What is Coronavirus (COVID-19)?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses which may cause illness in animals or humans. In humans, several coronaviruses are known to cause respiratory infections ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). The most recently discovered coronavirus causes coronavirus disease (COVID-19) which has infected thousands worldwide.

Understanding the Unique Challenges for Water Agencies

- Providing continuity of operations including chemical and fuel deliveries.
- Monitoring hygiene and waste management including maintenance of PPE.
- Developing an inventory of essential staffing and their ability to operate from home.
- Providing management of essential staffing including social distancing and family preparedness.
- Providing effective communication plans for customers including relief from utility bills and water shut-offs due to non-payment.

How Can the COVID-19 Pandemic Impact You?

This pandemic could have many immediate or long-range impacts on a water utility. For example, what if ...

- 30-60%* of your critical or essential employees could not report to work because of illness, needing to care for sick family members, school closures, etc.? What if this included Certified Operators, Analysts, and/or information technology staff? Note: State or or other mutual aide agreements may not be a resource for staff because most/all members will be suffering from the same staffing shortages.
- Your critical suppliers suffer 30-60% absenteeism of their critical or essential staff?
- 3.4%** of infected employees die as a result of being infected with COVID-19?
- There is a local, regional, or national shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE)?

Are You Prepared for the COVID-19 Pandemic?

Here are some questions to consider when evaluating your Agency’s ability to maintain essential functions during a pandemic. Have you:

- Developed a Pandemic Plan or modified an existing Emergency Response Plan or Continuity of Operations Plan?
- Established screening procedures for staff to help ensure they do not bring the virus into water/wastewater (W/WW) plants?
- Established a worker rotation schedule for critical staff that keeps them in isolation until relieved by another operator?
- Established workplace hygiene protocols such as posting handwashing guidance, initiating social distancing, and requiring diligent disinfection of common areas?
- Worked with employees to develop family preparedness plan?
- Developed remote access or secondary control room capability for controls system operations?
- Established appropriate level of process automation to conduct minimum level of controls of the water/wastewater/collection/distribution systems?

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* Absenteeism estimates based on previous influenza pandemics.
** Mortality rate based on estimates as of 3/20/20.
Protecting public health and improving community sustainability

For over 50 years Tetra Tech has helped provide safe, reliable water supplies and wastewater treatment. We are an industry leader in the planning, design, permitting and construction of water and wastewater treatment facilities. Tetra Tech is dedicated to technical excellence and the complete satisfaction of our clients on every project.

Let Tetra Tech help you prepare for, respond to, and recover from this pandemic and other, potentially catastrophic emergencies.

How Can Tetra Tech Help?

Tetra Tech is one of the largest consulting firms in the U.S., and we are consistently ranked as a top provider of management and consulting services by Engineering News Record. As the #1 ranked Water and Water Treatment/Supply engineering firm in the U.S. and a leading provider of emergency preparedness and response across the country, we offer comprehensive emergency preparedness, response, and recovery services for water utilities that include:

- Developing and reviewing Pandemic Plans, Emergency Response Plans (ERPs), Contingency Plans, Continuity of Operations (COOP), and Crisis/Risk Communication Plans
- Conducting risk, resilience, hazard vulnerability, and business impact needs, capability, and gap assessments
- Ensuring that water utility emergency plans dovetail into plans developed by local Emergency Management Agencies, Emergency Planning Committees, Public Health Agencies, Emergency Medical Services, and local utility plan
- Assisting with the development of mutual aid agreements/memorandums of understanding with critical suppliers and community response partners
- Conducting supply chain integrity assessments and PPE Hazard Assessments
- Helping prepare critical and essential staff and their families for long-term isolation and/or quarantine
- Providing documentation and reimbursement assistance
- Assessing current operational capabilities of remote operations

Tetra Tech is also a leading provider of training and exercises that comply with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) requirements. To help assess the viability of your Agency’s pandemic preparedness, we can develop training and/or exercises to help:

- Ensure that staff understand their roles in the Incident Command System (ICS);
- Confirm that communication protocols work as expected;
- Validate assumptions that impact the plan’s effectiveness;
- Confirm awareness of individual roles and responsibilities;
- Confirm the availability of resources identified in the plan;
- Confirm the ability to perform restoration tasks within established timeframes;
- Ensure that specific contingency plans or procedures are accurate and complete;
- Confirm that external vendors and contractors can provide adequate support (supply chain resiliency);
- Perform planning tasks without the use of normal communications capabilities;
- Confirm that back-up equipment or systems will perform as expected;
- Ensure that alternate workspace is adequate to perform critical functions; and
- Evaluate the timeliness of plan implementation in an unannounced test.

Learn more at tetratech.com

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