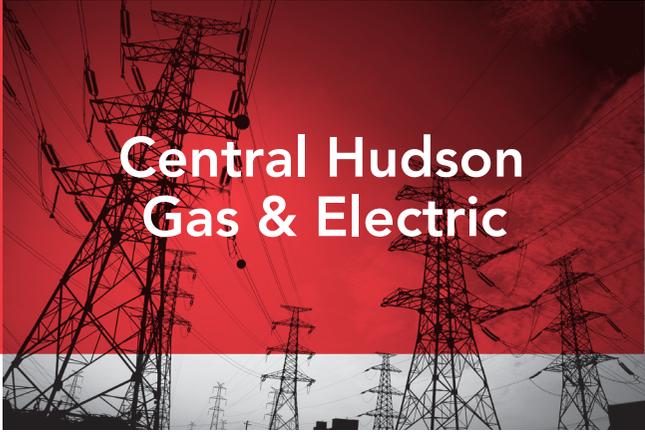




AUTOMATED CALLOUT HELPS CUT RESPONSE TIME



Central Hudson Gas & Electric

OVERVIEW

Central Hudson Gas & Electric Corporation serves approximately 370,000 gas and electric customers across a service territory that straddles the Hudson River from suburban New York City to Albany. Twenty percent of Central Hudson's customers rely on the corporation for natural gas. Central Hudson's natural gas system consists of 163 miles of transmission pipelines and 1,163 miles of distribution pipelines, as well as customer service lines and meters.

Central Hudson's target window for getting workers to an emergency site is about 20 minutes, as set by the utility in compliance with Public Service Commission response levels.

CHALLENGES

- CHG&E has a small target window to operate within and a diverse service area.
- From 2005 to 2009, CHG&E faced decreasing headcount and increased meter sets.
- Dispatch operations personnel typically have to go outside the district in which the emergency call occurs to find a chief and mechanic to respond; reaching beyond the district for help can mean the response time is pushed even further.
- For an after-hours call, the Dispatch Operations team must choose people in a way that ensures an equitable distribution of overtime. Monitoring overtime requires a patchwork computer system that programmers tinker with as work rules change.

*“Although the company had fewer workers to handle a greater workload, its **total average response time was still 6 percent lower...**”*

SOLUTION

Central Hudson credits an automated callout and resource management system made by ARCOS® LLC to get first responders to the scene of trouble within the approximately 20-minute response time. The ARCOS Callout and Scheduling Suite, installed in 2005 at Central Hudson, is a SaaS application that automatically identifies available crews, calls them, analyzes responses and reports on the outcome.

Dispatch Operations uses ARCOS for after-hours calls, for shift workers and most classified employees after the 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. shift. The ARCOS solution maintains Central Hudson's schedules, and the utility company's payroll team uses the software to cross-check timesheets.

The ARCOS solution accounts for complex work rules that ensure overtime is parceled out to gas chiefs and mechanics according to union agreements. For any updated union callout rules, the utility can use ARCOS to handle the changes with a few keystrokes.

The ARCOS solution stores the current work rules, such as the order in which gas personnel on different lists should be called, and juggles an ever-changing line-up of available staff. The solution enables the Central Hudson workers to update their status, so managers can adjust staffing around the clock. The software also tracks the number of first responders available as well as construction and maintenance workers across all districts.

If, for example, ARCOS shows there are no chief gas mechanics available for a callout, then it automatically contacts the first available first-class mechanic while factoring in any union rules. Some of Central Hudson's electric workers are also certified to handle gas emergencies, and the ARCOS solution will tap these employees if and when necessary.

RESULTS

From 2005 to 2009, Central Hudson's System/Dispatch Operations group has more often than not bested the corporate target response time. For instance, in 2005 the target was 22.5 minutes; Central Hudson's average response was 22.2 minutes that year. In 2006 and 2007, the mark to hit was 22.5 minutes and 21.3 minutes, respectively. Central Hudson responded by posting a total average response time of 21.3 minutes in 2006 and 20.7 minutes in 2007; these times were even lower than the bar set for superior response time both years. For the years that Central Hudson didn't reach the target response time (i.e., 2008 and 2009), the company's average response was no more than 42 seconds off the goal.

From 2004 to 2009, Central Hudson saw a reduction in the size of its response team. Although the company had fewer workers to handle a greater workload, its total average response time was still 6 percent lower in 2009 than in 2004.

The ARCOS solution knows who's available and when, which means Central Hudson can get workers to an emergency site faster to repair and restore service. The New York-based utility is a classic example of how automated callout and resource management can help optimize performance when resources are stretched, and stay in compliance with regulators.