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VI. CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS

The need for communicating with our customers, general public, news media, employees and local officials is more important during emergency conditions, such as storms, load-shedding events, and other emergencies, than at any other time. During an extended power outage, for example, customers without lights or heat can become upset and expect restoration within a few hours after calling the Company. Obviously, this cannot always be accomplished, and often, due to widespread damage to the transmission and/or distribution system, large numbers of customers may be without service for many hours or even days before restoration.

It is important, therefore, that timely and accurate information about restoration efforts be announced as widely as possible. Where applicable, the procedures outlined in this section shall be applied to non-storm emergencies, including load shed events and other emergencies. It is imperative that all company departments promote the same communications externally in any emergency event.

The Communications team shall be responsible for keeping customers, media, local elected officials, local municipal officials and employees informed on safety issues, storm preparation and the status of restoration efforts. It is extremely important that the Company communicate regularly throughout the event and share information to ensure a consistent message is provided both internally and externally.

Periodic reports should be accurate and timely, and avoid misleading the public with optimistic restoration times. If accurate projections are not immediately available, Company representatives should provide only information that can be authoritatively confirmed. Subsequent reports will be forthcoming as better information becomes available.

The Incident Commander (IC) should be responsible for providing periodic, confirmed updates to the CIO team. It is essential that the CIO team receive and issue information that is consistent in briefing the news media and customers.

A. *Event Information*

A single information source will be established in the R-EOC's or S-EOC for informing the CIO team who are responsible for public information.

The following paragraphs describe the flow and processes of obtaining information for the CIO team before and during an event.

1. **Pre-Event**


A pre-event conference call is initiated by Business Continuity where weather forecast details are provided. The severity and risk of impacts on the electric system are to be discussed, as are Company preparations, resource acquisition and pre-event communications.

2. **Event Situation**

During a storm or emergency event the Incident Commander is the sole source of information for the CIO and CIO team regarding Company operations and response. As part of its responsibilities, the CIO team monitors information from secondary sources including the outage map, digital communications, regulatory communications, customer communications, municipal and liaison updates and media reports. Conflicting reports are brought to the IC for clarification.

3. **Estimated Times of Restoration (ETRs)**

The Company's process for calculating Estimated Times of Restoration (ETRs) is coupled to the OMS but varies depending upon the event type and associated

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decentralization level. For Event Types 4 and 5, the OMS calculates the ETRs, which may be modified by CED as the trouble case dictates. However, Event Types 1, 2 and 3 typically require a modified approach that uses the Damage Assessment process as the primary driver for calculating ETRs. This modification is needed to address the widespread and/or severe damage typical of major storms. [Section V.C.](#) provides additional information on the decentralization process.

The Company uses a three-tiered process to conduct Damage Assessment, as outlined in the [Damage Assessment Procedure](#). The first tier references a Rapid Survey, which provides a general impression of the type and extent of damage and includes a review of the sub-transmission system. The second tier is a more formal Stage I, which focuses on a detailed inspection of the three-phase, main lines (distribution feeders). The third and final tier is a formal Stage II, which focuses on the double and single phases, as well as their associated laterals (side taps), off the main lines.

While the Rapid Survey is intended to provide the IC with an immediate yet admittedly more subjective damage assessment (using best professional judgments), data collected during Stages I and II are compiled and used to calculate more objective line hour estimates needed to repair the observed damage. These estimates, in conjunction with available and projected resources, are used to generate (1) a global ETR within 24-48 hours after the storm has cleared the region and (2) municipal ETRs within 72 hours after the storm has cleared the region.


A customer-specific ETR with high confidence is feasible at the tail end of the restoration effort, when isolated pockets of outages remain. Resources assigned to these isolated pockets are better situated to provide realistic time periods for restoration due to their local control of the electric assets. These time periods will be used to communicate ETRs to the remaining customers via the established reporting and communications processes.

Please note that the time periods referenced for calculating global and municipal ETRs are based on more recent restoration efforts. However and if a Category 5 tropical cyclone were to directly impact the New England region (clearly, an Event Type 1), these time periods may need to be extended based on the extreme severity of experienced damage, which will impede movement of resources and require more time at each location to gather damage data. Such extensions would be reported as an issue within the Incident Action Plan.

4. Field/On-Site Communications

Whenever an electric emergency is classified Event Types 1 through 3 (restoration cannot be accomplished within 24 hours and outside crews are required), the Chief Information Officer will be notified and CIO team member will be placed on standby for possible deployment to the impacted area. Team members will generally include: media relations contact and Audio/visual documentation specialist.

Team members will bring sufficient personal gear for an extended event. Lodging Leads will include the CIO team members in their plans as notified to do so.

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B. Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

When notified by weather services or Business Continuity of impending adverse weather, the CIO team will begin to monitor the situation and prepare the PSAs.


When the CIO team contact or other designee issues emergency status updates for the purpose of updating customers, media, local elected officials, local municipal officials and employees, the IC must be issued the final draft prior to its dissemination. PSA’s are issued a minimum of three times per day to coincide with local news cycles

Public statements may include the following confirmed items:

1. Number of customers affected.
2. Affected regions.
3. Numbers of crews.
4. Estimated restoration times.
5. Cause of the outage/event
6. Warnings regarding hazardous conditions and public safety information.
7. Description of emergency response actions already taken.
8. Customer Service phone numbers for customers to report outages or damage, as well as Company website link to report outages and access restoration information.

PSAs are distributed to the following stakeholders:

- CIO Team Members
- Customer Service Team
- Employees
- Media outlets
- Local Elected Officials
- Local Municipal Officials
- Regulatory and State Governmental Agencies

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C. Media Communications

Prior to and during an emergency event, a Unitil media representative will be available to media outlets for information regarding company activities in addition to regularly scheduled PSAs. In larger, more extensive emergencies, it may be desirable to schedule periodic news media briefings and have an appointed Unitil spokesperson available for press conferences.

News media representatives may be permitted access to facilities in times of emergency, accompanied by appropriate personnel. Pre-designated areas within the limits of safety and security will be selected. Live coverage from R-EOC, S-EOC, Staging Sites or CSC has proven effective in demonstrating to the public how the Company is responding to the emergency.

The goals are to:

- Provide accurate, timely information to the media, customers, local elected officials, local municipal officials and employees
- Demonstrate Unitil’s preparedness by proactive and diligent communication

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D. Digital Communications


Prior to a known event, the [Digital Communications representative\(s\)](#), will review and update the Outage Center website content. During the event, the designated member will ensure that [PSAs](#) are posted on the [website](#) and that [Outage Center](#) content is updated as needed. The Outage Map, within the Outage Center, displays outage and restoration information in both geographically and in tabular format. Outage information will be provided by region or town including customers served and customers impacted on the tabular side. Geographically, customers will also see outage information and an estimated outage location which a customer can view to access an [Estimated Time of Restoration \(ETR\)](#) range. For example: ETR 5:15 PM to 7:15 PM.

During times of major outage events the ETR engine will be turned off and specific restoration times replaced by the term “Assessing” until Damage Assessment is complete and a Global ETR determined. Town by town ETR’s will be made available as Stage II damage assessment information is refined.

Additional features to the web site include an online outage reporting tool that will update OMS directly and a window to Unitil’s social media feed.

Digital Communications will use designated company-sponsored social media accounts to provide periodic updates to the public prior to and throughout the event.

Audio visual documentation specialists may be utilized (as needed) for compiling a pictorial record of major emergencies, supplementing news media coverage, social media and reinforcing employee communications.


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E. Employee Communications

Employee Communications are important during extended outages. Daily and/or overnight email notifications and postings are examples of typical communications and will be sent by the [Employee Communications Coordinator](#). All information released will be approved by the CIO and/or IC.

Topics can include:


- Weather updates
- Safety information
- Company preparations and activities
- Restoration status
- [PSAs](#)
- Customer feedback
- Link to event photos and videography
- Links to outage center
- Important employee information

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F. Regulatory/Elected Officials

The [Chief Information Officer](#) will prepare information for the [Regulatory/Elected Liaison Officer](#) who will be responsible for maintaining contact with appropriate regulatory and elected officials. Contacts are initiated at the earliest time feasible. The Liaison team will communicate with regulatory and elected officials prior to and during an emergency event using email, conference calls, and individual phone calls and coordinate with state emergency management bunker staff when required.

Business Continuity is responsible for liaison with emergency management agencies at the state and Federal levels during non-emergencies and prior to a known major emergency. Once a predicted emergency event is forecasted, Business Continuity staff will prepare and submit Pre-Event Reports as required and submit to the appropriate agencies twice daily until outages occur. Once SAL personnel are activated this responsibility is assumed by members of the Liaison Unit under the [Regulatory/Elected Officials Liaison Officer](#). State and Federal emergency management’s officials have been given the contact information for contacting the Liaison Unit during a storm event.

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G. Municipal Officials

During events where the R-EOC's are activated, Customer Energy Solutions will provide staffing in the [Municipal Rooms](#) in an effort to facilitate communications between the Company and municipal officials prior to an event and during the restoration effort. The Company has experienced over time that supporting municipalities severely affected by emergency events not only supports the local area affected, but also aides in prioritizing the restoration of electric facilities and may improve access to company facilities by attaining municipal support services.

A dedicated telephone number will be established in each R-EOC for responding to local municipal inquiries. This responsibility will be assigned to designated regional municipal room representatives with the activation of the S-EOC and R-EOC. The telephone number will be displayed in the R-ERP and given out to municipal officials for their official use only. The regional municipal room shall prepare and maintain a list of cities, towns, and key contact information. The Company also utilizes an application (iRestore First Responder) which allows municipal officials the ability to report electrical hazards directly from the field with their mobile device and has a process in place to monitor the incoming reports.

Each electric distribution company, during an emergency event, shall provide periodic reports to municipal officials including, emergency managers or their designees, that contain detailed information related to emergency conditions and restoration performance for each affected city and town. The content and format of these periodic reports (Pre-Event Stage Reports and Service Restoration Stage Reports) as required by state regulatory agencies can be found in [Section XI – Forms & Reports](#).

The following communications carried out by the Regional Municipal Rooms satisfy the state regulatory reporting requirements: scheduled conference calls with municipal officials, including emergency managers; Community Liaison communications (telephonic, electronic and/or face-to-face) with municipal officials, including emergency managers; and/or provision of emergency conditions and restoration information, including but not limited to outage and restoration information, priority wires-down locations, critical facilities impacted by the emergency event, through a community website portal that may be accessed by municipal emergency managers.

1. Municipal Conference Calls


During Event Types 1 through 3, where an extended restoration period is expected, the municipal conference call shall be utilized twice daily until completion of the restoration effort. These conference calls may begin prior to the storm's impact if a great number of interruptions are expected or as directed by the IC.

Additionally, in extraordinary events such as load shed scenarios where information on restoration needs to be communicated to municipal officials; a Municipal Conference Call shall be utilized. The Regional Municipal Room, using their conference call number is responsible to coordinate the call and notify the affected municipal officials of the conference call number and time that the conference call will take place.

MeetNow Reservationless Toll Free Dial-In Number (US & Canada)

Unitil's reserved toll-free number is site specific; The Municipal Room Liaison will issue a number when necessary. Follow steps 1 through 5 below:

1. Give your participants the date and time of the call, your Dial-In Number and your Conference Code.
2. At the specified time, dial your Reservationless-Plus Dial-In Number.
3. When prompted, enter your Conference Code followed by #.

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4. When prompted, press * to identify yourself as the call leader, then enter your Leader PIN followed by #.

Your participants join the conference by following steps 2 and 3 above.

Notifications to municipal officials and state emergency management can be by phone, e-mail or fax; it should be emphasized that this confidential number is to be distributed only to state emergency management staff and municipal officials.

Internal participants on the Municipal conference call should include:

- R-OAC for the DOC
- Appropriate Area Supervisors
- Scribe
- Communications Representative
- Customer Energy Solutions leader or Municipal Supervisor
- Planning Chief


All information shared in the conference call shall be discussed with the Incident Commander prior to the call in order to be shared with MA DPU or NH PUC, staff, if necessary. When appropriate, CIO team should review and approve the conference call talking points prior to each conference call held.

The call will begin with the setting of call ground rules. Ground rules to be shared with meeting participants:

- The call should last approximately 20 minutes
- Questions from the participants will be taken at the end of the call
- Questions should be general in nature; requests for information concerning specific locations should be discussed separately after conclusion of the call.
- Local government representatives should contact their respective Municipal Room Liaisons or their Emergency Management Office for additional update information.

The Regional Municipal Liaison shall then introduce the R-OAC who will then provide the following reviews and information for the current event:

- Number of customers affected by peak of event
- Number of customers restored
- Number of customers still out
- Final estimated restoration time of event
- Number of crews being utilized including mutual assistance, contractor, service crews, surveyors, etc.
- Areas where crews are working
- Areas where crews will be sent next
- Type and extent of damage found, pole down, wire down, worst locations, etc.
- Weather update and impact of weather on restoration

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- Known open shelter locations


Every Municipal Conference Call shall include a Q&A session to allow call participants an opportunity to voice questions and concerns. At the completion of the R-OAC comments, the Municipal Room Liaison will entertain questions. When the question period is completed, the date, time and phone number for the next call to be held will be announced by the Municipal Room Liaison.

Municipal conference calls will continue to be held until the R-OAC, CIO and IC agree that the calls are no longer necessary at the end of the event.

A scribe will be appointed by the Municipal Room Liaison to document call participants and the discussions taking place in each call, including questions posed from the participants. This documentation will become part of the permanent storm file.


In the event that phone lines are incapacitated, the requirement to conduct this call is waived. Municipal Officials will acquire information through state emergency management as is normal operating procedure under the Incident Command System.

Business Continuity shall ensure each Municipal Room Liaison is annually trained on community conference calls to ensure those conducting the call are proficient in its requirements. It is expected that at least 75% of the management staffing in Customer Energy Solutions receive this training to ensure proper call performance if required.


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H. Communications Unit Actions


Communication Unit Actions (by Role) (Table 6)			
Responsibility	Pre-event	During Event	Post-Event
Chief Information Officer (CIO)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Contact and schedule team, including internal and external resources, to ensure adequate coverage during the event Conduct a prep conference call with the team Monitor the differing communications channels (internal and external) Communicate/brief the SRC Assist in developing SRC messaging 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Work with IC to develop communications protocols as identified in ERP Manage Media Relations, Employee communications and Digital communications Provide accurate information on restoration to customer service operations, liaison team and municipal relations team Maintain regular communications with the SRC Continue to assist in developing SRC messaging 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Manage the restoration completion messaging for internal and external stakeholders Ensure thorough documentation of messaging discussions and decisions made during the restoration Coordinate with internal stakeholders to ensure no significant, external issues remain Confirm completion of messaging with IC Approve public messaging thanking customers and external resource personnel for support Provide a summary to senior team on overall perception of the company's performance
Employee Communications	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Issue storm prep update to employees 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Provide daily updates to employees 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Issue Restoration Complete email to employees
Media Relations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Update distribution lists, if needed Review templates and update if needed Issue Prep PSA at appropriate time Respond to media inquiries about preparations 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Edit and distribute PSA as needed Handle inquiries from media Setup field visits with crews Ensure messaging aligns with IC projections of ETR's and Customer Service messaging Proactively position the company as well prepared 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Issue the Restoration complete PSA Handle media inquiries Document media activities Determine where or if follow up is required

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Communication Unit Actions (by Role) (Table 6)			
Responsibility	Pre-event	During Event	Post-Event
Digital Communications	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update Outage Center and other relevant areas of the website Post prep PSA and information via social media Send email and/or text communication to customers affected informing them of upcoming event Proactively position company regarding preparedness and safety. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Update the website with PSAs and other relevant information Manage and monitor social media outlets pushing information and responding to inquiries Update customers with pertinent information via email and/or text communication Incorporate field photography and videography where appropriate 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Post Restoration complete information on website and social media. Share field photography and videography where appropriate, use for event documentation.
Municipal Liaison Officer (System) Municipal Liaison Communications (regional)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Establish the Muni room numbers Establish all required internal contacts – customer service, wires down, Planning, CC, Outbound calls to – Municipal officials (Police, Fire, Town Managers, DPW, Emergency Response Manager) Outbound calls to Key account executives Document all calls and information 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Take pertinent information from agencies provide information to appropriate group Problem resolution for customers and constituents Work with CC to stay current Continue proactive outreach Document the calls and time of resolution Deal with local elected officials if routine items – escalate if needed 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Final call out to contacts Document any follow up actions Check with Planner or R-OAC on follow up and closing of room
Dispatch	<p style="text-align: center; color: red;">Off Hours</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Notify on-call personnel of inclement weather For off-hour events – make notification to on-call team leader of trouble Staff up if needed during transition Notify a “list” that the R-EOC is opening Re-direct communication phone lines to muni rooms 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Manage non impacted areas Continue to manage gas events Provide relevant information to the Planner, CC or Muni room Document any relevant information Highlight worsening weather conditions or situations developing in other areas 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Switch to normal operation Bring phones back centrally Continue to log an after action information that may develop – broken poles, etc.

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Communication Unit Actions (by Role) (Table 6)			
Responsibility	Pre-event	During Event	Post-Event
Customer Operations/Service	Regular Hours 1. Continue to take gas calls 2. Direct information to the EOC personnel 3. Continue to manage other areas not impacted and event		

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I. Communications with Other Utilities/Agencies

During emergency events, communications must be maintained with other various utilities for the coordination of operations and restoration. The following section details how communications are made with the various utilities during emergency situations.

1. Neighboring Electric Utilities

Communications must be maintained with other utilities concerning outages and restoration progress. In addition to the NAMAG coordination calls which occur during a New England regional impact, neighboring utilities also receive copies of all pre-event stage and restoration stage reports that are submitted to regulatory agencies.

For further details regarding the NAMAG and coordination activities, refer to [Attachment 11 – NAMAG Charter](#) found in [Section VIII](#) of this document.

2. Telephone & Cable Companies

Communications with telephone and cable companies are important during restoration efforts to coordinate joint work such as pole replacements. During major events many reports of wires down are received (including non-electrical) by the company. Those identified as non-electrical should be submitted to the appropriate company and coordinated for repairs. In each region the Pole and Transformer Coordinator is responsible for maintaining contact with telephone companies to coordinate restoration efforts requiring joint effort. Contacts for local telephone companies are reviewed annually for accuracy.

3. Public Works

Communications to local public works departments are handled via the municipal room through pre-established dedicated channels. The Municipal Room directs requests and information from public works departments to operations and acts as the dedicated resource to contact during emergencies. For more information related to municipal room operations refer to the [Municipal Communications Liaison](#) and [Municipal Officials Communications](#) sections located previously in this document.

4. State Emergency Management Agencies & FEMA

For major storm restoration events local, state, and federal emergency management agencies will be notified and updated on restoration status as appropriate. Active emergency management agencies will receive copies of all pre-event and restoration stage reports during an extended outage with the primary means of coordination occurring through the [Regulatory/Elected Official Liaison Unit](#) throughout the event.