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COVID-19 Preparedness Considerations for Electric Cooperatives

Although governments and businesses have business continuity plans to help them respond to natural disasters, technological failures or other disruptions, planning for a pandemic requires different continuity assumptions. Unlike hurricanes, winter storms or earthquakes that are confined to certain geographic areas and defined periods of time, a pandemic impacts a wide geographic area, an exceptionally high proportion of the population and could last several months.

Here are steps that electric cooperatives may consider as part of their business continuity planning related to the coronavirus:

Review and Confirm Your Business Continuity Plan

- ✓ Review your co-op's emergency preparedness plan with staff involved in executing the plan.
- ✓ Focus on maintaining the availability of key personnel—such as power plant operators, lineworkers, and member service representatives.
- ✓ If you expect employees to work remotely, evaluate your software licenses and conduct stress tests on your VPN network for bandwidth, security, connectivity and other potential limitations to support increased remote traffic.
- ✓ If employees are required to come into the office, consider staggered work hours and ensure those employees are trained on established health standards.
- ✓ Review policies that may be suspended or changed during a pandemic, such as business travel, sick leave requirements. Review OSHA requirements for maintaining a healthy, safe workplace. The CDC and OSHA have guidance for workplace safety and health.

Focus on Employee Health and Safety

- ✓ Provide guidance to employees to prevent the spread of illness. The [CDC website](#) provides guidance on healthy habits and personal hygiene to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.
- ✓ Provide instructions for employees who may develop symptoms so they know to stay home, who to contact at your co-op who to contact for medical care.
- ✓ Establish a policy to activate your business continuity plan, including business travel and situations when an employee or an employee's household family member returns from locations where there are reports of a coronavirus occurrence.

Communicate with Key Stakeholders (Board, Suppliers, Customers)

- ✓ Discuss your business continuity plan with other critical infrastructure providers, contractors and suppliers to ensure that your co-op's interdependencies are not compromised.
- ✓ Provide updates to member-consumers about your efforts to manage potential business disruption.
- ✓ Check with your business insurance provider to confirm your coverage in the event of a business interruption loss.

Stay Vigilant and Monitor Evolving Trends

- ✓ Monitor CDC and public health websites so you are informed and prepared for a public health emergency impacting your area.
- ✓ Remain vigilant in the face of evolving cyber and physical security threats. Maintain your focus on protecting your systems from those who are seeking to capitalize on the disruption in normal business operations.