



# Keeping field agents safe

We are used to having water and gas flowing continuously. In fact, for most of us, the thought of not having easy, uninterrupted access to these resources in our households for an extended period of time rarely crosses our minds. The COVID-19 pandemic could have created a significant disruption in our perception of what normal looks like, were it not for the quiet everyday heroes who were out in the field, maintaining critical infrastructure for safe water and gas delivery while most of us were adjusting to remote working conditions with stay at home orders in place.

Utility field agents managed the generation and distribution networks and ensured a vital service was delivered to every home, business and health care facility.

Although they carried on working with adapted emergency protocols, field workers still face risks every day in operations such as on-site interventions or meter readings. Ensuring employee safety is paramount, and solutions exist to alleviate the risks and keep working conditions safe for field workers



### Keeping a Distance with Remote-Reading Capabilities

Whether dealing with social distancing from customers or co-workers, adjusting to new rules of interacting with people creates challenges unheard-of in our society. Remote-reading capabilities offer a genuine response to today's and tomorrow's situations that require distancing as a precautionary measure. Enabling data retrieval through handheld systems in walk-by/drive-by settings or networked infrastructure, communication modules lower the risk of exposure field workers could face in unsafe environments.

### Maintaining Operations with Limited PPE Supply

While the COVID-19 pandemic was hitting full force worldwide, another crisis was in the works for essential workers. With Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in short supply, over 70% of utilities asked were anticipating challenges in maintaining the network while ensuring a safe working environment\*. Remote-reading enables remote diagnosis, helps assess the criticality of on-site operations and limits unnecessary deployments.

### No Contact Accuracy

With some aspects of our lives on pause, delivering water and gas safely continues to be critical for communities. In this context, meter readings and the capacity to maintain accurate billing cycles for services provided remain unchanged. Accuracy matters when it comes to billing. With the capability to retrieve information over-the-air or through interoperability with existing networks, communication devices are the cornerstone of "no contact accuracy" for utilities, maintaining both field workers safe and operations smooth.

**Over 80 million** mechanical water and gas meters were shipped in 2018. Auxiliary communication devices that enable remote reading and data collection are an accessible, readily available solution that help alleviate the risks and keep working conditions safe for field workers.

**Learn more about Cyble at [itron.com](https://www.itron.com)**

### OUR EMPLOYEES ARE OUR MOST PRECIOUS RESOURCE

The lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic reaffirmed for us that utility workers are—among so many others—the everyday heroes that keep our world turning. Maintaining the flow of water and gas through a safe, reliable network while keeping both field workers and consumers protected is a significant pledge utilities have been making to communities around the world for decades. With Itron's Cyble technology, gas and water utilities in over 80 countries have adopted remote-reading solutions, as a strong commitment to their workforce, their operations and their customers

\* AWWA COVID-19 Utility and Water Sector Organization Survey - April 2020



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