Covid-19 Impacts on Facilities and the Power of Virtual Roundtables

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2021 Government Affairs Seminar
Covid-19 Changed the Way We Do Business

• Wastewater facilities have been historically good at sharing tips and tricks
• Pandemic response a different and unique issue to a wastewater treatment plant
• Knowledgeable staff is always so critical but the pandemic took this concern to an even higher level – failure is not an option
What is Zoom?

- Transitioned to virtual communication vs. normal in person
- Started weekly roundtables to discuss Covid-19

Initial Facility Questions:
- What are others facilities doing?
- What can we learn from others?
- Should I be doing more? Or less?
What Facilities Did (And Continue to Do)

- Isolated Staff
- Created separated “crews”
- Staff Rotations
- “Hands Off” employees working from home
- Enhanced Cleaning
What Facilities Did (And Continue to Do)

- Divide Those on Site
  - Processes
  - Computer Access
  - Restrooms/Locker Rooms
  - Break Rooms
  - Contractors
  - Control Room Access
Sharing of Lessons and Experiences

- Response to when an employee was exposed or diagnosed with Covid-19
- One facility had a pandemic response plan even before Covid-19 and that proved to be valuable framework for those that didn’t
- Shared resources – CDC, WEF, Department of Health and Homeland Security
- Staff Moral
- DNR Updates
Updates on Plant Conditions

• Many plants detailed plant loading changes – depends on industry in area – some thrived in pandemic and some didn’t
• Hard to get parts to maintain equipment
• Hard to get PPE
• Project delays
•Detailed plans for on site contractors and staff separation
• Long term effects on budget?
Covid-19 Influent Sampling

- Detailed talks and expiation of Covid-19 sampling to educate facilities
- UW Milwaukee and State Lab of Hygiene
Power Of Virtual Roundtables

- Covid-19 discussions proved to be very valuable
- Emphasized “what is on your mind”
- Discuss the true needs of facilities

- Further use on other topics?
  - Semi structured open discussion on topic seems to work well.
Proud of Our Industry

- Failure is not an option
- Everyone met this challenge head on
- Often unnoticed when we are doing our job

THANK YOU TO ALL ESSENTIAL WORKERS!
Thank You!

• Huge thank to all those that participated!
• Special thanks to our special speakers and to Troy Larson and Rachel Lee for co-managing the roundtables.

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