



Public Utilities Commission of Nevada

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Strategic Plan

**Fiscal Years
2009 - 2011**

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF NEVADA
STRATEGIC PLAN
Fiscal Years 2009-2011

VISION

Ensure safe, reliable utility service at just and reasonable rates.

MISSION

Supervise and regulate the operation and maintenance of utility services in Nevada.

PHILOSOPHY

Strive to be efficient, flexible, impartial, diligent, and professional in all efforts.

Goal 1

Expediently process dockets.

Strategies

1. Resolve dockets within six months of assignment.
2. Review streamlined approaches to process assigned dockets.
3. Commissioners and Administrative Attorneys will attend training in adjudicating techniques and industry issues.
4. Review filings to ensure compliance with applicable statutes and regulations.
5. Timely prepare final orders after Commission votes.
6. All new filings to be assigned a docket number, docketed preliminarily, and routed promptly to the Legal Case Manager for review.
7. All new filings to be promptly docketed and distributed after acceptance as legally sufficient by the Legal Case Manager.
8. Utilize hearing officers for time-sensitive and time-consuming dockets.

Objectives

1. Resolve 80% of assigned dockets within six months after they are filed.
2. Send 50% of Commissioners and Administrative Attorneys to adjudicating techniques and industry issue training on an annual basis.
3. 100% of all filings will be reviewed, docketed and distributed within four business days of receipt date.
4. 100% of all dockets will be noticed within 10 business days of distribution of the docket.
5. 100% of all orders will be executed within 14 business days of Commission vote.
6. 100% of original filings that require a new docket to be opened will be routed to Legal Case Manager within four business hours of receipt.
7. 100% of original filings determined to be legally sufficient by the Legal Case Manager will be docketed within one business day of acceptance.
8. Eliminate or reduce Commissioner assignments of time-sensitive and time-consuming dockets.
9. 100% of statutory deadlines will be met.

Performance Measures

1. Percentage of assigned dockets closed during the year that took less than six months to resolve.
2. Percentage of Commissioners and Administrative Attorneys attending adjudicating techniques and industry issues training on an annual basis.
3. Percentage of total number of filings reviewed, docketed and distributed within four business days of receipt date.
4. Percentage of total number of dockets noticed within 10 business days of distribution of the docket.
5. Percentage of total number of orders executed within 14 business days of Commission vote.
6. Percentage of original filings that require a new docket to be opened routed to Legal Case Manager within four hours of receipt.
7. Percentage of filings docketed and distributed within one business day of acceptance.
8. Percentage of dockets assigned to hearing officers on an annual basis.
9. Percentage of dockets that met the statutory effective deadline.

Goal 2

Address legislative directives and utility issues in a timely manner through rulemaking and investigation dockets.

Strategies

1. Track proposed legislation affecting the Commission during the legislative session.
2. Identify all relevant legislative directives.
3. Conduct investigations and rulemakings to address legislative directives.
4. Conduct biannual reviews of all regulations to ensure they are up to date.

Objectives

1. Identify 100% of bill draft requests and/or proposed legislation affecting the Commission within one business day of proposal.
2. Attend 100% of legislative committee meetings dealing with legislation affecting the Commission.
3. Open all investigations and rulemakings to address legislative directives within 30 days of passage.
4. Complete all investigations and rulemakings to address legislative directives within nine months of passage.

Performance Measures

1. Percentage of bill draft requests and/or proposed legislation affecting the Commission identified within one business day of proposal.
2. Percentage of legislative committee meetings dealing with legislation affecting the Commission attended.
3. Percentage of investigations and rulemakings to address legislative directives opened within 30 days of passage.
4. Percentage of investigations and rulemakings to address legislative directives

completed within nine months of passage.

Goal 3

Provide timely responses to administrative and technical questions related to Division activities.

Strategies

1. Establish and maintain an inventory of general knowledge and skills required by Division personnel; address shortcomings in this regard through new hires (when possible), expert consulting contracts, or additional training of existing employees.
2. Improve Division expertise.
3. Maintain effective Division telephone coverage during working hours.
4. Assign docketed and non-docketed responsibilities to the appropriate person in a timely manner.
5. Establish project milestones and deadlines for major docketed and non-docketed activities.
6. Deliver docketed and non-docketed work products to the Director of Regulatory Operations (“DRO”) or docket coordinator, as appropriate, in a timely manner.
7. Maintain current knowledge at the federal level: Congressional and federal appeals court activity that could alter federal and state responsibilities in utility regulation, FERC rules and orders governing electric and natural gas regulation, and FCC rules and orders governing telecommunications regulation at the federal level.
8. Maintain current knowledge of technical issues facing utility industries.

Objectives

1. 100% of divisional assignments for docket responsibilities made within 10 calendar days of notice.
2. 100% of lists of project milestones and resource requirements for divisional personnel and the DRO made within 10 calendar days of receipt of procedural orders in major dockets.

Performance Measures

1. Percent of divisional assignments for docket responsibilities made within 10 calendar days of notice.
2. Percent of lists of project milestones and resource requirements for divisional personnel and DRO made within 10 days of notice in major dockets.

Goal 4

Eliminate reversal of Commission decisions on appeal.

Strategies

1. Ensure compliance with all applicable case law, statutes, and regulations.
2. Base decisions on a fair, impartial, and thorough examination of the evidence.
3. Balance the interests of customers and shareholder by providing utilities with the opportunity to earn a fair return on their investments while providing customers with just and reasonable rates.
4. Review all notices and orders for legal sufficiency prior to issuance.

Objective

1. 0% reversal of Commission decisions appealed to state and federal court.

Performance Measures

1. Percent of Commission decisions reversed on appeal to courts.

Goal 5

Maintain a data base of compliance items contained in Commission orders to ensure completion.

Strategy

1. Utilize Commission orders and the compliance order tracking system to accommodate the timely identification of required compliances.

Objective

1. Identify and report to administrative assistant of each applicable division and the executive assistant to the Director of Regulatory Operations 100% of compliance items contained in Commission orders, including compliance due dates and responsible division, within thirty days of issuance of the Commission orders. (Division administrative personnel disseminate compliance reports for their division and are responsible for entering the compliances into their respective data bases. The executive assistant is responsible for entering Order dates and the compliances into the Docket Tracker's compliance system).

Performance Measure

1. Percentage of Commission orders containing compliances reported to administrative assistant of each applicable division and the executive assistant to the Director of Regulatory Operations within 30 days of the issuance of the Commission orders.

Goal 6

Respond to all public inquiries, providing timely and accurate information.

Strategies

1. Ensure that all responses to inquiries are timely.
2. Commission personnel will research information and/or consult with other Commission personnel before providing answer when necessary.

Objective

1. 95% of all inquiries will be responded to within two business days of receipt.

Performance Measure

1. Percentage of inquiries responded to within two business days of receipt.

Goal 7

Resolve written complaints that arise between regulated utilities and their customers effectively

and efficiently.

Strategies

1. Provide management oversight on turnaround times on all written complaints.
2. Ensure the division is sufficiently staffed and trained to timely respond to written complaints.
3. Maintain a database to track written complaints.

Objective

1. Ensure 75% of all written complaints that arise between regulated utilities and their customers are resolved within 45 calendar days of formal notification to the utility.

Performance Measure

1. Percentage of written complaints resolved within 45 calendar days of formal notification to the utility.

Goal 8

Educate consumers on public utility issues and efficiency measures.

Strategies

1. Distribute pamphlets and brochures that increase the understanding of the regulatory process and the role that conservation plays in reducing monthly utility bills.
2. Enhance Commission website with energy saving ideas, tips on how to read bills, and other resources for energy conservation.
3. Track utility consumer issues and/or concerns that need to be addressed.

Objectives

1. Distribute pamphlets at five energy conservation related events and make five energy conservation presentations at Nevada schools each year.
2. Update Commission website every six months with new pages or links promoting energy conservation.
3. Conduct consumer sessions.

Performance Measures

1. Number of energy conservation presentations made in Nevada annually.
2. Number of Commission website updates performed annually with new pages or links promoting energy conservation.
3. Number of consumer sessions conducted.

Goal 9

Promote the safety, reliability, efficiency and viability of water and sewer utilities.

Strategies

1. Inspect water and sewer utilities to discuss and evaluate technical, managerial and financial capabilities of the utility.

2. Coordinate with other state agencies to verify utility compliance with state rules and regulations, and assist utilities in achieving compliance.

Objectives

1. Visit 50% of the water and sewer utilities annually.

Performance Measure

1. Percentage of water and wastewater site visits.

Goal 10

Promote the safety of railroad facilities and operating practices.

Strategies

1. Conduct field inspections of railroad rolling stock to determine whether cars and locomotives conform to federal requirements.
2. Conduct inspections and audits of shippers and consignees of hazardous material rail cars to verify compliance with federal regulations.
3. Conduct inspections of general system track to verify compliance with federal track standards.
4. Conduct surveillance of train operating crews in railroad operations to ensure safe practices.
5. Coordinate with the Federal Railroad Administration ("FRA") on inspections and follow-up inspections to verify compliance or corrective actions.
6. Maintain and/or develop inspector certification through close cooperation with the FRA on training and education of Commission personnel in the rail safety program.

Objectives

1. Inspect 6,000 freight and passenger cars and locomotives annually.
2. Inspect 100% of hazardous material shippers and consignees annually and 900 hazardous material cars.
3. Inspect 3,500 track units (miles of rail, turnouts, switches, ties, audits, etc.) annually.
4. Inspect at least 600 units (train rides, records inspections, safety audits, observations, testing, etc.).

Performance Measures

1. Total number of Motive Power and Equipment units for freight and passenger car and locomotive inspections per year.
2. Percentage of hazardous material shippers and consignees inspected annually.
3. Total number of hazardous material cars inspected annually.
4. Total number of track units inspected annually.
5. Total number of Operating Practices units inspected for surveillance of railroad operations annually.

Goal 11

Ensure gas system operators comply with federal and state safety regulations.

Strategies

1. Conduct comprehensive pipeline safety audits of jurisdictional operators for compliance with federal and state regulations.
2. Assist jurisdictional gas system operators in complying with regulations by offering advice and support on resolution or correction of potential safety violations.
3. Provide prompt and efficient response and investigation of pipeline events or incidents to identify whether code violations contributed to the incident or its severity.
4. Obtain operator compliance with federal and state safety requirements by employing the minimum enforcement action that will ensure compliance.

Objectives

1. Inspect all gas pipeline systems for direct sales, master meters and liquefied petroleum gas systems every two years.
2. Conduct inspections of construction and maintenance activities on a virtually daily basis, and quarterly documentation and records review encompassing all gas pipeline systems operated by the local distribution companies and intrastate transmission facilities every year.

Performance Measures

1. Percentage of gas pipeline system inspection units for direct sales, master meters and liquefied petroleum gas systems inspected during the past two years.
2. Percentage of gas pipeline system inspection units for local distribution companies and transmission facilities inspected during the current year.

Goal 12

Increase effectiveness of the "One-Call" system by contract excavators and subsurface installation operators.

Strategies

1. Participate in the operating committee for the One-Call center that serves the state's Underground Service Alert North ("USAN") and will support its goals.
2. Participate in the Nevada Regional Common Ground Alliance Partnership and support implementation of the Common Ground Alliance best practices and goals in Nevada.
3. Participate in excavator and/or operator safety awareness functions organized by USAN, operators or their associations, contract excavators or their associations as a sponsor or program speaker.
4. Staff will work with USAN, utility associations, contractor associations, and public works associations to promote an understanding of relevant statutes and regulations.
5. Facilitate the development and population of an adverse impact database that will track root causes that lead to damages, or locator or excavator delays. Staff will analyze the database to identify causes for violations and increase educational focus on these issues.
6. Support utilities and excavators by explaining the essentials of effective complaints and the complaint resolution process.
7. Work with damage prevention stakeholders to improve the process and effectiveness of the program in Nevada.

Objectives

1. Staff will maintain records of complaints received against excavators or operators and the measures employed to obtain resolution, and will monitor the effectiveness of the complaint resolution process in achieving better compliance.
2. Staff will maintain records of all field inspection and enforcement activities, and will monitor the effectiveness this direct oversight has on reducing damages, as well as day-to-day implementation costs.

Performance Measures

1. Development of a concept/proposal to greatly improve the functionality of the one-call center (association of operators) serving Nevada by 08/01/08.
2. Implementation of a consensus adverse impact reporting database by 12/31/08.

Goal 13

Effectively monitor and control regulatory assessments, surcharges, fees, and administrative fines.

Strategies

1. Aggressively pursue payments.
2. Monitor databases for compliance.
3. Utilize General Counsel's division to enforce past due collections.

Objectives

1. Send demand letters to 100% of all delinquent entities within 45 calendar days of past due.
2. Refer 100% of all delinquent entities to General Counsel Division for collection within 100 days of past due.

Performance Measures

1. Percentage of demand letters sent to delinquent entities within 45 calendar days of past due.
2. Percentage of delinquent entities referred to General Counsel Division for collection within 100 days of past due.

Goal 14

Leverage and enhance the electronic filing and records management system.

Strategies

1. Implement and deploy new applications that will benefit internal and external users.
2. Ensure prompt public access to docket information over the Internet.
3. Increase the number of users filing electronically through continued outreach efforts and end-user training.

Objectives

1. Create two new applications within the next two years.

2. 100% of all filings will be available electronically within four business hours of receipt or acceptance.
3. 90% of all filings will be made electronically.

Performance Measures

1. Number of new applications created.
2. Percentage of filings processed and available to the public within four business hours of receipt or acceptance.
3. Percentage of total number of filings made electronically.

Goal 15

Convert paper distribution of notices and orders issued to electronic notification.

Strategies

1. Implement and maintain changes to database allowing electronic notification in lieu of mailing paper copies of notices and orders.
2. Encourage all persons to receive electronic notification of all notices and orders

Objective

1. 100% of all persons requesting notification will be sent notification of notices and orders electronically.

Performance Measure

1. Percentage of notices and orders sent electronically to persons requesting notification.

Goal 16

Implement an internal information technology project to migrate and refactor* the Commission's applications written in Microsoft Access to .NET technologies.

Strategies

1. Integrate multiple database applications into a single comprehensive application where practical.
2. Improve the end-user experience with improved user-friendly interfaces.
3. Improve the logic and capabilities of the resulting applications over the logic and capabilities of the Microsoft Access applications.

Objectives

1. Assign an internal project manager.
2. Identify new system requirements and user interface improvements by interviewing division managers and end-users regarding the Microsoft-Access applications used by the commission.
3. Document the project requirements.
4. Develop a Project Plan.
5. Obtain approval and execute Project Plan.
6. Refactor targeted Microsoft Access VB code and macros to ensure existing

- requirements are brought forward and enhanced in the new system.
7. Integrate and migrate the major applications into one or more .Net applications.

*code refactoring is any change to a computer program's code that improves its readability or simplifies its structure without changing its results.

Performance Measures

1. Assign project manager by 7/31/2009.
2. Conduct interviews with Division managers and end-users by 2/28/2010.
3. Identify new project requirements during interviews documented by 08/31/2010.
4. Develop a project plan that identifies the work effort, resources required and timelines for refactoring the applications, testing the application, migration and implementation of the new applications, contingency plans and final acceptance by 12/31/2010.
5. Get approval on Project Plan by 01/31/11.

Goal 17

Encourage a work environment that values employees, innovation, teamwork, professional development, and career advancement.

Strategies

1. Ensure employees are treated fairly and are provided equal opportunities for professional development and career advancement.
2. Provide a rewarding, challenging and respectful work environment.
3. Improve employee competency in using information management tools.
4. Maximize employee development in the workplace to achieve the desired performance objectives of the Commission.

Objectives

1. Offer professional-specific training to 73 employees per biennium.
2. Offer state-offered training classes to all employees per biennium.

Performance Measures

1. Percentage of employees completing professional-specific training per biennium.
2. Percentage of employees completing state-offered training classes per biennium.