

# HOW SMART SOLUTIONS HELP UTILITIES ENSURE UNINTERRUPTED SERVICES DURING A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

by MeterSYS

## MITIGATE RISKS WITH SMART TECHNOLOGIES

Software, sensors, smart mobile devices, and communication networks can help your utility and your staff be better prepared and more responsive to your community during unexpected public health events.

## TIPS FOR UTILITIES ON PREPARING AND RESPONDING TO PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

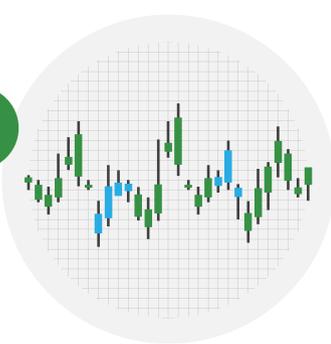


### 1 PROVIDE STAFF WITH REMOTE AND SECURE ACCESS TO YOUR SOFTWARE

Staff, from billing to distribution to field operations, should have secure access to the data they need if they are required to operate remotely. If your data is not available to staff from remote locations during a crisis, there may be a vulnerability at the worst possible time. Data security and governance should be reviewed to make sure there are customer and utility data protections in place at all times, especially during a public health crisis.

### 2 SHIFT LOW VALUE WORK TO HIGHER PRIORITY SERVICES

Investing in technologies such as Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) and remote meter disconnection technologies will automate manually-intensive tasks and free up employees to focus on more critical and time-sensitive issues, such as leak detection and distribution line repair work. AMI systems also allow utilities to maintain critical meter reading and billing schedules with limited staff.



### 3 INVEST IN PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE TECHNOLOGIES

Mitigate risks such as pipe bursts and meter read failures by investing in predictive analytics and sensors to detect risks before they occur and disrupt services. During a crisis that may include shelter-in-place orders, service interruptions are even more critical to avoid. There are many technologies, including AMI, leak detection sensors, and pressure sensors that can help reduce large sources of clean water loss during both crises and during normal times.

### 4 SHARE COMMUNICATIONS IN REAL TIME

Does your communication plan account for emergencies? Does staff have the right technology to contact utility customers across multiple channels on a timely basis? Ensuring the utility has a single strategy for communicating internally with staff and externally with customers during a crisis is critical to maintaining control and managing expectations of service delivery during events. Metering technologies should include integrated customer engagement applications to significantly enhance external communications.



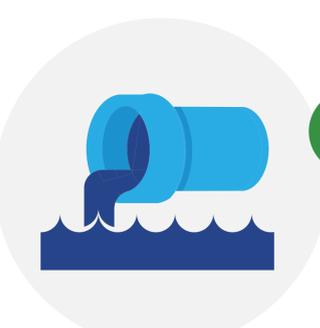
### 5 PROTECT YOUR EMPLOYEES AND YOUR CUSTOMERS

What policies and resources are in place for your employees that address mandates such as social distancing, use of enhanced protective equipment, or may require essential workers to deploy to work or field sites during disasters? A major benefit to technologies such as AMI and online bill payment processing is that they protect both your community and your workforce by limiting personal encounters during unexpected public health events like Covid-19.



### 6 CAPTURE REAL TIME DATA ON WATER QUALITY

Can your utility use technology, such as remote sensors, to detect, sense, and report on levels of water contaminants in your system? Can you detect the source pollutant and trace its point of origination? Is the data near-real time and integrated with your work order system so alerts can be issued and corrective actions can be made on a timely basis?

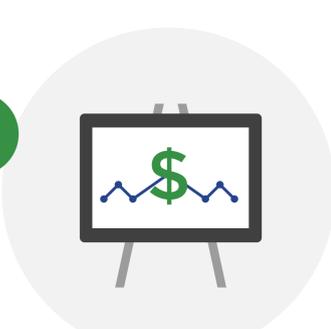


### 7 PROTECT YOUR SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE

One realization from Covid-19 is that sewer infrastructure can be damaged due to changes in customer behaviors for sanitation. Making sure you can communicate with customers on what items cannot be flushed and also identify instances of blockage or overflow to quickly remedy will limit major impacts to the wastewater system. Additionally, wastewater treatment sites can be the source of air quality issues and other environmental impacts. Can your utility detect and respond to adverse air quality pollutant events?

### 8 PLAN FOR FINANCIAL STABILITY IN TIMES OF CRISIS

The National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) conservatively estimates the impact to clean water utilities nationwide of lost revenues due to coronavirus at \$12.5 billion. This may be a low-end estimate assuming an average loss of revenue of 20 percent. Do you have a plan to understand and respond to these financial challenges? How are you tracking financial losses in a time of crisis and what are your plans for insurance, reimbursement, and replacement? Can your utility afford to cover infrastructure losses? Does your staff have plans for negotiating the path for Disaster Recovery Financing?

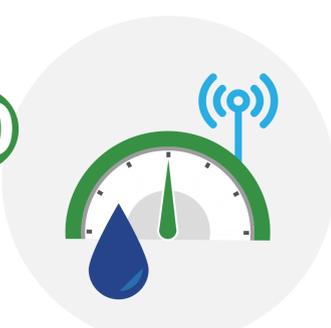


### 9 INVEST IN SAFE AND EFFICIENT SOLID WASTE SERVICES

Sensors and intelligent software can help reduce bin overflows, detect contaminants in your solid waste streams, and identify the sources of those contaminants. Smart technologies can also help you limit carbon emissions and person-to-person contact by reducing pick-up routes for bins with low-fill levels.

### 10 PRIORITIZING TECHNOLOGY USES IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

According to the 2019 American Water Works Association (AWWA) survey of its members, Climate Risk and Resiliency was the least important of 30 business initiatives. What plans are in place to respond to water shortages, stormwater overflows, or other extreme weather conditions? What technologies are you using to help reduce these risks?



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