



PPUC assures customers safe and reliable service will continue during COVID-19 pandemic

March 18, 2020

As the COVID-19 coronavirus continues to spread, Palau Public Utilities Corporation (PPUC) wants to assure customers that the company is developing its comprehensive plans and procedures to ensure a continuation of operations and service. The company's detailed plans ensure readiness of the critical personnel and facilities necessary to continue providing the safe and reliable energy our customers expect and deserve.

Our teams are always prepared to respond in challenging situations and we are confident we will continue to meet the needs of our customers during this unprecedented time. PPUC's operational plans, systems, infrastructure and generating plants are all designed with reliability in mind. We remain focused on ensuring both the well-being of our employees and the continuity of services for our customers.

PPUC has been closely monitoring the potential threat posed by COVID-19 since January 2020. Proactive actions have been taken to both prevent the spread of the illness and protect the safety and health of employees, including:

- Implementing telecommuting for those who can perform their duties remotely and allowing certain employees to work from home
- Cancelling facility tours and external meetings
- Increasing cleaning frequency at company locations
- Aggressively sanitizing work areas
- Cancelling all non-essential business travel – both domestic and international
- Asking employees to self-identify, if they have or plan to travel internationally
- Using technology for meetings

In the case of an employee or employees that do contract the coronavirus, PPUC is working on a plan and considering the following:

1. Instituting domestic and international travel restrictions
2. Planning for facility decontamination and remediation
3. Maintaining internal and external communications
4. Review of I.T. Capacity access to allow employees to work from home and equipment to do so such as laptops and/or tablets.
5. Developing shelter-in-place plans for critical facilities to the power grid and water networks
 - a. Stockpiling materials such as food, water, equipment and supplies including health and hygiene products

The company has regularly provided information and updates on the virus to employees, including prevention recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention through the Republic of Palau Ministry of Health, and is following the latest developments and updates from our National Public Health Officials and medical professionals.



Access to electricity and water is critical to the protection of health and safety at all times, but particularly when managing a serious disease outbreak like COVID-19. No one should be deprived of access to tap water due to inability to pay during this time of heightened need. The PPUC is temporarily ceasing all water and electricity service shutoffs as a result of nonpayment so that our customers will continue to have access to water for hygiene, consumption and safety during the current pandemic event.

PPUC will also temporarily suspend electric and water service disconnections beginning on March 18, 2020, and will reevaluate the policy and timeframe as the situation develops. Even though disconnection has been suspended, we still encourage customers to make payments to their bills. To reduce in-person transactions, we would like to remind customers that the online and over the phone payment options, which have been available to customers prior to this crisis, remain accessible through the [website](#) or by calling (680)488-3870.

People need electricity and water to stay home safely right now. Availability of potable water is critical under these circumstances, and should not be interrupted for any reason.

While water will continue to be provided even for customers delinquent on their bill, individual water meters will continue to record water usage and water bills will continue to be generated and delivered to customers.

Running water and a way to heat that water—through electricity or natural gas— are essential for COVID-19 prevention sanitization. There are many families heeding public health and safety warnings by staying at home in quarantine due to COVID-19 infection, potential exposure to COVID-19, or flu-like symptoms. In order to maintain public health and safety, such families must be able to comfortably stay at home under safe conditions which include running utilities that are essential for hygiene, cleaning, cooking, and climate control.

In addition, many families are staying at home — or may be forced to stay at home — due to work and school closures in response to the pandemic virus. It would be impossible for home schooling in households with no electricity, which raises educational equity issues as students from low-income or otherwise vulnerable families would not have the same at-home learning opportunities without electricity for internet services.