforts. Ensure responding crews have consistent messaging and practices.

Health Issues

- Workers’ temperatures should be taken daily. If a worker has a temperature above 100.4 F, he/she should be removed from the workforce and should follow CDC guidelines on what to do if you are sick. (See CDC Recommendations.)

- Workers who become ill should immediately contact host and responding supervisors, and follow CDC guidelines. (See CDC Recommendations.)

- Workers should minimize the use of currency and use credit cards instead to avoid hand-to-hand contact.
CDC Recommendations

Interim Guidance for Business and Employers:

Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations:

What to Do If You Are Sick:

Guidance for Large Events:

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