



## M E M O R A N D U M

To: Governors' Offices  
Re: Governor Guidance on the Energy Sector During COVID-19 Response  
From: National Governors Association Office of Government Relations  
Date: March 25, 2020 (Revised December 15, 2020)

### **Purpose**

This memo serves to provide guidance to governors on how they can best support and protect the energy industry during the COVID-19 pandemic. It highlights three areas governors should consider to ensure energy continuity and shares the energy industry response to COVID-19. NGA has been in conversation with the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and the energy industry to collect much of this information.

### **Key Takeaways**

- (1) Ensure critical energy infrastructure employees can be identified and credentialed in the event of a shelter in place order
- (2) Critical infrastructure workers may need priority access to vaccine distribution, testing, PPE, and cleaning supplies
- (3) Waivers for fuel carrier standards and CDL's may be needed to move critical utility supplies

### **Things Governors Should Consider**

- (1) Ensure critical energy infrastructure employees can be identified and credentialed in the event of a shelter in place order**

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) issued revised guidance on who should be classified as "essential" critical infrastructure workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. The list is meant to assist prioritizing activities related to continuity of operations and incident response, including the appropriate movement of critical infrastructure workers within and between jurisdictions. Table 1 in the appendix details the energy sector workers deemed essential from the DHS memo. As of April 2<sup>nd</sup>, thirty-eight states have designated "essential businesses" and all thirty-eight states included the energy sector as essential. Twenty-nine of the states mention the DHS memo directly and twenty-nine states make specific references to the energy sector in the text of the declaration. Table 2 in the appendix details how states have handled addressing the energy industry in essential business designations.

Governors can connect with state emergency management agencies to determine how critical energy infrastructure employees are credentialed for travel in other extenuating circumstances like severe storms and tornadoes. There should already be a process in place to issue waiver requests, communicate with state and local authorities, and allow utility crews and energy personnel to move across the state in emergencies. Additionally, governors should coordinate with county and municipal leaders to communicate credentialing and exemptions to ensure that they are incorporating critical energy infrastructure employees into any emergency actions.

If a physical or cyber event or staff shortage affects the reliability of energy systems, utilities and energy companies may implement their mutual assistance agreements to move employees or equipment across state borders. Coordination with neighboring states to communicate what travel exemptions or credentials are being implemented can facilitate this interstate travel for critical energy infrastructure employees so they can maintain or restore utility service.

**(2) (UPDATED) Critical infrastructure workers may need priority access to vaccine distribution, testing, PPE, and cleaning supplies**

As COVID-19 spreads, it will be important to adequately protect critical energy infrastructure facilities that cannot be shuttered or operated remotely. Doing so will include testing potentially exposed employees before returning to work to limit the spread of the virus to critical employees needed to operate the grid and other energy systems. There are a limited number of qualified control room personnel and power plant employees and their roles cannot be completed remotely. If COVID-19 spreads to these facilities, it could seriously undermine the industry's ability to maintain energy continuity. In conversations with NGA and through formal [memos](#), industry representatives indicated that they would like to test these personnel so they can sequester the healthy ones and limit the spread of the virus among this critical community. It is also important to consider prioritizing critical infrastructure workers for access to the COVID-19 vaccine when it becomes available. For further guidance on strategies to support the equitable distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine, please reference the NGA [report](#) on equitable vaccine distribution.

The energy sector also maintains multiple types of facilities that will need to remain operational, even in the event of a shelter-in-place order or detection of an infection. These include major generating sites, utility operations centers and natural gas compressor stations. These facilities may require additional cleaning and access to personal protective equipment (PPE). Consideration should also be given to utility personnel who may need to enter residents' homes in the event a problem arises, i.e., a gas leak. Energy companies may need to be made aware if an individual at the customer's site has the virus or is otherwise under quarantine so sufficient protective measures can be taken for any company personnel entering the building. In the event of a shortage of or run on PPE and cleaning supplies, the energy industry may need to be placed on a priority access list to receive these supplies so they can maintain critical operations. Critical infrastructure services territories can be large and cross state boundaries, so providing them a direct line to the state emergency operations center can facilitate accessing PPE in a timely fashion.

**(3) Waivers for fuel carrier standards and CDL's may be needed to move critical utility supplies**

Energy companies may ask governors to request suspension of fuel carrier rules on hours of service or cargo weight so that essential equipment and personnel can be moved as quickly as possible throughout the state or from other states. Other requests might include toll waivers for utility and emergency response crews. The U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) has already issued an [emergency declaration](#) for COVID-19 exempting motor carriers and drivers providing transporting personnel, equipment, and supplies and otherwise providing direct existence from certain restrictions. Travel for energy equipment and personnel has not been explicitly called out in this declaration.



During an energy emergency, regulatory waivers may be issued to facilitate the movement of crews, movement of personnel, and restoration of power. Temporarily waiving enforcement of certain safety, environmental, or statutory requirements can accelerate response and restoration efforts. DOE maintains a consolidated, categorized [library](#) of waivers the Governor can request from the federal government if needed to facilitate energy sector response.

NGA's Roadmap, "[Executive Authority During Energy Emergencies](#)" provides in-depth guidance to help governors understand state and federal legal authorities during energy emergencies, identify key decision points and actions that should be taken, and provides guidance on coordination strategies for governors' offices and energy sectors.

## **Updates on Actions the Energy Industry is Taking**

The Electricity Subsector Coordinating Council (ESCC) serves as the principal liaison between the federal government and the electric power industry, with the mission of coordinating efforts to prepare for, and respond to, national-level disasters or threats to critical infrastructure. The ESCC includes electric power industry CEOs and trade association leaders representing all segments of the industry. They developed a [Resource Guide \(UPDATED\)](#) to support electric power industry leaders in making informed localized decisions and to inform the general public about the electric industries response to the pandemic. The ESCC has also formed seven "tiger teams" to focus on critical issues and problem solve as issues arise. Those teams are addressing control center continuity, generation facility continuity, supply chain issues, mutual assistance, ensuring access to critical areas for utility workers, messaging, and telecommunications/IT.

The Oil and Natural Gas Subsector Coordinating Council (ONG SCC) serves as the principal liaison between the federal government and the oil and natural gas industry. They have been in regular contact with the DOE and the ESCC to coordinate industry response to COVID-19. The American Petroleum Institute (API) and the American Gas Association (AGA) are both members of the ONG SCC. API is the national trade association for America's oil and natural gas industry. They issued a [Pandemic Planning Guide](#) to help the oil and natural gas industry plan for and respond to COVID-19. AGA is the national trade association for energy companies that deliver natural gas and they have developed a [website](#) for their COVID-19 response efforts.

The DOE has also created a [Frequently Asked Questions](#) (FAQ) website to capture COVID-19 energy sector response efforts.

NGA will continue to work with the U.S. Department of Energy and industry trade associations and will update this guidance as needed.

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*For questions or requests related to the contents of this memo, please contact NGA staff: Alyse Taylor-Anyikire, PhD ([atanyikire@nga.org](mailto:atanyikire@nga.org); 202-603-6319)*



## Appendix

**(UPDATED) Table 1: Essential Energy Sector Personnel Identified in DHS CISA Guidance (Revised 8/18/20)**

<b>Essential Energy Sector Personnel Identified in DHS CISA Guidance (Revised 8/18/20)</b>
<p><b>Energy (Broadly)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Workers supporting the energy sector, regardless of the energy source (including, but not limited to, nuclear, fossil, hydroelectric, or renewable), segment of the system, or infrastructure the worker is involved in, who are needed to construct, manufacture, repair, transport, permit, monitor, operate engineer, and maintain the reliability, safety, security, environmental health, and physical and cyber security of the energy system, including those who support construction, manufacturing, transportation, permitting, and logistics.</li><li>• Workers and contractors supporting energy facilities that provide steam, hot water or chilled water from central power plants to connected customers.</li><li>• Workers conducting energy/commodity trading/scheduling/marketing functions who can't perform their duties remotely.</li><li>• Workers supporting the energy sector through renewable energy infrastructure (including, but not limited to, wind, solar, biomass, hydrogen, ocean, geothermal, and hydroelectric) and microgrids, including those supporting construction, manufacturing, transportation, permitting, operation and maintenance, monitoring, and logistics.</li><li>• Workers and security staff involved in nuclear re-fueling operations.</li><li>• Workers providing services related to energy sector fuels including, but not limited to, petroleum (crude oil), natural gas, propane, liquefied natural gas (LNG), compressed natural gas (CNG), natural gas liquids (NGL), other liquid fuels, nuclear, and coal) and supporting the mining, processing, manufacturing, construction, logistics, transportation, permitting, operation, maintenance, security, waste disposal, storage, and monitoring of support for resources.</li><li>• Workers providing environmental remediation and monitoring, limited to immediate critical needs technicians.</li><li>• Workers involved in the manufacturing and distribution of equipment, supplies, and parts necessary to maintain production, maintenance, restoration, and service at energy sector facilities across all energy sector segments</li></ul>
<p><b>Electricity industry:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Workers who maintain, ensure, restore, or who are involved in the development, transportation, fuel procurement, expansion, or operation of, the generation, transmission, and distribution of electric power, including call centers, utility workers, engineers, retail electricity, construction, maintenance, utility telecommunications, relaying, and fleet maintenance technicians who cannot perform their duties remotely.</li><li>• Workers at coal mines, production facilities, and those involved in manufacturing, transportation, permitting, operation, maintenance, and monitoring at coal sites.</li><li>• Workers who produce, process, ship, and handle coal used for power generation and manufacturing.</li><li>• Workers in the electricity industry including but not limited to those supporting safety,</li></ul>



construction, manufacturing, transportation, permitting, operation/maintenance, engineering, physical and cyber security, monitoring, and logistics.

- Workers needed for safe and secure operations at nuclear generation including, but not limited to, those critical to the broader nuclear supply chain, the manufacture and delivery of parts needed to maintain nuclear equipment, the operations of fuel manufacturers, and the production and processing of fuel components used in the manufacturing of fuel.
- Workers at fossil fuel (including but not limited to natural gas, refined, distillate, and/or coal), nuclear, and renewable energy infrastructure (including, but not limited to wind, solar, biomass, hydrogen, geothermal, and hydroelectric), and microgrids, including those supporting safety, construction, manufacturing, transportation, permitting, operation, maintenance, monitoring, and logistics.
- Workers at generation, transmission, and electric black start facilities.
- Workers at Reliability Coordinator, Balancing Authority, local distribution control centers, and primary and backup Control Centers, including, but not limited to, independent system operators, regional transmission organizations, and local distribution control centers.
- Workers that are mutual assistance/aid personnel, which may include workers from outside of the state or local jurisdiction.
- Vegetation management and traffic control for supporting those crews.
- Instrumentation, protection, and control technicians.
- Essential support personnel for electricity operations.
- Generator set support workers, such as diesel engineers used in power generation, including those providing fuel.

**Petroleum workers:**

- Workers who support onshore and offshore petroleum drilling operations; platform and drilling construction and maintenance; transportation (including helicopter operations), maritime transportation, supply, and dredging operations; maritime navigation; well stimulation, intervention, monitoring, automation and control, extraction, production; processing; waste disposal, and maintenance, construction, and operations.
- Workers in the petroleum industry including but not limited to those supporting safety, construction, manufacturing, transportation, permitting, operation/maintenance, engineering, physical and cyber security, monitoring, and logistics.
- Workers for crude oil, petroleum, and petroleum product storage and transportation, including pipeline, marine transport, terminals, rail transport, storage facilities, racks, and road transport for use as end- use fuels such as gasoline, diesel fuel, jet fuel, and heating fuels or feedstocks for chemical manufacturing.
- Petroleum and petroleum product security operations center workers and workers who support maintenance and emergency response services.
- Petroleum and petroleum product operations control rooms, centers, and refinery facilities.
- Retail fuel centers such as gas stations and truck stops, and the distribution systems that support them.
- Supporting new and existing construction projects, including, but not limited to, pipeline construction.
- Manufacturing and distribution of equipment, supplies, and parts necessary for production, maintenance, restoration, and service of petroleum and petroleum product operations and use, including end-users.
- Transmission and distribution pipeline workers, including but not limited to pump stations



and any other required, operations maintenance, construction, and support for petroleum products.

**Natural gas, natural gas liquids, propane and other liquid fuels:**

- Workers who support onshore and offshore drilling operations, platform and drilling construction and maintenance; transportation (including helicopter operations); maritime transportation, supply, and dredging operations; maritime navigation; natural gas and natural gas liquid production, processing, extraction, storage and transportation; well intervention, monitoring, automation and control; waste disposal, and maintenance, construction, and operations.
- Workers in the natural gas, NGL, propane, and other liquid fuels industries including but not limited to those supporting safety, construction, manufacturing, transportation, permitting, operation/maintenance, engineering, physical and cyber security, monitoring, and logistics.
- Transmission and distribution pipeline workers, including compressor stations and any other required operations maintenance, construction, and support for natural gas, natural gas liquid, propane, and other liquid fuels.
- Workers at Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) and Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) facilities.
- Workers at natural gas, propane, natural gas liquids, liquified natural gas, liquid fuel storage facilities, underground facilities, and processing plants and other related facilities, including construction, maintenance, and support operations personnel.
- Natural gas processing plants workers and those who deal with natural gas liquids.
- Workers who staff natural gas, propane, natural gas liquids, and other liquid fuel security operations centers, operations dispatch and control rooms and centers, and emergency response and customer emergencies (including leak calls) operations.
- Workers supporting drilling, production, processing, refining, and transporting natural gas, propane, natural gas liquids, and other liquid fuels for use as end-use fuels, feedstocks for chemical manufacturing, or use in electricity generation.
- Workers supporting propane gas service maintenance and restoration, including call centers.
- Workers supporting propane, natural gas liquids, and other liquid fuel distribution centers.
- Workers supporting propane gas storage, transmission, and distribution centers.
- Workers supporting new and existing construction projects, including, but not limited to, pipeline construction.
- Workers supporting ethanol and biofuel production, refining, and distribution.
- Workers in fuel sectors (including, but not limited to nuclear, coal, and gas types and liquid fuels) supporting the mining, manufacturing, logistics, transportation, permitting, operation, maintenance, and monitoring of support for resources.
- Workers ensuring, monitoring, and engaging in the physical security of assets and locations associated with natural gas, propane, natural gas liquids, and other liquid fuels.
- Workers involved in the manufacturing and distribution of equipment, supplies, and parts necessary to maintain production, maintenance, restoration, and service of natural gas, propane, natural gas liquids, and other liquid fuels operations and use, including end-users.



**Table 2: State Mentions of the Energy Industry in Essential Business Designations Announced as of April 2, 2020**

	<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Date Issued</b>	<b>Classifies Energy as Essential</b>	<b>Reference DHS CISA Memo</b>	<b>Direct Energy Industry Reference</b>
1	<a href="#">Alaska</a>	27-Mar-20	Yes	Yes	“Essential Infrastructure - gas, electrical, oil production”
2	<a href="#">Arizona</a>	23-Mar-20	Yes	No	“operation and maintenance of utilities including water, sewer and gas; electrical (including power generation, distribution, and production of raw materials); oil and biofuel refining”
3	<a href="#">California</a>	19-Mar-20	Yes	n/a	
4	<a href="#">Colorado</a>	26-Mar-20	Yes	No	“Critical Infrastructure – Utilities and electricity, including generation, transmission, distribution and fuel supply; Oil and gas extraction, production, refining, storage, transport and distribution”
5	<a href="#">Connecticut</a>	20-Mar-20	Yes	Yes	“essential infrastructure, including utilities, wastewater and drinking water”
6	<a href="#">Delaware</a> <sup>1</sup>	22-Mar-20	Yes	Yes	Lists out essential energy employees as defined by DHS CISA memo
7	<a href="#">Florida</a>	1-April-20	Yes	Yes	Lists out essential energy employees as defined by DHS CISA memo
8	<a href="#">Georgia</a>	2-April-20	Yes	Yes	
9	<a href="#">Hawai'i</a>	23-Mar-20	Yes	Yes	
10	<a href="#">Idaho</a>	25-Mar-20	Yes	Yes	"Essential Infrastructure: Gas, electrical, oil refining"
11	<a href="#">Illinois</a>	20-Mar-20	Yes	Yes	
12	<a href="#">Indiana</a>	23-Mar-20	Yes	No	“operation and maintenance of utilities including, for example, water, sewer and gas; electrical (including power generation, distribution, and production of raw materials); oil and biofuel refining”
13	<a href="#">Kansas</a>	24-Mar-	Yes	Yes	"Generate, distribute and transmit

<sup>1</sup> Additional [table](#) provided by the state of Delaware highlighting essential businesses



		20			electricity, provide and maintain critical infrastructure, fuel refining and processing fuels"
14	<a href="#">Kentucky</a>	25-Mar-20	Yes	Yes	
15	<a href="#">Louisiana</a>	22-Mar-20	Yes	Yes	
16	<a href="#">Maine</a>	24-Mar-20	Yes	Yes	"all utilities such as electricity, water, wastewater, and telecommunications"
17	<a href="#">Maryland</a>	23-Mar-20	Yes	Yes	
18	<a href="#">Massachusetts</a>	23-Mar-20	Yes	Yes <sup>2</sup>	Lists out essential energy employees as defined by DHS memo
19	<a href="#">Michigan</a>	23-Mar-20	Yes	Yes	"Energy sector"
20	<a href="#">Minnesota</a>	25-Mar-20	Yes	Yes	Lists out essential energy employees as defined by DHS memo
21	<a href="#">Mississippi</a>	2-April-20	Yes	Yes	"Essential infrastructure including utilities including power generation, nuclear facilities, utility poles and components, fuel and transmission, petroleum producers, suppliers and distributors, ... pipelines"
22	<a href="#">Montana</a>	26-Mar-20	Yes	Yes	"operation and maintenance of utilities, including water, sewer, and gas; electrical (including power generation, distribution, and production of raw materials); distribution centers; oil and biofuel refining"
23	<a href="#">Nevada</a>	20-Mar-20	Yes <sup>3</sup>	Yes	"Utilities as defined in NRS Chapter 704"
24	<a href="#">New Hampshire</a>	26-Mar-20	Yes	Yes	Lists out essential energy employees as defined by DHS memo
25	<a href="#">New Jersey</a>	16-Mar-20	Yes	n/a	"Examples of employees who need to be physically present at their work site in order to perform their duties include, ... utility workers"
26	<a href="#">New Mexico</a>	23-Mar-20	Yes	No	"Infrastructure operations including ... gas; electrical; oil drilling; oil refining; natural resources extraction or mining operations; nuclear material research and enrichment;" "Utilities, including their contractors and suppliers, engaged in power generation,

<sup>2</sup> Does not mention DHS CISA memo directly but copies text directly from the memo

<sup>3</sup> Earlier [Nevada Health Response COVID-19 Risk Mitigation Initiative](#) that highlights utilities as essential





					fuel supply and transmission, water and wastewater supply;"
27	<a href="#">New York</a> <sup>4</sup>	20-Mar-20	Yes	No	"Essential infrastructure including utilities including power generation, fuel supply and transmission"
28	<a href="#">North Carolina</a>	27-Mar-20	Yes	Yes	"operation and maintenance of utilities, including water, sewer, and gas; electrical (including power generation, distribution, and production of raw materials); distribution centers; oil and biofuel refining"
29	<a href="#">Ohio</a>	22-Mar-20	Yes	Yes	"Essential Infrastructure includes operation and maintenance of utilities, including water, sewer, and gas; electrical (including power generation, distribution, and production of raw materials); oil and biofuel refining"
30	<a href="#">Oklahoma</a>	1-April-20	Yes	Yes	
31	<a href="#">Pennsylvania</a> <sup>5</sup>	23-Mar-20	Yes	Yes <sup>6</sup>	"Oil and Gas Extraction; Gasoline Stations; Utilities"
32	<a href="#">Tennessee</a>	30-Mar-20	Yes	Yes	"Essential Infrastructure Operations ... operation and maintenance of utilities, including water, sewer, and gas; electrical services, including power generation, distribution, and production of raw materials; distribution centers; oil and biofuel refining"
33	<a href="#">Texas</a>	31-Mar-20	Yes	Yes	
34	<a href="#">U.S. Virgin Islands</a>	23-Mar-20	Yes	No	"Core life services: Refineries, utilities"
35	<a href="#">Vermont</a>	24-Mar-20	Yes	No	"critical infrastructure including utilities"
36	<a href="#">Washington</a> <sup>7</sup>	24-Mar-20	Yes	Yes <sup>2</sup>	Lists out essential energy employees as defined by DHS memo
37	<a href="#">West Virginia</a>	23-Mar-20	Yes	Yes	"Essential Infrastructure includes ... operation, maintenance and supply of

<sup>4</sup> New York's Additional Guidance on Essential Services <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-issues-guidance-essential-services-under-new-york-state-pause-executive-order>

<sup>5</sup> PA chart listing specific industries deemed essential: <https://www.scribd.com/document/452553026/UPDATED-2-30pm-March-24-2020-Industry-Operation-Guidance>

<sup>6</sup> PA Stay At Home Order: <https://www.governor.pa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/03.23.20-TWW-COVID-19-Stay-at-Home-Order.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Washington Executive Order Appendix listing out specific critical infrastructure entities <https://www.governor.wa.gov/sites/default/files/WA%20Essential%20Critical%20Infrastructure%20Workers%20%28Final%29.pdf>



					utilities, including water, sewer, and gas; electrical (including power generation, distribution, and production of raw materials including without limitation coal and natural gas) ... oil and biofuel refining”
38	<a href="#">Wisconsin</a>	24-Mar-20	Yes	Yes	"operation and maintenance of utilities, including water, sewer, gas, and electric (including power generation, distribution, production of raw materials; oil and biofuel refining"

