# Process Safety Vulnerabilities Enhanced by COVID19

Presented By: John T. Perez, P.E., CCPSC







#### World's Response to COVID19

What have we done around the globe to protect ourselves and others?

#### Trickle-Down Effect On Oil, Gas, Petrochemical

How have our global responses impacted our daily and local operations?

#### **Enhanced PSM Vulnerabilities**

Did we check our tires and adjust our mirrors?

## **Thoughts On Bolstering Our Safeguards**

What engineering and administrative safeguards can we use to adapt?



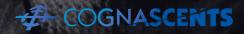


John T. Perez, P.E., CCPSC

- Happily married with four teenagers!
- Rice University '96 BSChE, '12 MBA
- Rohm and Hass Process Engineer
- Berwanger Engineer and Sales
- Celerity3 Engineering Owner
- Lloyd's Register Sold Out
- Cognascents Round 2
- 24 years in Process Safety

# Opening Thoughts...

When COVID19 became real to you, what did you do first? And second? And third? At what point did you start to focus on vulnerabilities beyond yourself and your loved ones? At what point did you start considering how things would change at the office? On the platform? At the refinery? In the field?



# **COVID19 TIMELINE**

A lot can happen between Thanksgiving and Easter.

#### China

Chinese health officials inform the WHO on 31 December 2019 about a cluster of patients with mysterious pneumonia.

**DEC 2019** 

#### California, USA

First stay-at-home order issued 19 March 2020. Domino effect ensues with stay-at-home order soon to follow in Houston.

MAR 2020

## Start

# NOV 2019 China

First case confirmed on 17 November 2019. What was on your mind back then? USA

First case confirmed stateside on 20 January 2020. WHO had not even named the coronavirus disease and air travel restrictions were not in place.

JAN 2020



# World Response to Coronavirus

What behaviors did we change to combat COVID19?



## **Travel Restrictions**

Travel restrictions
started between China
and the rest of the world
and eventually expanded
to restrictions between
countries and now
states/provinces.



## Stringent Hygiene

Guidance to wash hands and disinfect surfaces resulted in worldwide runs on hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, Clorox®, and face masks.



# **Social Distancing**

Guidance to limit
gatherings to <10
persons and to stay at
least 6 ft. away from
other persons led to
modified personal and
professional
environments.



## Stay-At-Home

Policies requesting persons to stay at home except for essential visits have reduced consumption on many fronts while also spurring spikes of panic buying and hoarding.



# Trickle-Down Effect On Oil, Gas, and Petrochemical

Where did travel restrictions, more stringent hygiene, social distancing, and stayat-home policies take our industries?



#### **Reduced Consumption**

For the most part, our consumption has reduced down to living essentials and whatever entertainment we can afford.

"More than two-thirds of U.S. economic output is tied to consumer spending, and a majority of Americans are actively cutting their spending due to pervasive worries about the COVID-19 impact on the economy and stock market," says Greg McBride, CFA, Bankrate chief financial analyst.



#### **Work Disruption**

Non-essential businesses are closed and non-essential workers have been relegated to contribute remotely, if at all.

The coronavirus outbreak could cost 47 million jobs next quarter, according to estimates by the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis. That would translate to an unemployment rate of 32.1%, well above the 24.9% rate it was at during the Great Depression.



#### **Nationalistic Economic Reactions**

Nations and cultures are withdrawing behind the castle walls and doing whatever they can to shore up their economies (e.g. oil plays, repatriation).

"If the Saudis and Russians can't agree on a production cut, WTI could slip even farther. \$15 per barrel looks like a real possibility." - Jim Patterson, Managing Editor, Kiplinger



#### Fear, Uncertainty, Doubt

Researchers at the Sheffield and Ulster Universities in Northern Ireland found on March 24 (the day after Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced Britons were to stay at home) 38% of participants reported increased feelings of depression and 36% said they felt more anxious.

"Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the assessment that something else is more important than fear." - Franklin D. Roosevelt



# Operational Readiness

Process transitions, such as start-ups and shutdowns, are where the wild things live.

## **Enhanced Vulnerabilities**

# **Adaptive Safeguarding**



#### Working without margin and buffer

How will a quick and broad workforce infection impact your ability to shutdown?





#### Develop your Plan B to Plan B

Define your decision-points regarding required resource levels against time to perform critical shutdown activities.

#### Potential competency gap for PSSRs

What effort is made to contact personnel competent in the PSSR scope?





#### Use technology to loop in competency

Conduct online PSSR in addition to field PSSR using video-conferencing and 3-D viewer.

#### Operational stress and fatigue

Some essential personnel will not perform to the same level of excellence during this ordeal.





#### Perform meticulous verification via checklists

Checklists ensure corners do not get inadvertently cut when the mind, body, and soul fatigue.



# Operational Discipline

Formality of operations must increase when complexity and anxiety increase.

## **Enhanced Vulnerabilities**

# **Adaptive Safeguarding**



#### Working without margin and buffer

Are response times and simultaneous operations negatively impacted during strained resourcing?





#### Check operational resourcing assumptions

Ensure resourcing affords safe operation and emergency response given social distancing requirements.

#### "Churn" during economic downturn

How are changes in responsibility being managed during this pandemic?





#### Postpone org. changes for 6 months

Now is simply not a time to push the envelope regarding organizational change.

#### Reduced operational oversight

Who is providing operational oversight during this turbulent time?





#### Use technology to loop in competency

Use video-conferencing and electronic logs to keep experienced personnel working remotely engaged and informed



# Asset Integrity and Reliability

Assets that are not fit for purpose must not be put into operation.

## **Enhanced Vulnerabilities**

# **Adaptive Safeguarding**



#### Working without margin and buffer

What level of resourcing is required to maintain inspection and maintenance integrity?





#### Identify asset integrity / maintenance absolutes

Define your decision-points regarding safety-critical and compliance-driven maintenance activity.

#### **Exposed asset integrity risks**

Are essential personnel aware of high severity asset integrity risks?





# Review high-risk asset integrity scenarios with essential personnel

Al risks may be tracked separately from PHA risks.

#### Running with higher number of exemptions

What decision will be made if critical inspection or PM cannot be performed due to COVID19 impact?





#### Define asset integrity-driven shutdown triggers

Make the decision when level-headed and stick to it when things go South.



# Input from Colleagues

You never want to be the smartest person in the room and thanks to y'all I am not.



#### Make up for unstructured conversations

"Regular team check in to review work progress and remain connected. This prevents things falling through the cracks at a time where there are not a lot of unstructured conversations that you would have in the work place." - The Earl\*



#### Maintain presence of leadership and culture

"Weekly safety meetings with the operations crews were attended by members of the leadership team, safety, and process safety at one site. To limit the number of attendees in these meetings, the leadership team, safety, and process safety no longer attend. Discussion of weekly topics are led by the crew foreman with the crew." - The MIT Grad\*



#### Combat distraction and depression

"Distracted operators who may not be totally focused on the risks in their everyday work because they are worried about their families in this current environment." - The Grillmaster\*



#### Prepare, share, and "On Air"

"We are planning on doing PHAs remotely. Plan is to provide hard copies of P&IDs that are sent out beforehand and to require use of cameras during sessions to maintain engagement." - Mr. 3 Floyds\*



<sup>\*</sup> Names have been changed to protect the innocent.

# Effective Videoconferencing

01

#### **VIPS Only**

Reduce the number of participants to only those required to make the necessary decisions and perform the necessary tasks to achieve the goals of the meeting

02

#### **Advance Sharing**

Share information required for the meeting at least two days in advance with all required participants. 03

#### **Reduce Length**

Reduce the length of virtual meetings in comparison to face-to-face meetings.

Long virtual meetings run the risk of participant disengagement.

04

#### **Rules and Roles**

Define ground-rules and assign roles for meeting participants (such as timekeeper and rabbit-hole watcher). You may want to define communication / approval hierarchy.

05

## **Engaging Hooks**

Call on participants by name with queries for input (e.g. "What do you feel needs to be changed?", "Is this how it is done in the field?", "Are you happy with the wording?") 06

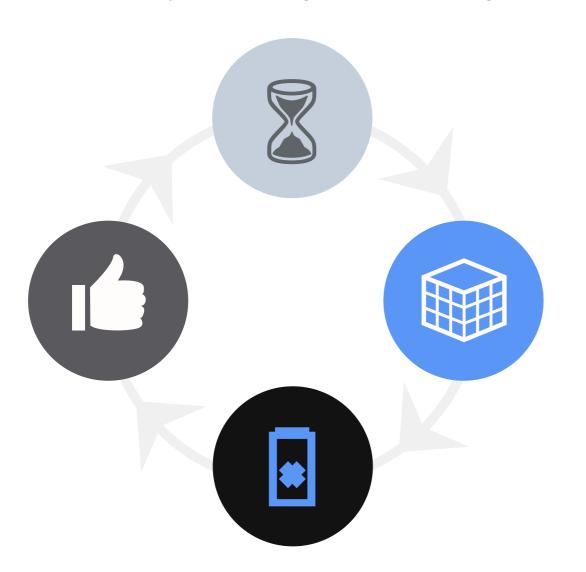
#### **Body Language**

Watch body language (e.g. posture, subconscious gestures, facial expressions) and listen for non-visual cues (e.g. short / sharp responses, sighing, heaving, huffing).



# **COVID19 Survival Loop**

Apply the following loop to help navigate crucial conversations and decision points while in the fight.



#### Slow down.

We make mistakes when we outrun ourselves...especially when we are stressed out.

## Keep thinking.

Make time for creative problem-solving as well as traditional decision-making processes.

## Say "No" and be disciplined.

You cannot do it all and some things just need to be put on hold. Everyone has this super-power!

#### Do with excellence.

Spend your time on critical tasks. Channel your energy to the distilled mother liquor of life!





# **GET IN TOUCH**

We are here to serve your asset integrity, process safety, and process engineering needs.

norberto.pineda@cognascents.com

281.717.8590









1519 Vander Wilt Lane Building 4 Katy, Texas 77449

www.cognascents.com

