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Request from: Public Utilities Regulatory Authority

Question:
(EXTERNAL VENDOR SHIFTS-BILLING) Refer to Responses to EOE-470 and EOE-517. The Company referenced that external "Tree Contractors invoice the Company for their entire shift, which includes their travel time." Respond to the following:

a. Does the Company practice of paying for a crew's entire shift apply to all types of vendors (i.e., tree, line, etc.)? If not, explain the different practices.
b. Explain how the Company is able to verify that vendors worked through their entire shift.
c. Are external vendors expected to be staged at a central location that is managed by an Eversource employee? If not, explain the process.
d. Explain the process for how a vendor is assigned shifts during a storm event.
e. Is the Company permitted to release vendor employees prior to the end of their respective shifts if there are insufficient assignments? If not, cite the document or an example of a contract provision that prevents the release of a vendor employee before the end of a shift.
f. Explain the specific expectations of external crews for both the start and end of the crews' shifts. For example, are crews expected to be on site at a staging location at the start and end of their shifts? Can a crew commence their shift while eating breakfast at their hotel? Provide details on Company expectations.

Response:
a. The Company pays for the entire shift for tree crews. Those resources are not available to work elsewhere and therefore must be paid for the time they are committed to the CL&P system. Line Crew pay is based on need and can release prior to the end of a full shift. The contract does not require full shift payment.

b. For contractor tree crews, Eversource Arborists are overseeing tree crew activities during their shifts. Eversource employees are provided updates for when tree crews are to be released and ensure the crews remain are available up until the time of their release. When crews are hired, rosters are processed and the rostered crews are uploaded to the Outage Management System (OMS). Restoration Management Teams (RMTs) have oversight of

on-shift line crews in the OMS and assign line crews to trouble spots as needed. External Field Resource Coordinators (ERFC) coordinate the activities of crews assigned to them. They communicate the restoration strategy to the crews, and provide them with logistical details concerning food and lodging. Additionally, they provide two-way communications regarding damage, restoration times, and materials needed between the Operations Coordinator in the RMT and field crews.

c. Contractor tree crews are provided an address for a staging location for their storm shift. Depending on the size of the storm, line crews may be instructed to report to designated staging areas or simply to a specific town in the area they will be working.

d. For contractor tree crews, Operations will request a specific number of tree crews to be available in each area work center (AWC) and they are assigned accordingly. Line crews are assigned shifts based on the number of crews available and to ensure coverage for 24-hour operations and provide appropriate rest time. Furthermore, shift assignments are based on restoration need and crew availability. The Incident Commander (IC) confirms details with Operations who updates internal systems, and the information is then used by Resource Acquisition (RA) who communications through the ERFC and or the ERFC to RA and Operations aligns the internal work management system accordingly.

e. The Company may release contractor line and tree crews at any point during their shift as they complete their assignments, and no other assignments or work is needed. Work assignments may not be associated with specific tickets in situations like circuit patrols.

f. Contractor tree crews are expected to be at the staging location for the start and end time of their shifts, excluding an exception for dinner if it was not taken earlier in the shift due to a long event or logistics complication. Likewise, line crews are expected to meet at the start of their shift, either at a designated staging area or agreed upon location, to conduct tailgate a safety meeting and be ready for assignments. At the end of the shift crews can travel back to lodging or demobilize from their last ticket location. There are instances where the contractor may rally all of their resources in one location for a final debrief.