

## VPS Memo

# COVID-19: Recommendations for Broadband & Telecom Providers

## BEST PRACTICES IN TIMES OF UNCERTAINTY

These are unusual times, as COVID-19 has disrupted daily life and business operations across the country. In doing so, the current pandemic has highlighted the need for reliable, robust, fully supported broadband networks. Vantage Point offers the following recommendations and best practices for maintaining and supporting your networks and business continuity.

### Personnel & Business Operations

#### Protect Your Employees

In addition to CDC recommendations regarding handwashing and other hygienic measures, OSHA also provides information for protecting your staff. Though not an exhaustive list, examples of recommended procedures related to telecommunications include:

1. Keeping your staff informed on internal procedures
2. Post external procedures for customers (i.e. business office closed to public, shortened hours, etc.)
3. Pre-screening on-site calls to protect technicians
  - a. *"Does anyone in the home have a fever?"*
  - b. *"Has anyone been exposed to COVID-19?"*
4. Only send technicians out for emergency visits
  - a. Provide technical assistance via phone to reduce in-person visits or prepare short videos on common technical issues that can be posted online or sent to the customer
5. Provide Personal Protective Equipment for employees

## Disaster Recovery Plan

Vantage Point wants to remind you to implement your Disaster Recovery Plan to help maintain business continuity. If you do not have a Disaster Recovery Plan, or yours does not include contingencies for a pandemic, please contact any of the Vantage Point team members listed below and we can assist you.

## Pandemic Checklist

Vantage Point recommends forming a pandemic checklist to help maintain critical infrastructure during this time. This list should include procedures for repairing fiber cuts, maintaining e911 services, and identifying a list of essential staff. Additionally, we suggest making note of what works and what is unhelpful over the coming days and weeks. These notes can later be used to strengthen the pandemic checklist for a potential event in the future.

## Community Support

You may consider an internal policy to support customers during this uncertain time by suspending disconnects, allowing late bill payment, or other measures. In this vein, FCC Chairman Pai has enacted the “Keep Americans Connected” Pledge found [here](#).

## Network Support

We are already seeing increased network traffic as social distancing has encouraged the use of telehealth, online education, video conferencing, and streaming entertainment. Vantage Point encourages all network operators to consider the following items, and if necessary, we stand ready to assist:

### Bandwidth Monitoring

Monitor your existing bandwidth to ensure you have adequate capacity and avoid network congestion. If you need assistance with bandwidth monitoring or securing additional capacity, please contact us.

### VPN Capabilities

For companies who are shifting to work-from-home arrangements for their employees, you may need additional VPN licenses or other technical support. Vantage Point can assist in securing these if necessary.

### Collaboration Tools

Zoom, WebEx, Microsoft Teams, and other collaboration tools can help maintain a semblance of “business as usual” while honoring social distancing measures. If your company would like assistance selecting, incorporating, or supporting these tools, Vantage Point can help.

### Network Operations Support

Should you encounter decreased staff availability, Vantage Point network experts are available for remote technical support for virtually any need, including: network monitoring, remote provisioning, troubleshooting, and other critical functions.

## Additional Information

Vantage Point is committed to providing uninterrupted service to our clients, and have undertaken several internal measures to ensure the safety of our team and protect our availability to serve you.

If you have any questions about operations or best practices as we work through COVID-19, please contact these members of the Vantage Point team:

FOR PERSONNEL & BUSINESS OPERATIONS:

**Jill Weber** at (605) 995-1832 or [Jill.Weber@vantagepnt.com](mailto:Jill.Weber@vantagepnt.com)

**Wendy Harper** at (605) 995-1756 or [Wendy.Harper@vantagepnt.com](mailto:Wendy.Harper@vantagepnt.com)

**Dereck DeVries** at (605) 995-1762 or [Dereck.DeVries@vantagepnt.com](mailto:Dereck.DeVries@vantagepnt.com)

FOR NETWORK SUPPORT:

**Andy Deinert** at (605) 995-1765 or [Andy.Deinert@vantagepnt.com](mailto:Andy.Deinert@vantagepnt.com)

