

Paradise Irrigation District

Return to Work

Responding to COVID-19 Pandemic

- ▶ Office
 - ▶ Set up handwashing stations and signs for 6ft physical distancing measures
 - ▶ Increased signs and encouraged public to practice safety measures. Public was mixed on response to physical distancing from customer service staff so the office closed its doors to the public for staff safety March 20th
 - ▶ Implemented Social distancing practice in the office to only allow 2-3 people in the office at once. Alternating days that employees could work from the office so their counterpart would not cross paths.
- ▶ Created a temporary telecommuting policy for any employee who had the capability to work remotely.
 - ▶ 1 of the 2 Customer Service staff would work in the office while other worked from home. Started with 1 of the staff primarily working from home as technology was limited and home working environments were not yet situated (still getting situated after Camp Fire)
 - ▶ IT created a created a new online chat option for customers questions. Emails, phone calls and voicemail returns was the primary to communicate. Customer requests did not reduce with the pandemic as the recovery need was still there.
 - ▶ Billing and AP could work 100% remotely with only early morning pick up of invoices were need to limit physical interactions.

Responding to COVID-19 Pandemic Cont.

- ▶ Office Management which included General Manager, Finance Manager, Office Manager, and IT/PIO and District Secretary alternated days in the office to provide additional support and safety for the 1 customer service staff in office. The rest of the team would remote work when applicable.
- ▶ Transmission and Distribution (T&D) Teams:
 - ▶ Early on all work in the field was limited to Emergency Response work as adhering to the 6 ft physical distancing required was impossible to do when working in a service line together. Each employee was allowed to take vehicle home to avoid cross contamination and allow for immediate response for call out when needed.
 - ▶ Employees who were not called in, received Emergency Paid leave to supplement the hours they normally would work.
 - ▶ Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent alternated days in the office to avoid contact.

Responding to COVID-19 Pandemic Cont.

▶ Treatment Plant

- ▶ Called the Day Operator off duty to limit interaction, he was paid Emergency Paid leave.
- ▶ Treatment Plant Superintendent would work 100% remotely
- ▶ Treatment Plant Shift operator would continue their 24 hour shift and would properly clean area before the next operator would report for duty. The transfer of duty and report would be done via phone instead of in person.
- ▶ Water Quality Technician would continue to sample and practice physical distancing, communicating via phones when needed.

▶ Board Meetings and other Committee Meetings

- ▶ Streamed online for public participation via Facebook. Board members given the option to call in or be physically distance from other members.

Phasing into alternate response plan

- ▶ The Office and Treatment Plant remained in original pandemic response with slight changes in whom was responsible for duties for balance and personal life, i.e Childcare and workload.
- ▶ T&D began to return to scheduled work as the need for the Camp Fire recovery was still in need. Installing Interim Water Supply (Backflows), replacing damaged service lateral lines and pressurizing mains and testing for VOC's
 - ▶ Morning Safety meetings limited to smaller groups with 6 ft spacing. Continued 1 person per vehicle. Supplied staff with disinfected spray, gloves and masks. Limited to a 3 person team per site.
 - ▶ Communication to be done via web conferencing or phone calls.

Phasing into alternate response plan Cont.

Each department held a daily meeting to line out work, set goals and address any concerns.

- ▶ Manager meetings held 3 times per week as a check with each department giving a recap of work done, planned work and address any needs like, IT, HR or communication needs.
- ▶ Weekly “All Hands” Monday morning meeting to keep all staff up to date with the Districts operations, as well as how the State guild lines were changing.
- ▶ District Manager formed a local agency management group to work with and support each other in navigating the pandemic.

Phase 3 response to modified re-opening

- ▶ Office remains closed to public traffic and continue to response via telephone, chat and emails. Both Customer Service staff are back in the office to support the customers needs. They are 6 ft apart and will continue practicing the safety measures. As the community reopened and the warm weather continued we saw an increase need for new IWS needs. We are also on a bi monthly billing cycle and the bills recently went out creating more customer service calls as well as payment processing.
- ▶ Office is looking into a permanent safety barrier from the public prior to re-opening doors.
- ▶ Treatment Plant is bringing Day Shift operator back on but remaining closed to the public, all other operations to remain the same under alternate plan.
- ▶ T&D will remain in their alternate response phase with a focus on Camp Fire recovery while maintaining the health and safety of the public and co-workers.

“New Normal”....yet again

- ▶ As PID transitions and navigates this pandemic we are looking to ways that we can prepare for on going physical distancing and remote working to eligible employees.
- ▶ We are presenting to our board IT advancements to better broadcast and interact with the public via online streaming as we feel we can interact with more people.
- ▶ Looking into implementing and using more of our current technology in place for efficiencies and offering more self service modules on our website for better customer service.

Challenges

- ▶ Navigating the HR hot topics of COVID-19 paid leave, 12 weeks expanded FMLA
- ▶ IT safety concerns of remote work
- ▶ Getting IT supplies and safety supplies when supply was low and demand high
- ▶ Working with our Unions to make sure safety measures were available and working conditions were appropriate
- ▶ Financial Impact of Emergency Paid leave, laid off temporary employees
- ▶ Recovery work from Camp Fire still demanding
- ▶ Supporting staff during this challenging times to support their family needs

Opportunities

- ▶ Managers meetings via phone conference.
 - ▶ Having these meeting more regularly in a shorter time frame proved to be more effective and efficient than 1 times a week for 2 hours.
- ▶ All Hands on meetings weekly
 - ▶ Helps keeps the staff more informed than the Monthly meetings
- ▶ Telecommuting sometimes allows more uninterrupted times for work on projects
- ▶ Outside Agency Group
 - ▶ Working more closely with other agencies and supporting each other and building better relationships.