

Suggestions and Comments from “Keeping the Water on During and After the COVID-19 Pandemic” held on 06/29/2020



Presenter: Stacey Isaac Berahzer, CEO, IB Environmental

View presentation slides & video recording here: <https://efcnetwork.org/events/webinar-keeping-the-water-on-during-and-after-the-covid-19-pandemic/>

Related to Lowering Operating Costs with Respect to Vehicles, participants made the following comments:

- A very small water utility in Arizona shared that they provide *reimbursement of \$0.50 mile (lower than federal guidelines) to use own vehicle*
- *An operations manager from California said: If more than one person is in a vehicle, they must wear a face mask.*
- From a fairly large water utility in North Carolina: *We aim for 1/vehicle, but limit to no more than 2 wearing face covers*
- A Michigan agency shared ... *Our field offices have staff disinfect vehicles before and after use and/or some locations have regular disinfection with vehicles sitting at least 3 days between uses.*

Related to restrictor plates:

- *“with hand washing residential usage is higher than normal, and more folks staying home with no school available.”*

Related to when utilities in a given state should start doing shutoffs again, one participant shared: *Another suggestion for when to collectively voluntarily end moratoria on shutoffs is when the State moves into a specific phase (e.g. Phase 3) of reopening.*

An Oregon utility serving just over 10,000 customers shared that, **regarding non-paying customers,** *“We are asking for customers to contact us to establish a plan for payment in the future going forward. We want to hear from them what their issues are, what and when they think they can start making some payments, how long a term they need (up to 12 months). But no contacting us as we reach out to them by phone call, email, and door hanger will lead to a shutoff until we hear from them. We will still not turn off water for non-payment during the pandemic.”*

In response to the question asked about **how to fund a customer assistance program,** one participant offered that *“there is also the issue of your lender(s) and getting their OK for using rates money for a CAP, since it could impact the ability to pay back the loans.”* Another participant added that: *“Round-up programs and customer contributions are a great way to fund customer assistance programs.*

A water agency in California that sells wholesale water and also has 1,200 retail customers shared: *I keep track monthly of all accounts that are delinquent. Typically, they would be locked off after 60 days past due. I now have several accounts that are 120 days past due, which would not be allowed under normal circumstances.”*

