



DHS updates essential workforce guidance to cover transportation supply chain

25 March 2020

On 23 March 2020 the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) published [revisions to its guidance](#) regarding the "Essential Critical Infrastructure Workforce." One of the key updates to the CISA guidance is additional language to ensure the transportation supply chain is included within the scope of the guidance. Under the "critical manufacturing" category, the new language identifies the transportation supply chain and adds: "workers needed to maintain the continuity of these manufacturing functions and associated supply chains."

Accordingly, the full "critical manufacturing" category now reads as follows, with the new language shown in italics:

Workers necessary for the manufacturing of materials and products needed for medical supply chains, *and for supply chains associated with transportation*, energy, communications, food and agriculture, chemical manufacturing, nuclear facilities, the operation of dams, water and wastewater treatment, emergency services, and the defense industrial base. *Additionally, workers needed to maintain the continuity of these manufacturing functions and associated supply chains.*

This new language broadens the coverage for critical industries that make up the supply chain for the various transportation subsectors such as rail and highway and motor carrier.

Background on federal critical infrastructure sector policy

Under federal emergency preparedness planning, DHS has prioritized the protection and continued operation of certain industries and systems, including the transportation system and critical manufacturing, during a crisis as "critical infrastructure." CISA executes the secretary of Homeland Security's responsibilities as assigned under the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to provide strategic guidance, promote a national unity of effort, and coordinate the overall federal effort to ensure the security and resilience of the nation's critical infrastructure.

As defined by the USA Patriot Act of 2001 (42 U.S.C. 5195c(e)), critical infrastructure are any "systems and assets, whether physical or virtual, so vital to the United States that the incapacity or destruction of such systems and assets would have a debilitating impact on security, national economic security, national public health or safety, or any combination of those matters."

[Presidential Policy Directive 21](#) identifies 16 critical infrastructure sectors under the USA Patriot

Act, including "transportation systems" and "critical manufacturing." The [transportation systems sector](#) encompasses seven key subsectors: aviation, highway and motor carrier, maritime transportation, mass transit and passenger rail, pipeline systems, freight rail, and postal and shipping.

CISA developed the essential workforce guidance to help state and local governments and the private sector ensure that employees essential to operations of critical infrastructure are able to continue working with as little interruption as possible. The purpose of this guidance is to enable continued resilience for public community, health and safety of government, economy, and society despite possible impacts to the workforce and critical infrastructure workforce brought on by consequences of COVID-19. Although the guidance is not binding, the federal government encourages state and local governments to align their shelter-in-place and other emergency orders with the CISA essential workforce guidance to ensure the continuity of essential functions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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