# IMEA

## Indiana Municipal Electric Association

**Disaster Response & Mutual Aid**

What it Takes *TO* *BE* Community Powered

**Information & Tips**

**Supervision Practice and Procedures for Pandemic Responses**

# Power Connections

# We Take Pride in Our Municipal Communities!

Town of Bremen, IN. | Bremen Electric Light & Power

## IMEA

### Indiana Municipal Electric Association

*FOR OUR MUNICIPAL UTILITY FAMILIES ON THE GO!*

*Try This Quick and Easy Crockpot Spaghetti Recipe..*

# POWER CONNECTIONS

**Indiana Municipal Electric Association**

Supervision Practice and Procedures for Pandemic Responses

## A Dedicated Pandemic Response Team Can Identify and Implement Policies Needed for a Safe Return

As shelter-in-place orders enacted in response to COVID-19 are lifted throughout the country, companies have begun the process of returning their workforces from home back to the workplace. In order for employers to facilitate a safe return and be prepared to address the issues that return will undoubtedly generate, employers must now revisit, revise, and in certain circumstances, draft anew their pre-COVID-19 employment policies and practices. Creation and operationalization of an empowered Pandemic Response Team at the outset to establish a Return to Workplace Plan will assist in identifying, revising, drafting, and implementing the policies needed in the new COVID-19 workplace, and will position the company to thoughtfully prepare to bring its employees back.

Five key steps will assist employers in preparing to meet these challenges, including the creation of an empowered Pandemic Response Team at the outset to establish and manage a Return to Workplace Plan that will help companies identify, revise, draft and implement the policies needed in this new workplace.

## Step 1: Establish Your Pandemic Response Team

As employers plan their return to the workplace, a Pandemic Response Team should be created to drive, direct and communicate the employer's policy and practice efforts. Because the corporate world is not a one-size-fits-all proposition, an effectively designed Pandemic Response Team will depend on the entity's mission, size, structure and available resources. Team members may include an executive decision-maker as well as members of the employer's most significant groups, including legal (regulatory, employment and real estate issues), human resources (employee policies, practices and relations, benefits and training), information technology (telework, network administration and data security), facilities (landlord-tenant, environmental issues and workplace redesign) and public relations (internal and external). These Team members may be tasked with staying updated on a daily basis on federal, state and local government mandates and guidance that may result in repeated policy changes over time.

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## A Dedicated Pandemic Response Team Can Identify and Implement Policies Needed for a Safe Return

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Employers with multiple worksites may also wish to consider the creation of location-based groups to support the Team's efforts at the local level. Depending on the employer's local footprint, these groups may include local legal counsel, management representatives and staff tasked with staying up to date on state and local mandates, implementing policies and practices, responding to employees' policy and practice-related questions and concerns, supervising workplace redesigns, and enforcing social distancing mandates and similar requirements.

## Step 2: Establish Your Process for Policy Review, Revision and Implementation

Prior to undertaking its review, the Pandemic Response Team should agree on the role and assignment for each Team member, including specific policies or policy areas for review. The scope of the Team's review will depend on a number of relevant factors. Applicable federal, state and local law generally should be considered, particularly as related to the employer's total number of employees, industry and geographic locations. In addition, the Team may wish to take into account:

- **Industry-specific considerations**, including the type of work being performed by employees. For example, professional services employers, retail employers and manufacturing employers will all have unique policy considerations for returning employees to work during the pandemic. Employers with workplaces that are frequently accessed by the public will have different considerations than private offices. Employers who assign employees to work on customer sites will have different considerations than employers who exercise control over their employees worksite.

- **Management and reporting structure**, including employee access to their supervisors and established chains of authority. Effective implementation of new and revised policies and operating procedures must take into account the degree of daily oversight and enforcement exercised by supervisory level employees, which may differ across departments or working locations.

- **Workforce considerations**, including employee access to information and resources needed to comply with new policies and protocols, employee language barriers, whether employees are represented by a labor union, and whether employees are subject to employment contracts prescribing the terms and conditions of their employment.

**Worksite considerations**, including the layout of a physical workspace. Employers with worksites that can be easily reconfigured for social distancing will have different considerations than those where employees must work in close proximity.

Issues relating to workplace culture and corporate identity may also come into play. Some employers already utilize robust and expansive workplace policies. However, if introducing a number of new policies and protocols is contrary to an employer's culture or past practice, the Team may wish to consider how to implement changes in a way that anticipates and addresses the corresponding culture shock.

A timeline for completing the review and for implementing new and revised policies is useful to keep the Team on track. Pandemic conditions and related government guidance and regulations are constantly evolving. Accordingly, the Team should consider establishing a near-term deadline to ensure that the evaluation is completed and identified changes are implemented within a time frame when such changes are still relevant. Depending on the size of the Team and available resources, it may be necessary to prioritize certain areas for review over others. If constraints on time or resources require significant departure from the attached checklist, the Team should consider consulting with legal counsel to understand the potential corresponding risk of liability.

# Skilled.

## DECADES OF EXPERIENCE
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### _ABOUT THE IMEA_

**IMEA** has operated as the statewide service association representing the issues and concerns of municipally owned and operated electric utilities while promoting the benefits and public power business model since 1941.

## A Dedicated Pandemic Response Team Can Identify and Implement Policies Needed for a Safe Return

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### Step 3: Review Existing Policies, Practices and Protocols

The Pandemic Response Team should begin its review by identifying existing policies, practices and protocols that may require revision as employers return employees to the workplace. Policies, practices and protocols that most likely warrant revision include those relating to:

- **Benefits.** The Team should ensure that existing policies address new and expanded benefits available to employees, including the expanded availability of unemployment benefits (although employers should continue the best practice of not advising on eligibility for such benefits). Revisions may also be needed to address the continuation of health insurance and other benefits in the event of leave or furlough.

- **Attendance/Leave.** Employee attendance during the pandemic may be impacted by the employee's own health, the need to care for family members who are sick or children who do not have school or childcare, and disruptions in public transit. Policy and practice updates should take into account newly enacted leave laws such as the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. (See Holland & Knight's previous alert, "DOL Issues Initial Guidance and Employee Notice for Families First Coronavirus Response Act," March 25, 2020.) Policies should also be reviewed for consistency with public health guidance regarding when employees should stay home, and should allow for compliance with state and local government orders. The employer's unpaid leave policy may also need to be revised.

- **Anti-Discrimination.** Existing anti-discrimination policies should be updated to address assumptions regarding COVID-19 and the countries where it originated. Policies should be revised to expressly prohibit discrimination and harassment on the basis of national origin, age, disability and perceived disability. Reasonable accommodation procedures should be reviewed, and the Team may want to implement similar procedures for evaluating continuing work from home and other accommodation requests from employees who identify as vulnerable to COVID-19 exposure under federal, state and local guidance.

- **Telework.** Existing telework policies and protocols may need to be modified to accommodate and address expanded numbers of employees who may not have been approved for telework pre-pandemic.

More extensive policy guidance may be needed for employees who have no experience with telework, and the realities of childcare and stay-at-home orders should be taken into account and addressed in such policies.

- **Business Travel.** As employees begin to travel again for business, policies may need to be revised to incorporate travel approval and reporting protocols to ensure that the employer can manage employee safety. Consider protocols for employees returning from business travel to minimize workplace exposure.

- **Employee Layoffs/Furloughs/Terminations.** In anticipation of future furloughs, layoffs and terminations necessitated by the economic impact of the pandemic, expanded policies that explain the difference between furloughs and layoffs, as well as the related impact on employee benefits, may help address employee concerns and manage expectations. Explaining the work limitations for employees on furlough can also help manage employer compliance with wage and hour laws.

Typically, these policies and practices are addressed in an employer's personnel policies or employee handbook, but the Team also should give consideration to other employer documents such as hiring and onboarding materials, employee training materials and employment agreements. In those workplaces with union representation, the Team should ensure that any changes comply with the duty to bargain and meet collective bargaining-related obligations, as well as comply with shutdown and return-to-work agreements.

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Contact Dirk Garriott, Manager of Member Services for IMPA, to learn what the IMPA family can do for you.

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INDIANA MUNICIPAL POWER AGENCY

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## A Dedicated Pandemic Response Team Can Identify and Implement Policies Needed for a Safe Return

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### Step 4: Identify and Implement New Policies

In the course of its Step 3 review of existing policies, practices and protocols, the Pandemic Response Team will undoubtedly recognize the need to draft entirely new ones to address COVID-19's impact on the workplace. The following are key areas for consideration:

- **Social Distancing.** Policies addressing social distancing requirements mandated or recommended at the federal, state and local level may be developed. This may include policies requiring employees to stay a minimum of 6 feet apart, to avoid scheduling or attending workplace gatherings of certain sizes, to avoid congregating in common areas (workrooms, copy centers, kitchen facilities) and recommended best practices for commuting.
- **Screening and Testing.** A plan for conducting routine employee wellness checks prior to permitting employees to enter or stay in the workplace may be developed and communicated.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) have advised that during the pandemic, employers are permitted to inquire into whether an employee exhibits COVID-19 symptoms and to take an employee's body temperature. Confidentiality protocols relating to employee health information obtained by an employer during the screening process should also be developed and implemented.

- **Enhanced Workplace Hygiene.** New policies, protocols and practices for enhanced workplace hygiene requirements may be considered. This includes whether and when employees are required to utilize personal protective equipment (e.g., masks, gloves) as well as protocols reminding employees to frequently wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, use hand sanitizer if soap and water is not readily available, avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth, and whether it is necessary to stagger use of workplace bathroom facilities.
- **Action Plan for Employee Positive/Presumptive Positive COVID-19.** Employers should develop, implement and communicate an action plan in the event that an employee in a specific workplace is reported as positive or presumptive positive for COVID-19. Such policies should address employee reporting requirements, quarantining, workplace deep cleaning, contact tracing and return-to-workplace protocols.
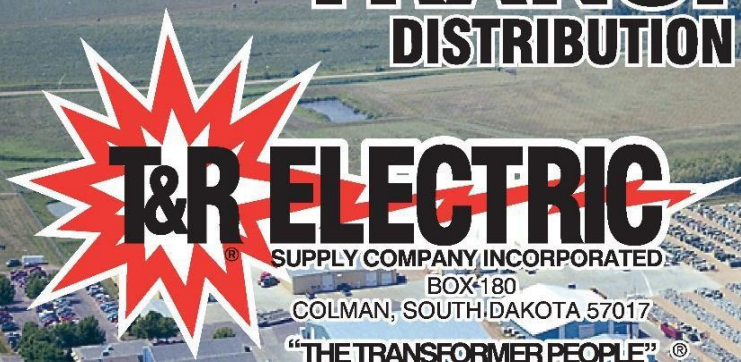
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## A Dedicated Pandemic Response Team Can Identify and Implement Policies Needed for a Safe Return

*(Continued from Page 7)*

- **Scheduling.** In order to comply with state and local return to workplace mandates including social distancing requirements, many employers will need to address scheduling changes, including breaking the workforce into "teams" who return to the workplace in staggered phases, alternating teams into "telework" and "return to workplace" daily or weekly shifts, and reducing schedules for certain members of the workforce. When drafting scheduling policies and practices, employers should remain mindful of the impacts that such policies have related to unemployment or underemployment insurance availability, formal state workshare options and immigration status.

- **Emergency Communications Plan.** The rapidly changing COVID-19 landscape creates ongoing uncertainty for employers and employees. In an effort to make sure that employees are kept informed about the employer's COVID-19 management plan and safe, to the extent possible, when they are in the workplace, the Team should consider developing a written emergency communications plan that provides avenues for employers and employees to communicate on various issues, including methods for reporting and managing employee positive or presumptive positive COVID-19 diagnoses, workplace plans in the event of a local COVID-19 outbreak, and methods for employees to raise questions or concerns regarding workplace policies, practices and protocols.

In the process of finalizing revised and new policies for implementation, even though policies may require differences based on the nuances of state and local mandates, care should be taken to ensure that there are no material inconsistencies or conflicts between policies prepared by different Team members. Prior to implementing revised and new policies, any implications for other existing policies should be assessed. For example, a newly implemented telework policy may have implications for an employer's information security policy or business expense reimbursement procedure.

### Step 5: Moving Forward

The clear and consistent communication of new and revised policies, processes and protocols is critical. One approach is for the Pandemic Response Team is to prepare a brief summary of material policy changes to provide to employees, along with a copy of, or link to, the updated policies. The use of a policy acknowledgment form or another process for employees to acknowledge their receipt and understanding of the new policies is useful.

Given the unprecedented nature of the pandemic and its impact on the workplace, employees will likely have questions about the application of new and revised policies. Designating a Team member to evaluate and respond to such questions (or to assist Human Resources in responding) can help ensure consistency in interpretation and enforcement. Having a Team member monitor employee questions and concerns can also help the Team identify those policies and practices that may require further adaptation or new protocols that may be needed.

In addition to monitoring employee response, the Team will also need to monitor emerging public health guidance and legislative developments. A designated Team member should review the websites for the CDC and local and state government offices on a daily basis to stay abreast of any changes in workplace guidance. The Team should also identify and monitor any industry-specific resources to ensure it is aware of best practices that may be unique to the employer's business. By complying with government-issued guidance and adhering to industry-specific best practices, employers can demonstrate they are taking reasonable steps to return to "normal" in a way that prioritizes employee health and safety.

Finally, employers need to be prepared for the possibility of restrictions tightening again in the event of a localized outbreak or increase in COVID-19 cases. Building flexibility into workplace practices and protocols to provide for quick adjustments as needed is ideal. The possibility of rapid changes with little notice should be clearly communicated to all employees to encourage their maximum cooperation and flexibility for the duration of the pandemic.

*Documentation Written By: Holland & Knight LLP*
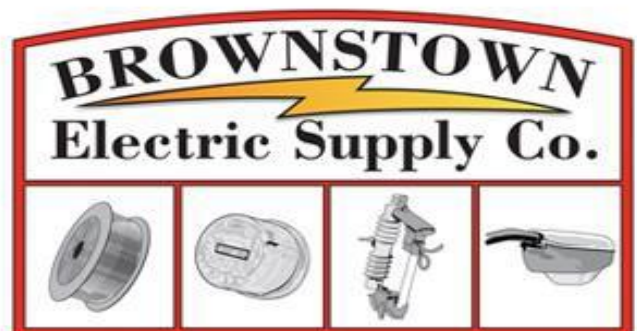
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Paul Brewster
Osmose, Director of Business Development
Guest Speaker

**Power Quality in Metering and Why It Matters**

Rick Laster
Leidy Engineering Sales, Inc.
Ion Metering Specialist
Guest Speaker

**Dave Davlin
Keynote Speaker**

"THE GAME-WINNING 3" – MAKING IT COUNT … IN BUSINESS AND IN LIFE

**Why Use Capacitors**

Arno Kivi
GE Grid Solutions, LLC
Senior Sales and Proposals Manager
Guest Speaker

**Power Transformer Life Cycle Management**

Frank Rudolf
Alpha Engineering, Inc.
Senior Engineer
Guest Speaker

**Regulator Safety & Basic Problems**

Joe Robb
Transformer Maintenance & Service, Inc.
Senior Sales Representative
Guest Speaker

**The Importance of Being Earnest in Maintaining Data for Your ROW Activities**

Mark Mann
Plant Growth Management Systems / CEO Founder
Guest Speaker

**Erick Rheam
Keynote Speaker**

THE POWER OF LEADERSHIP DURING AND AFTER A CRISIS

**Future of the Electric Industry**

Chris Heimgartner
General Manager
Henderson Municipal Power and Light
Guest Speaker

**IMEA Annual Meeting Safety Roundtable**

Duane Richardson
IMEA Executive Director

# The Value of Being COMMUNITY Powered

## What Is Public Power?

Community-owned, not-for-profit public power utilities power homes and businesses in 2,000 communities — from small towns to large cities. They safely provide reliable, low-cost electricity to more than 49 million Americans, while protecting the environment. Public power utilities serve customers in 49 states.

Public power supports local commerce, employs 93,000 people in hometown jobs, and invests more than $2 billion annually directly back into the community.

Most public power utilities have fewer than 4,000 customers, and collectively, these utilities serve 1 in 7 electricity customers across the U.S.

## Local Governance and Regulation

In general, a governing body — a city council or independent utility board — has authority over a public power utility's retail rates. In some states, and in certain circumstances, a state regulatory commission may have jurisdiction.

## Affordable

In general, a governing body — a city council or independent utility board — has authority over a public power utility's retail rates. In some states, and in certain circumstances, a state regulatory commission may have jurisdiction.

## Reliable

Customers of public power utilities lose power less often. Customers of a public power utility are likely to be without power for just 59 minutes a year, compared to customers of private utilities that may lose power for 133 minutes a year — provided there are no major adverse events.

## Diverse Sources

Public power generates 10 percent of all electricity in the U.S. and distributes — or sells at the retail level — 15 percent of all power flowing to homes and businesses. Public power utilities buy or generate electricity from natural gas, coal, and nuclear, as well as renewable energy sources such as solar, water, and wind.
In several regions, public power utilities can buy wholesale hydropower generated from federal dams at cost and pass the savings on to customers. Across the country, public power utilities buy wholesale electricity and other services through joint action agencies to leverage economies of scale and strength in numbers.

## Giving Back

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*Written and Published by American Public Power Association*

For More Information Please Visit:
www.wearecommunitypowered.com

## Disaster Response & Mutual Aid

Public Power Utilities are committed to protecting the people working for them and to ensuring energy operations and infrastructure are supported throughout an emergency. Similar to other first responders that combine forces to assist communities in times of need, utilities come together to restore services and keep the public safe. IMEA has directed inter and intra state mutual aid efforts for over five decades.

Every emergency brings new challenges; the IMEA mutual aid program provides that critical point of contact for utilities to obtain emergency service in the form of personnel, equipment and materials. Our goal is to always ensure a **SAFE**, organized and expeditious response to every request for assistance.

Whenever there's a request and a response for assistance we review and evaluate the processes to see if there's something we can improve. The need for formalized mutual aid protocols has always existed but really became apparent when Superstorm Sandy caused widespread damage to the Northeast. In 2013 a national Mutual Aid Working Group was formed to establish a national network for public power utilities.

We work closely with APPA (American Public Power Association) and the ESCC (Electricity Subsector Coordinating Council) at the national level and serve as the primary Mutual Aid Coordinators for Indiana Public Power.

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# FOR IMEA MUNICIPAL UTILITY FAMILIES ON THE GO!

## *Try This Quick and Easy Crockpot Spaghetti Recipe..*



Whatever the reason, spaghetti and meatballs is a classic we serve over and over. So it's nice to know an easy way to make it. And this version – Crockpot Spaghetti and Meatballs – is so easy it practically cooks itself.

All the ingredients are ready-made: frozen meatballs, dry spaghetti, canned tomatoes, canned beef broth, and sauce from a jar. And all you have to do with them is load them into the crock, give it a stir, and cook for two hours on high or 3-4 on high (Don't let it go longer, or it gets mushy.) If you don't have two hours before dinnertime, that's okay too. Just start the meatballs in the morning, add the noodles when you get home, and give it half an hour. Either way, it's just about the easiest meal your family will ever gobble up.

1. **Spray slow cooker with cooking spray to make clean-up easy. Place meatballs in the bottom of your slow cooker and pour beef broth over the top of meatballs.**
2. **Place spaghetti on top of meatballs, break pasta is necessary. Make sure to criss cross the pasta so it doesn't all clump together.**
3. **Pour diced tomatoes and pasta sauce on top of spaghetti. Stir if needed to make sure the pasta is completely covered.**
4. **Cook on HIGH for 2 hours or 3 - 4 hours on LOW. Stir the pasta and meatballs together and let sit for 5 minutes while the extra liquid is absorbed.**
5. **Serve garnished with fresh parsley and parmesan.**

# PLEASE JOIN US!

Being active in the IMEA Conferences can bring with it many benefits. There is power in being connected to other people who are active in our line of work, but it can also be easy to talk yourself out of committing to conferences year after year. Many people think that joining the organization is enough, but to capitalize on the return on your investment you need to be engaged and participate in our conferences and organization.

## The mindset you choose about participating in events will impact your results

**Educational opportunities.** No matter how experienced you are at your utility, everyone can learn. Working in a small business venture can often be isolating, and without exposure to a variety of points of view, we can miss new ideas and trends that can impact future results. The educational aspect of our conferences can expose you to new ways of conducting your business, employee relations and help you discover how to be more productive.

**Networking with peers**. Industry conferences provide a great opportunity to network. Collaboration is the way to approach networking. Most people can help each other uncover ideas and spark inspiration when they get to know each other on a personal level.

**Encounter new Associate Members and Suppliers.** Too often people shy away from the Vendor exhibit hall at conferences. They fear that they will have to talk to salespeople, but these industry suppliers are some of the best people for you to get to know if you want to learn more about the current utility climate. Discovering innovative products and services for your utility is necessary for system reliability and safety. Plus, these vendors who sell to our industry fully grasp what is happening inside your utility. Invest time with the sponsors at the event and turn them into your friends and allies.

**Position yourself as an expert.** When you are active in your industry, you can develop a reputation as a leader and an expert to your peers. Like it or not, others like to associate with the experts in our industry.

**Have fun.** Our industry should be both rewarding and fun. All work and no play can get old fast. Industry conferences can add a layer of enjoyment to managing your career growth by mixing a social aspect into your learning, never underestimate the power of a little fun mixed with some interesting people!

# INDIANA MUNICIPAL ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION |CALENDAR

**June**

22      IMEA 613      Scottsburg

**July**

8      Top Out Test      Scottsburg

13      IMEA 611      Scottsburg

27      IMEA 612      Scottsburg

**August**

3      IMEA 612      Lebanon

10      IMEA 610 (Week One)      Lebanon

17      IMEA 610 (Week Two)      Lebanon

24      IMEA 611      Lebanon

**September**

2      Intro to Supervisor 2      Mishawaka

**October**

7      Intro to Supervision 3      Mishawaka

13 to 16      Annual Meeting      Noblesville

28 & 29      IMEA 212      Mishawaka

**November**

17 & 18      Supervisor Safety      Anderson

**December**

1 & 2      IMEA 212      Lebanon

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# COMPLIANT GRAPHICS FOR HARSH ENVIRONMENTS
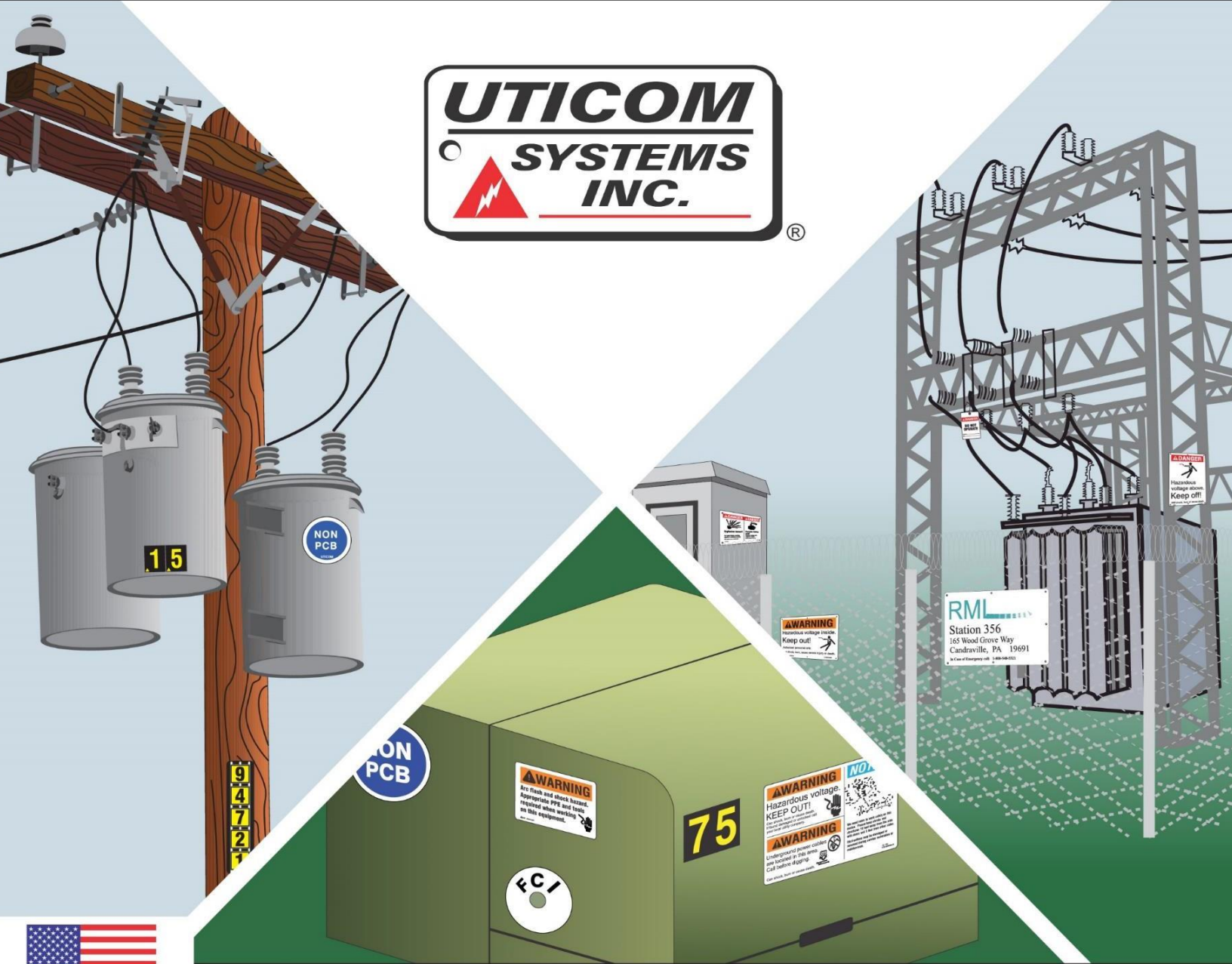


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