



# **Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania, Inc.**

## **2020-2021 Winter Reliability Overview**

### **Winter Readiness**

#### Frost Patrols

Leak surveys based on frost potential will continue on our remaining and declining population of cast iron pipe until this pipe is entirely replaced. These patrols typically begin in late December and continue weekly until the end of March.

#### Winter Operations Preparedness

Columbia's 2020-2021 Winter Operations Plan includes an assessment of all distribution facilities to ensure that adequate capacity and pressures are available to serve projected peak day demand. Considered in the assessment are facility performance under last year's peak demand, system improvements, upgrades and reconfigurations over the past year, along with changes in customer demand. This assessment determines the appropriate monitoring activities to be performed throughout the winter season.

#### Winter Operations Monitoring

Winter Operations Monitoring involves the recording of distribution system pressures at particular intervals of winter ambient temperatures. Collecting and compiling winter operations information enables Technical Operations and Measurement & Regulation personnel to proactively address operational issues and provides a platform for system planning and modeling.

#### Emergency Dispatch

Columbia operates a fully-automated call-out process for emergency response with Service personnel on an Emergency Response Rotation. This means that Columbia's emergency response personnel are available on rotation 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year to respond to emergencies on its distribution system.

## Employee Safety/Readiness

### Employee Safety

Columbia is committed to maintaining a strong culture of safety for employees, customers and the communities in which we work. During most of 2020 and into the winter months and future, we have been utilizing the NiSource Work Together. Be Safe. Stay Healthy. An Interactive Guide to Navigating our COVID-19 Response as guidance to keep our employees and facilities as safe as possible through the pandemic. As part of this plan, Columbia employees who are able to work remotely from home have been doing so since March 2020, and will continue to do so through the winter months and at least into August of 2021. Weekly safety communications which focus on seasonal hazards experienced during winter operations and maintaining safe work habits are shared with all front line employees. Mobile Data Terminal messages are sent on an as needed basis during inclement weather or significant changes in weather. In 2020, we added the utilization of the Dynamic Signal Communication and Engagement Platform and Mobile App to communicate information, including safety messaging and resources, COVID-19 guidance and other pertinent information to our personnel through their iPhones and smart devices. Work site safety audits are conducted on a regular basis and will continue during the heating season. Key safety messages are incorporated into our pre-job briefings process, which was revised effective November 2020 to continue our focus on the identification and mitigation of hazards related to our work. In addition, front line employees are equipped with cold weather Personal Protective Equipment, and facilities are prepared with snow removal and ice management materials and equipment.

In 2019-2020, Columbia Gas began supplementing our Emergency Management protocols with the widely used Incident Command System (“ICS”) protocols defined and used by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The enhancement will improve our emergency preparedness and response planning and execution. Key roles defined by the ICS structure have been assigned to individuals in Columbia leadership, and training has been completed ahead of the heating season by those individuals on both the overall ICS and their specific roles. The Columbia ICS was activated on March 13, 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and continues to meet currently to manage and implement our ongoing coronavirus response efforts.

In prior years, Columbia has organized multiple simulation exercises to practice for emergency situations ahead of the winter season. On-site mock emergency drills and table-top drills are two primary types of exercises conducted. Columbia did not complete in person table top or emergency

drills in 2020 due to ongoing COVID-19 restrictions. However a virtual table top to test out the new Incident Command Structure (ICS) was conducted on June 24, 2020

### Staffing

Columbia's Operations Planning team, in conjunction with local operating center leadership, evaluate projected workloads by activity and develop an annual staffing plan to ensure preparedness. These plans are used to coordinate the hiring and training of new employees throughout the year. The plans also identify shift placement to best match workload demands and enhance response to emergency situations.

### Personnel Preparedness

In addition to ongoing training and qualification programs, the development of the Winter Operations Plan provides an opportunity for Field Operations personnel to better understand how their systems operate. This process includes a review of system performance during the previous year's heating season, changes made to the system, and key monitoring points. Collecting and compiling winter operations information enables Technical Operations and Measurement & Regulation personnel to proactively address operational issues and provides a platform for system planning and modeling.

## **Communications Outreach**

Columbia's Customer Care Center has up-to-date information to respond to customer inquiries in the event of any emergency or outage. As service interruptions can vary in nature and range – and therefore require different levels of customer outreach – Columbia will take the following additional steps to communicate with impacted customers, as appropriate:

- a. Web Page Customer Alert – “Customer Alert” posted on Columbia's web site. This includes an alert bar on the home page with a link to an “Outage/Incident Center” page, with regularly posted updates when new information is received.
- b. Local Public Official Notification – Notify appropriate local public officials (i.e. legislators, town managers, public/safety works directors, emergency response officials, etc.) as well as the PUC to ensure that all critical external stakeholders are identified and the response is coordinated.
- c. News Release – As appropriate, issue a targeted news release with incident details. For

example, an outage release would include the location of outage, number of customers impacted, estimated date and time for service restoration, and the location of potential warming centers. Any news release will be followed by targeted outreach and updates to local media contacts, with an awareness of news cycle times, in an attempt to provide the most up-to-date information through public dissemination of information.

d. On-camera Interviews or Targeted Media Outreach – As appropriate, participate in live or filmed news clips and provide targeted outreach and updates to local media contacts, with an awareness of news cycle times, in an attempt to provide the most up-to-date information through public dissemination of information.

e. Social Media – Post regular, time-sensitive outage/emergency updates on Columbia’s Twitter and Facebook pages to provide regular updates to customers, communicate the location(s) of warming center(s), and educate affected customers on the process for restoration of service.

f. Customer Emails – When appropriate, send zip-code targeted emails to customers with outage/emergency information, the location of warming center(s), and instructions for the restoration of service.

g. Text Messaging – When appropriate, send text messages to targeted customers, with outage/emergency information, including the location of warming centers(s) and instructions for the restoration of service.

h. Warming Center Coordination – If needed, partner with local Volunteer Fire Departments, Emergency Management organizations, and Red Cross chapters to establish a warming center for impacted customers while their service is interrupted. If shelters are open, utilize news media, Columbia’s web site, social media channels, and the customer email system to disseminate information (location, hours, and resources available).

i. Reverse 911 or Other Applicable Phone Lists – Where applicable, work with emergency management agencies about using county Reverse 911 system, emergency alert, or school district notification systems to communicate with the community during outages and restoration efforts.

## **Gas Supply and Planning**

To ensure that it can meet its firm service obligations, Columbia has longstanding daily and winter season “Design Criteria” which serve as the basis for the design and management of its supply/capacity portfolio. Columbia’s Design Day Temperature has a 6.67% probability of occurrence and Columbia’s Design Winter Season is based on colder temperatures having a 10% probability. More specifically, there is a 1 in 15 chance that actual temperatures could exceed Columbia’s Design Day Temperature of -5 degrees, and a 1 in 10 chance that the weather could exceed Columbia’s Design Winter Season criteria. These criteria serve as the basis for the design of Columbia’s supply and capacity portfolio and Columbia’s management of its assets to ensure its ability to reliably fulfill its firm service obligations.

Columbia is well positioned to meet its firm service obligations for the 2020-2021 Winter Season. Columbia secures its winter supplies primarily in two ways. First, Columbia contracts for firm supplies equal to its expected purchase needs for the three coldest months of December through February, prior to the start of the winter season. Secondly, Columbia fills its firm pipeline storage services to a level of approximately 95 percent by November 1<sup>st</sup>. Further, Columbia manages its assets daily in a manner that ensures reliable service in the short term through the use of a 5-day weather forecast from a commercial weather service. In the longer term, Columbia protects its firm seasonal service obligations based on managing its assets to meet the “Design Criteria” throughout the winter period. For the 2020-2021 Winter Season, assuming normal weather, Columbia expects to service Firm Sales Markets with approximately a 30/70 split between Firm Purchases and Storage Withdrawals. On a Design Day, at an average daily temperature of -5 degrees, Storage Withdrawals will make up an even greater portion of Columbia’s service to Firm Sales Markets, approaching 80%. Columbia would not expect curtailment of any firm requirements.

## **Natural Gas Demand from Electric Generators**

In recognition of the planning criteria and processes described in the Gas Supply and Planning section above, Columbia is confident about the adequacy of supply and the availability of firm transportation service to meet its firm service obligations for the upcoming winter. As has been noted, Columbia’s supply/capacity portfolio and associated management throughout the winter



season is predicated on the occurrence of extreme cold daily and seasonal temperatures having rather limited probabilities of occurrence, with the foremost objective being the maintenance of safe, reliable service. For these reasons, the prospect of increased demand for natural gas or increased use of firm transportation service for the purpose of electric generation present Columbia with no undue cause for concern. In fact, Columbia fully supports the concept of firm transportation service capacity being used for such purpose. Because of Columbia's longstanding policies and practices regarding supply and capacity, along with their actual management, no new plans or protocols are in need of being developed or instituted as a result of the prospective increased use of natural gas for electric generation.

### **COVID-19 Preparations**

In addition to actions identified above under the heading "Employee Safety/Readiness", Columbia continues to evaluate work plans and resource capabilities. Columbia has made adjustments to work plans and staffing throughout the pandemic to meet response obligations and will continue to do so during winter operations.