



Public Utilities Commission of Nevada



STRATEGIC PLAN Fiscal Years 2015-2020



**PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF NEVADA
STRATEGIC PLAN
Fiscal Years 2015-2020**

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 assignments.
2. Review streamlined approaches to process assigned dockets.
3. Commissioners, Hearing Officer and Administrative Attorneys will attend training in adjudication techniques and industry specific 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.

Objectives

1. Resolve 80% of assigned dockets within six months after they are filed.
2. Send 50% of Commissioners, Hearing Officer and Administrative Attorneys to adjudication techniques and industry specific issues training on an annual basis.
3. 100% of filings will be reviewed, docketed and distributed within four business days of receipt date.
4. 100% of dockets will be noticed within 10 business days of distribution of the docket.
5. 100% of 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. 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, Hearing Officer and Administrative Attorneys attending adjudication techniques and industry specific 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 that met the statutory effective deadline.

Goal 2

Address legislative directives and utility issues, improve efficiency and decrease unnecessary and repetitious regulations 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 Commission regulations to ensure they are up to date.
5. During the Legislative Session, attend legislative hearings in order to clarify and assist with the promulgation of statutes reflective of the mission, powers and duties of the Commission.
6. Attend relevant interim legislative committee meetings in order to clarify and assist committee members in policy decisions consistent with statutory intent.

Objectives

1. Identify 100% of bill draft requests and/or proposed legislation affecting the Commission within three business days of proposal.
2. Attend or monitor 100% of legislative meetings and hearings dealing with legislation affecting the Commission during the Legislative Session
3. Attend 100% of interim legislative committee meetings dealing with issues and policies related to the Commission.
4. Open all investigations and rulemakings to address legislative directives within 60 days of session's end or pursuant to specific legislative instructions.
5. Complete all investigations and rulemakings to address legislative directives within one year of session's end or pursuant to specific legislative instructions.

Performance Measures

1. Percentage of bill draft requests and/or proposed legislation affecting the Commission identified within three business days of proposal.

2. Percentage of legislative hearings and meetings attended or monitored dealing with legislation affecting the Commission.
3. Percentage of interim legislative committee meetings attended dealing with issues and policies related to the Commission.
4. Percentage of investigations and rulemakings to address legislative directives opened within 60 days of passage or pursuant to specific legislative instructions.
5. Percentage of investigations and rulemakings to address legislative directives completed within one year of session's end or pursuant to specific legislative instructions.

Goal 3

Ensure that Commission decisions are sound, Commission actions are lawful, the Commission is adequately represented when called into court, and the Commission is able to monitor and/or participate in proceedings at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and Federal Communications Commission as appropriate.

Strategies

1. Provide competent legal advice and effective representation to the Commission covering the entire range of potential legal issues that may require attention.
2. Provide adequate resources and access to training for attorneys in General Counsel to ensure their ability to provide competent legal advice and representation to the Commission, including FERC and FCC specific training.
3. Provide timely and thorough review of all Commission documents for legal sufficiency prior to their issuance.

Objectives

1. 100% of Commission notices and orders will be reviewed by General Counsel for legal sufficiency prior to issuance.
2. 100% of petitions filed with the Commission will be presented by General Counsel for initial Commission action within the 60-day timeframe in Nevada Administrative Code 703.540.
3. 100% of Nevada-licensed attorneys in General Counsel will complete the continuing legal education (CLE) training required annually, with an emphasis on industry specific issues, FERC and FCC training.
4. 100% of pleadings filed by General Counsel on behalf of the Commission, in all types of proceedings in which General Counsel may participate, will be filed by the applicable due dates (as determined by court or agency rules, or by presiding officers in individual proceedings).

Performance Measures

1. Percentage of Commission notices and orders reviewed by General Counsel for legal sufficiency prior to issuance.
2. Percentage of petitions presented for initial Commission action within the 60-day timeframe in Nevada Administrative Code 703.540.
3. Percentage of Nevada-licensed attorneys in General Counsel that complete the continuing legal education (CLE) training required annually.

4. Percentage of pleadings filed by General Counsel on behalf of the Commission by the applicable due dates.

Goal 4

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. Classify written complaints based on complexity and nature of complaint. Complaints that can be resolved at the division level will be classified as Tier 1 complaints, those complaints requiring assistance from other Staff Divisions would be classified as Tier 2 complaints.
3. Ensure the division is sufficiently staffed and trained to timely respond to written complaints.
4. Maintain a database to track written complaints.

Objectives

1. Ensure 75% of all Tier 1 written complaints that arise between regulated utilities and their customers are resolved within 45 calendar days of formal notification to the utility.
2. Ensure 100% of all Tier 2 written complaints that arise between regulated utilities and their customers that are not resolved by Staff, are brought to the Commission for decision.

Performance Measures

1. Percentage of Tier 1 written complaints resolved within 45 calendar days of formal notification to the utility.
2. Percentage of Tier 2 written complaints resolved.

Goal 5

Promote public understanding of the Public Utilities Commission of Nevada and its functions, as well as energy efficiency and conservation measures.

Strategies

1. Enhance the Commission website with content that explains Commission processes and promotes energy and water efficiency/conservation.
2. Distribute pamphlets/brochures and a monthly newsletter to increase awareness of the Commission and its function, enhance understanding of the regulatory process, and inform about the role conservation plays in reducing monthly utility bills.
3. Directly engage with consumers and community leaders through speaking engagements and informational presentations that increase awareness of the Commission and its function, enhance understanding of the regulatory process, and inform about the role conservation plays in reducing monthly utility bills.

4. Utilize social media to increase awareness of the Commission and its function, enhance understanding of the regulatory process, and inform about the role conservation plays in reducing monthly utility bills.

Objectives

1. Revise existing web content, create new content and conduct updates every six months to ensure the website adequately and accurately explains Commission processes and promotes energy conservation.
2. Host an informational display and distribute pamphlets/brochures at a minimum of two community events in Northern Nevada and two community events in Southern Nevada each year.
3. Provide a guest speaker for a presentation at five public venues each year in both Northern and Southern Nevada.
4. Message social media followers at least once every two weeks.
5. Conduct at least two general consumer sessions annually.

Performance Measures

1. Number of Commission website updates performed annually with new pages or links promoting energy conservation.
2. Number of speaking engagements or informational presentations made in Nevada annually.
3. Number of community events attended and brochures/pamphlets distributed annually.
4. Number of consumers who subscribe to the Commission's listserv or follow the Commission's social media websites.
5. Number of general consumer sessions held annually.

Goal 6

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

Strategies

1. Inspect water and sewer utilities in order 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.
3. Assist small water and sewer utilities to understand and navigate the regulatory process.

Objectives

1. Visit and/or meet with at least 25% of the water and sewer utilities annually.
2. Communicate with at least 50% of water and sewer utilities annually via telephone, video conferencing, email, or physical site visit.
3. For those utilities that have annual gross operating revenues under \$1,000,000, perform full inspections and file a Staff Inspection Report (per NAC 704.628) with the Commission once every three years.

4. Perform a thorough system review through the Integrated Resource Plan process every three years (per NRS 704.661), for utilities that have annual gross operating revenues over \$1,000,000.

Performance Measure

1. Percentage of water and wastewater utilities visited or met with annually.

Goal 7

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.
7. Provide public education regarding railroad safety and operations.

Objectives

1. Inspect 6,000 freight and passenger cars and locomotives annually.
2. Inspect 100% of hazardous material shippers and consignees annually and 2,500 hazardous material cars.
3. Inspect 3,200 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.)
5. Create educational information and present to railroad personnel and/or other state or Federal railroad professionals.

Performance Measures

1. Percentage of 6,000 car (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. Percentage of 2,500 hazardous material cars inspected annually.
4. Percentage of 3,200 track units inspected annually.
5. Percentage of 600 Operating Practices units inspected for surveillance of railroad operations annually.
6. One presentation annually regarding railroad safety and/or operations.

Goal 8

Ensure jurisdictional operators comply with 49 Code of Federal Regulations Part 192 (49 CFR 192)

Strategies

1. Conduct comprehensive pipeline safety audits and field inspections of jurisdictional operators for compliance with 49 CFR 192.
2. Respond promptly to reportable pipeline incidents in order to investigate the root cause and determine if any violations of 49 CFR 192 occurred.
3. Continue to support, when appropriate, the accelerated replacement of aging/higher risk natural gas pipeline infrastructure in order to reduce leaks and prevent incidents.

Objectives

1. Audit all gas pipeline systems for direct sales, master meters and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) systems every year.
2. Audit all local distribution companies (LDCs) every quarter.
3. Investigate and prepare a causation report regarding all Federal reportable pipeline incidents within one year of the date of the incident.
4. Schedule and conduct daily field inspections (Field Days) of LDCs construction and maintenance activities.
5. Work with small master meter and LPG operators to find opportunities to have these small pipeline systems converted to systems owned, operated and maintained by the LDC.

Performance Measures

1. Percentage of gas pipeline system inspection units for direct sales, master meters and LPG systems audited during the past year.
2. Percentage of LDCs audited every year.
3. Percentage of Federal incident reports completed within a year.
4. Percentage of 85 inspection Field Days per inspector conducted during the past year.

Goal 9

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

Strategies

1. Participate in the Nevada Regional Common Ground Alliance (NRCGA) partnership and support implementation of the Common Ground Alliance (CGA) best practices and goals in Nevada.
2. Participate in excavator and/or operator safety awareness and recognition functions organized by the NRCGA, the one-call center serving Nevada (USAN), operators or their associations, contract excavators or their associations, as a sponsor or program speaker.
3. Participate in and/or coordinate excavator and/or operator/locator training sessions conducted by the NRCGA.

4. Facilitate in the development and use of an adverse impact database that will track root causes that lead to facility damages, or locator or excavator delays. Staff will analyze the database to better focus in-field inspections and to increase or redirect educational and/or training activities to better apply limited resources to effectively resolve identified issues.
5. Conduct a robust in-field inspection program to ensure effective compliance with NRS 455/NAC 455 and to address violations found. This will include issuing verbal warnings in the field, issuing written warnings, and bringing formal show cause proceedings before the Commission when warranted.
6. Work with the involved damage prevention stakeholders to improve the process and effectiveness of the program in Nevada.
7. Work with concerned stakeholders to improve the functionality and responsiveness, and hopefully lower the operating costs of the one-call center serving Nevada.
8. Work with concerned stakeholders to improve the state's one-call law, NRS 455, bringing it fully up to date to address various issues and aspects.
9. Implement an adverse impact reporting tool via the NRCGA's or the one-call center, which is compatible with the CGA DIRT database, and review resultant trends to determine how effective the damage prevention process appears to be.

Objectives

1. Staff will maintain a presence at all NRCGA activities, committee meetings, subcommittee meetings, etc., and maintain an effective dialogue with all stakeholders.
2. Staff will maintain records of all field inspection and compliance-enforcement activities, and will monitor the effectiveness that this direct oversight has on reducing damages, as well as day-to-day implementation costs. Staff will share its findings with interested stakeholders through the NRCGA.

Performance Measures

1. Number of inspections conducted during the past year.
2. Number of violations found during inspections, and how they were addressed (via verbal warning, written warning, or assessment of civil penalty).

Goal 10

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 and support the core mission of the Commission.

Objectives

1. Offer professional-specific training to 70 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.