



# ERCOT Pandemic Plan Preparations for Coronavirus (COVID-19)

September 17, 2020

ERCOT's Pandemic Plan may be found online at:

[http://www.ercot.com/content/wcm/lists/200199/ERCOT\\_Pandemic\\_Preparedness\\_Plan\\_20200204\\_Redacted\\_Public.pdf](http://www.ercot.com/content/wcm/lists/200199/ERCOT_Pandemic_Preparedness_Plan_20200204_Redacted_Public.pdf)

This document is intended to share steps taken by ERCOT in response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19), to protect its employees and ensure ERCOT can continue to provide its key business functions and ongoing operations.

## **Pandemic Actions**

### **I. Active Measures**

#### **a. Grid Operations**

ERCOT has implemented a number of measures to help protect the health and safety of its grid operators.

- At this time, anyone reporting to an ERCOT facility must agree to a temperature screen every time they come on-site. On-site workers have committed to rigorous social distancing, including inside the control room.
- ERCOT is alternating shifts between its primary and backup control rooms. This allows for greater social distancing between grid operators.
- Additionally, ERCOT is doing extensive cleaning of the control room and associated areas in between shifts, and each grid operator is also cleaning his/her own station and equipment again prior to the start of their shift. There are also established methods for disinfecting the doors used to enter the control rooms.
- During this time, only grid operators and cleaning crews are allowed inside ERCOT's control rooms.
- Grid operators have received an on-site critical infrastructure verification letter allowing them to continue working on-site during the shelter-in-place order.
- ERCOT has acquired electrostatic cleaning equipment and has also contracted with a company who specializes in biological hazard disinfecting, which is designed to kill COVID-19. If a grid operator or anyone else working on-site becomes ill, this company can be brought in to deep clean the impacted area(s).

## b. Measures for Entire Business

- Mobilized Pandemic Planning Team and put Disaster Management Team on notice in early March
  - Pandemic Planning Team meets regularly to discuss evolving situation and identify ways to mitigate risk
  - Engages in discussions with other Regional Transmission Operators (RTOs)/ Independent System Operators (ISOs) and Transmission Operators for best practices
  
- Effective March 18, 2020, moved from voluntary work from home to mandatory work from home for employees and contractors who do not need to be on-site to perform their job responsibilities
  - Implemented special screening measures for staff required to work on-site at any ERCOT facility during this time
    - Must be on pre-determined list of required on-site workers (some exceptions may apply at discretion of management)
    - Must agree to a temperature screen each time employee/contractor enters an ERCOT facility
    - On-site staff must practice social distancing as much as possible
  - As of Sept. 17, 2020, mandatory work from home has been extended through January 2021
  - Effective June 1, 2020, an exception process allows additional workers to request limited periods of on-site work to address business-critical tasks that cannot be effectively completed in a remote work environment
    - Approvals to come on-site are limited and must come from executive management, Human Resources, Security and Facilities
      - ERCOT must ensure there is adequate Personal Protective Equipment and that workers pass health and travel screenings
    - Workers who come on-site must adhere to all safety protocols that exist for current on-site workers
    - Process is subject to change based on future course of events
  
- Enforcing other business measures for the foreseeable future:
  - Using conference calls, WebEx, Zoom and other technical means for conducting business with external parties
  - Hosting ERCOT stakeholder meetings via WebEx
  - Canceled all non-essential business travel
  - Canceled and/or rescheduled non-essential meetings, conferences, speaking engagements, trainings
  - Implemented visitation restrictions on all ERCOT facilities
    - No non-essential vendors, caterers, visitors
  
- Implemented extra measures for deep cleaning of all ERCOT facilities
  - Weekly electrostatic cleaning

- Increased wipe down of work areas, conference rooms and door handles
- Additional cleaning of surfaces in the control room and Day-Ahead Market operator areas
- Increased availability of cleaning/disinfecting supplies to common areas
- Installed wall hand sanitizers in high traffic areas
- Installed touchless features in high traffic areas

## II. Previously Implemented Measures During Pre-Work from Home Status

- Monitoring international travel of ERCOT staff and their household members
  - Implemented a policy requiring employees and contractors who travel to or through a country with a U.S. Department of State travel advisory rating of 2, 3 or 4 for the Coronavirus or who have been on a cruise to work from home a minimum of two weeks prior to returning to work; also applies to employees or contractors who have someone in their household who has traveled to or through the countries identified or been on a cruise
    - ERCOT workers – whether working from home or on-site – should complete a Worker Screening Questionnaire if they or a household member has traveled from, to or through the above-mentioned areas
    - Employees and contractors must contact HR and be authorized to return on-site
- Instructed ERCOT staff with illness or symptoms of illness to stay home
  - Enhanced immediate cleaning of work areas of ERCOT staff who are sent home
  - Employees and contractors must report any symptoms to HR and must be authorized to return to work
- Increased communication to encourage healthy hygiene; employees are encouraged to take the following actions:
  - Enhance social distancing
  - No handshaking or other physical contact
  - Sanitize hands and meeting spaces
  - Clean workspace daily
  - Wash hands frequently and maintain good personal hygiene
  - Cover mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing
  - Avoid touching face, mouth and eyes
  - Seek medical attention if employee experiences any cold or flu-like symptoms, especially fever or shortness of breathe
- Canceled 2020 Black Start Training indefinitely
- Canceled on-site recruiting interviews until further notice
  - All interviews will be conducted via conference calls and WebEx

### III. Market Notices

ERCOT has issued the following market notices in response to COVID-19:

March 3

[http://www.ercot.com/services/comm/mkt\\_notices/archives/4449](http://www.ercot.com/services/comm/mkt_notices/archives/4449)

March 6

[http://www.ercot.com/services/comm/mkt\\_notices/archives/4467](http://www.ercot.com/services/comm/mkt_notices/archives/4467)

March 9

[http://www.ercot.com/services/comm/mkt\\_notices/archives/4468](http://www.ercot.com/services/comm/mkt_notices/archives/4468)

March 16

[http://www.ercot.com/services/comm/mkt\\_notices/archives/4479](http://www.ercot.com/services/comm/mkt_notices/archives/4479)

April 21

[http://www.ercot.com/services/comm/mkt\\_notices/archives/4515](http://www.ercot.com/services/comm/mkt_notices/archives/4515)

May 11

[http://www.ercot.com/services/comm/mkt\\_notices/archives/4541](http://www.ercot.com/services/comm/mkt_notices/archives/4541)