

Special Edition

● APRIL 2020

SAVANNAH RIVER NUCLEAR SOLUTIONS

# SRNS Today



## COVID-19 response

SRNS shows resilience while dealing with the pandemic

### This month

Enhanced cleanings • Temperature checks • Online training • Supply Chain challenges



**Stuart MacVean**  
SRNS President and CEO

# Welcome

to the April 2020 special edition of

# SRNS Today

Like the rest of the country, COVID-19 has changed the way we approach “normal life.” To keep up with the rapidly evolving situation and to protect our employees, SRS implemented extraordinary changes to our normal operating posture in a short amount of time. The SRS Infectious Disease Response Team was activated in March to strategically position the Site to protect the SRS workforce against COVID-19 and within a matter of a few weeks, a large portion of Site employees moved to telework. Despite the change in their physical location, those employees continue to be fully engaged, adapting to the needs that are in front of us and delivering on our important missions.

While some of our employees worked from home, many essential personnel remained on Site to ensure the safety of our facilities and operations. Our National Nuclear Security Administration Missions have remained in normal operations with maximized telework and our Environmental Management missions have maintained a continuity essential posture. I applaud the SRNS employees who have reported daily to SRS throughout this pandemic and greatly appreciate their ongoing hard work, dedication and commitment.

This special edition of SRNS Today highlights the agility and impressive response exhibited by all the SRNS employees, whose efforts continue to make SRNS a safety leader in the DOE Complex while delivering solutions for the nation’s pressing challenges. There is not a single department that hasn’t played a vital role in the rapid restructuring of our business framework to support the ongoing health of SRS and the community.

SRNS makes the world safer by affording the nation with a means to deter adversaries. COVID-19 is a different kind of foe. It is an enemy that cannot be held at bay through negotiations. Despite these uncharted waters, SRNS employees stand ready to answer the call, no matter the challenge, and deliver reliable products and expertise for our nation. Our physical locations and workplace controls may have changed, but our capabilities remain unmatched.

I believe that we will come out of this crisis stronger than ever before. We will be better prepared to handle similar challenges in the future and we will realize new opportunities for business modernization. I have never been more honored to say that I am a member of the SRNS team than now.



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# COVID-19 ‘War Room’

## SRS Infectious Disease Response Team directs Site response to COVID-19



The SRS Infectious Disease Response Team (IDRT) is working from the IDRT “War Room” as the front line in planning and communications surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic.

The small, SRNS-led team of approximately 15-20 employees works daily with SRS leadership to align SRS protocols with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines and respond to evolving challenges.

The team is made up of members from the SRS Emergency Response Organization, Business Services, Human Resources, Corporate Communications, Site Services, and Environmental Stewardship & Safety and Health.

The COVID-19 War Room is housed in the 735-B Alternate Emergency Operations Center. The room looks similar to those seen in movies; workstations line the perimeter of the room with large televisions at the front of the room that provide team members with real-time updates from across SRS and national resources.

“The purpose of the IDRT is to ensure Site missions continue in a safe and effective manner,” said IDRT Lead Neal Gilmore. “Additionally, the team monitors evolving guidance to provide employees with up-to-date information in a timely manner.”

The IDRT is responsible for implementing the SRS COVID-19 Response Plan. This plan aligns with long-standing emergency operations procedures that guide SRS’ response to infectious diseases. The COVID-19 Response Plan provides sitewide guidance on isolating and preventing the spread of the virus, extent of condition investigation protocols, recommended hygiene practices, staffing requirements based on operational posture, and operational

controls to protect mission critical services. The SRS COVID-19 Response Plan is continuously reviewed by the IDRT and changes to the plan are made as emerging information becomes available.

In addition to Site representatives, the IDRT is in regular communication with the DOE Headquarters in Washington, D.C., the South Carolina Emergency Management Division and the Georgia Emergency Management Division. The team also monitors updated guidance and metrics provided by the CDC and the Coronavirus Resource Center at Johns Hopkins University and Medicine.

Work performed by the IDRT includes the identification of new sources to procure nationally depleted products so that SRS employees can practice CDC-recommended hygiene protocols while at work, and updated policies and guidance to departments and employees across the Site, many on a case-by-case basis.

“The IDRT is navigating the constant flow of information from external resources while simultaneously adapting SRS business practices and delivering support and supplies where needed. The team has also developed recovery plans to safely bring SRS employees back to the Site when it is appropriate to do so,” said Gilmore.

“Although COVID-19 has proven to be a formidable adversary, SRS employees continue to prove their ability to adapt, overcome and deliver on our missions and support functions,” said DOE-SR Manager Mike Budney. “I cannot give enough thanks or praise to the members of the IDRT for leading the efforts to make sure the Site is operating and functional, and that our employees are informed and safe.”

The IDRT War Room hours of operation are 6 a.m.-6 p.m., Monday-Friday.



The SRS Infectious Disease Response Team (IDRT), located in the War Room in 735-B, coordinates the Site’s response to COVID-19.

# COVID calls

Medical confronts COVID-19 pandemic through extraordinary teamwork

The SRS Medical Operations and Services (Medical) department, run by SRNS employees, is playing a vital role in the Site's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The staff is diligently working to provide routine services while responding to questions and concerns about the virus. Working under difficult circumstances, teamwork is a critical component of their success in meeting the needs of SRS employees.

In early March, phone lines in Medical experienced a surge of activity that has continued through April. Approximately 5,000 virus-related phone calls have been handled by the department. Due to the high call volume, Medical added phone lines, contracted additional nursing staff and extended phone coverage from Monday through Friday to Monday through Saturday.

Clinic Manager Cynthia Kroes said, "Nurses are constantly answering the phones. People call with questions about the virus. Some call to discuss symptoms, which leads to a discussion about exposure. Others call to self-identify as a high-risk individual who feels they need to be home. These are not always quick and easy phone calls."

Apart from the clinical aspect of Medical, the department's operational efficiency is an asset. Staff established a Medical War Room to communicate COVID-19 updates to the Site's Infectious Disease Response Team War Room and to assist nurses on phone lines to obtain needed information. Previously, nurses placed calls on hold to locate documents, but now, Medical War Room personnel locate and deliver them to the nurse. As a result, phone calls are more efficiently handled.

"In this demanding time, Medical's staff has displayed extraordinary teamwork and maintained professionalism," said Kroes. "Our team has risen to the challenge this pandemic handed us, and all of us in Medical are proud of the work we're doing to aid our coworkers."



Medical team members Amber Collins and Dr. Manigo-Johnson respond to a phone call.



Chris Makekau takes Amy Ekechukwu's temperature at the temperature check station in C Wing of SRNL.

## Proactive testing

SRS implements temperature checks at key facilities to monitor for COVID-19

As part of the effort to control the spread of COVID-19 among essential employees working at SRS, IDRT implemented temperature check stations in key facilities.

"Running a fever is one of the symptoms of COVID-19, along with coughing and shortness of breath," said SRNS Medical Liaison to the IDRT Trish Blush. "Checking temperatures to ensure workers aren't exhibiting one of these symptoms is another way we can help protect our essential employees who are working onsite, along with other protective measures such as providing face coverings and promoting social distancing."

Testing is done by using an infrared scanner on the forehead. If an employee's temperature is elevated, the employee is asked to sit down for five minutes to ensure the elevation isn't from outside temperatures or from walking from the parking lot. If an elevated

temperature is registered again after five minutes, the employee is sent home and told to contact their management and Site Medical.

Diana Jennings, SRNS H Canyon Radiation Protection Department, was recently tasked with manning a temperature check station. "I definitely feel safer knowing that this process is in place," she said. "It adds a second layer of accountability to make sure people aren't sick when they show up for work."

Testing has been expanded to all SRNS facilities and is one of the controls in place to protect employees in the months ahead.

"Not only is this proactive testing helping prevent the spread of COVID-19, it is also helping protect employees from other seasonal illnesses like the flu," said Blush. "The safety of our employees is our top priority, and we are happy to be able to provide this additional layer of protection."



## SRNS organizations team up to provide a safe work environment for SRS employees

SRNS Site Services and Supply Chain Management (SCM), working with infectious disease control experts, have taken the necessary action to systematically help protect employees from the COVID-19 virus, through enhanced cleaning at SRS.

“This all actually cycled through a series of progressively more extensive actions beginning with preventive sanitizing long before the teleworking began,” said Mark Eberl, Manager, Subcontract Execution. “It then moved to extensive, enhanced cleaning of work areas where a suspected or confirmed COVID case had been found. If there were any suspicions or doubt, we chemically fogged it to ensure a safe work environment.”

During the initial sanitizing phase, the SRS janitorial staff went through an average of 70 large plastic tubs of Clorox-based wipes a day, thoroughly cleaning surfaces in common areas such as doors, light switches, railings, handles, elevators, kitchens, bathrooms, conference rooms and other high-traffic, high-touch areas.

“A contract modification was quickly put into effect that permitted the sub-contracted janitors to work overtime,” said Eberl. “We essentially worked down to dusk and on Saturdays to clean the huge amount of surface area that had to be wiped down across the site multiple times for weeks prior to the majority of the employees leaving the site.”

As response efforts expanded, emergency acquisitions through SCM were started. This resulted in a contract with CDC-approved Duraclean of North Augusta.

“We leaned heavily on these experts who had the proper protective suits, equipment and sanitizing agents to ensure a successful transition into the next phase, level two cleaning, which included the use of hand-held fogging machines,” said Eberl. “We need

to recognize the outstanding accomplishment of our SRNS team members who brought these workers to SRS in record time.”

Duraclean technicians are able to wear protective suits and respiratory gear, using the foggers to completely sanitize every surface—within a work area or other locations—suspected of having been used by employees confirmed with or exhibiting symptoms of a COVID-19 case.

“Duraclean employees had been working 12 hours a day, six days a week for about three weeks, when we realized that we were steadily falling behind. So, another contract was placed with CDC-approved ServePro, in this case with a franchise located in Alabama, to add to Duraclean’s limited resource,” said Eberl.

Since a large portion of the SRS workforce began teleworking, all COVID cleanup contractors have returned to do the frequent sanitizing of surfaces within buildings where employees are still working.

“The enhanced sanitizing being conducted now is at a whole new level,” added Eberl. “They literally attack each assignment in mass, working with extreme thoroughness within a building or structure using all the tools available to them. It’s impressive.”

SRNS Subcontract Technical Representatives (STRs) continue to oversee and direct the work, ensuring every need of the cleaning companies are met. Two teams of STRs, each consisting of seven employees, are working a rotating schedule. Alternating weeks, they are working side-by-side with the subcontractors.

“The STRs have been on the battle line with these cleaning crews for a long time, and they have done a great job,” said Melanie Lepard, SRNS Manager, Site Facility Support. “I couldn’t be more pleased.”



Duraclean technicians support the frequent sanitizing of surfaces within buildings where employees are working, as part of the Site’s efforts to combat COVID-19.



SRNS Subcontract Technical Representatives Marty Hart (foreground, left) and Dane Burkhart prepare to brief a team of sub-contractors from Duraclean prior to entering a facility to conduct enhanced cleaning.

# ‘Making’ a difference

SRNS Site Services employees help reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19

The SRNS Site Services department is helping reduce the risk of spreading the COVID-19 virus. Based on CDC guidance adopted by SRS leadership, employees and subcontractors whose job assignments do not permit proper social distancing are advised to wear face coverings. To meet this need for the nearly 2,500 employees working onsite for mission-critical operations, Site Services is producing face coverings. The department is also making plexiglass barriers and face shields to meet other needs.

In mid-April, the Containment Fabrication Facility, which normally produces radiological containment huts and control devices, was quickly converted to a facility capable of fabricating face coverings. Using industrial sewing machines and their fabrication skills, a team of seven craft personnel began production. In the first few days they completed more than 1,600 units, but as demand increased, production rates rose to approximately 1,000 units per day, with more than 10,000 produced to date.

“The level of ownership and pride this team has shown in their work is incredible,” said Stewart Gambrell, SRNS Site Services Shop Manager. “Instead of being isolated at home on leave, they are making face coverings, because they want to help our community reduce the spread of the virus and SRS to continue its critical missions.

Site Services also developed a prototype face shield to be attached to hard hats. It provides another barrier of protection for employees who are unable to complete their job assignments within social distancing guidelines. More than 200 units have already been produced and will be used for upcoming projects at SRS.

Additionally, Site Services played an integral role in decreasing face-to-face exposure in several heavily trafficked locations, including the Badge Office, Information Technology (IT) and Site Medical. The department fabricated and installed plexiglass barriers at these locations to help shield workers from airborne droplets, like those from a cough or a sneeze.

“The Site Services team is diligently working to help reduce the risk of spreading the virus,” Gambrell said. “Although the work we’re doing is not what we routinely do, lending our skills in support of ensuring a safer workplace for our coworkers and ourselves is something we were eager to do.”



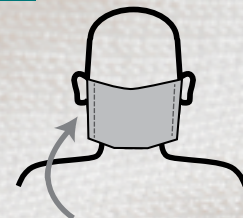
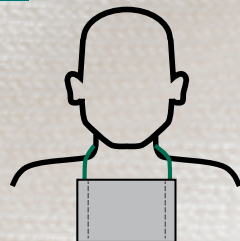
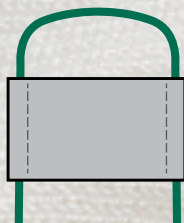
Janice Love displays a face covering fabricated at the Containment Fabrication Facility.



Tomasita Ray operates an industrial sewing machine.

## How to wear an SRS face covering

- 1 Hold mask with loop on top.
- 2 Place head through loop.
- 3 Flip mask upwards.
- 4 Tie knot at back of head.



# Procurement during a crisis

Business as usual has drastically changed for several groups within the SRNS Supply Chain Management (SCM) organization due to the impact of COVID-19 at SRS.

The SRNS SCM team has been working relentlessly since this crisis started to procure masks, digital thermometers, gloves, hand sanitizer and other supplies for the Site. “Our existing business model has been based on purchasing items using ‘just in time’ practices, where products are procured as needed, versus stocking large quantities to draw upon,” said Tammy Rimes, SRNS SCM Deputy Senior Director. “COVID-19 has caused us to shift our strategies based on the vastly decreased availability of many products SRNS needs to fight the virus.

“Finding reliable sources is a real challenge. There is a high demand globally and most suppliers are unable to accept new orders or to deliver in a short lead-time, so we have to find new ones,” Rimes explained. “And then, we need to manage the demand and dispatch the goods accordingly. In times like these, we don’t have supplies for everyone at the same time; managing the demand is an important challenge and a critical part of our work right now.”

Adding to the increased complexity of their work, some manufacturing facilities and suppliers have reduced operations or have come to a complete halt due to COVID-19.

“On the positive side, we’re working with a local small manufacturing company in Barnwell. They retooled their operation to provide hand sanitizer and masks for us,” said Rimes. “It’s a win-win situation; we get hard to find products from them, and they have creatively found a way to help stay in business during the pandemic.”

## SRNS Supply Chain Management responds to the COVID-19 challenge

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“Thinking outside of the box and using all the tools available in our supply chain toolbox have paid dividends.”

**Tammy Rimes**

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According to Alex Agyemang, SRNS Small Business Liaison Officer, SCM officials are carefully monitoring what’s happening around the country and how it potentially impacts our ability to receive goods and services. “We’re creating detailed reports based on the spread of the virus to forecast which states need our attention to ensure the orders we currently have pending will be filled,” he said. “The bottom line is, by confirming our orders in hard hit states, we find out early—rather than late—where we need alternate sources of supply.”

“Thinking outside of the box and using all the tools available in our supply chain toolbox have paid dividends,” said Rimes. “The team has been very successful at distributing and shifting our processes to support Site missions. In fact, we have fulfilled all of the facility requests to date for COVID-19 commodities and continue to seek alternative suppliers for commodities that are more challenging to locate in the market.”

“We are actively working to continue to do what we do best, fueling our SRS missions. We provide goods and services to what we believe are the best people in the Department of Energy Complex,” said Agyemang.



Larry Hay (left) and James Grubbs sort packages within the Supply Chain Management Warehouse prior to delivery to SRS facilities.

# IT made Quick Work of IT

SRNS IT employees respond quickly to support thousands of new teleworkers during COVID-19 pandemic

SRNS Information Technology (IT) successfully rose to the challenge when it became evident that thousands of SRS employees would need to be equipped and trained to telework from homes due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The only system in place at the time to support teleworkers was designed to meet the needs of a small pilot group.

"We've had employees from our group put in a massive number of manhours since this all started, to include evenings, weekends and often 60-hour weeks," said Frances Osteen, SRNS (Acting) Manager, IT Enterprise Operations.

"We went from supporting 50 workers to supporting 6,500 employees through Citrix and VPN (using SecurID tokens) in a very short period of time," added Tim Arnold, Manager, Enterprise End User Services.

Many IT employees, whose duties did not normally involve creating accounts, have helped tackle the enormous task of setting up Citrix accounts. Successfully meeting this challenge has involved working long hours including several consecutive weekends.

"On the Laptop and Desktop side of our business, the SRNS Process Control & Automation Engineering department volunteered resources to help in the PC Administration Warehouse, processing laptops quickly and helping to get them out the door," said Arnold.

"Our focus has been on getting PCs to people who need them to work in their homes, whether it's laptops or now, encrypted desktops. That was a huge win, we don't normally encrypt desktops. We have encrypted over 1,000 desktops for employees to take home," he added.

The next challenge experienced by IT personnel was providing Help Desk support for the thousands of employees who, until recently, did not know how to use a SecurID token or a Citrix account for their home network.

Currently, Help Desk workers averaged 1,000 calls a day when a normal rate is 200.

"The team has really stepped up, doing whatever it takes to get the job done, including taking on roles that are not their normal job and solving customer problems," said Arnold. "It doesn't matter what it is, we have people moving around to new functions every day, and they're doing whatever it takes to get our employees home and being productive. Their response has been amazing."



SRNS intern Mitchell Redd is one of many Information Technology employees manning the SRS Customer Service Desk providing the tools needed by SRS workers to telework from their homes during the pandemic. Redd stands behind a new plexiglass barrier installed as a safety measure in response to the COVID-19 virus.

## Training must go on

Site Training moves GET Training online in response to COVID-19



The SRNS Site Training Department recently completed a large amount of work in a short amount of time to move General Employee Training (GET) online for mission essential personnel in response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

"This was a pretty big lift," said Director of Site Training Kevin Whitt. "The fact that we could get it online and available within a week is pretty impressive and involved our whole team, many of whom worked over 16-hour days to complete it."

GET is offered to all badged individuals coming onsite. In the past, it has been offered as a classroom training, followed by an exam. Participants were required to pass the exam in order to be badged for Site entry.

The new training is a self-study, online slide deck with an automated exam at the end. This allows the Site to follow Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations for social distancing while also making sure it can support mission essential needs during the pandemic.

"We could not have completed this huge task without the help of the Information Technology department," Whitt continued. "We also worked closely with Human Resources, Site Badging and the Medical department to ensure we were in sync."

Stuart MacVean offered his congratulations to the Training Department for the impressive achievement.

"This is just one example of the dynamic, innovative work that SRNS has accomplished to address the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, and a new best practice we plan to continue long into the future" he said. "Kudos to the team for completing this huge and necessary task in such a short amount of time."

## Security remains a constant priority in unusual times

At the center of the "essential" missions that must continue at SRS, no matter what else is scaled back or suspended, you'll find the Site's security posture. Just like the protection of health and safety, security at SRS remains an unwavering priority. Like many other endeavors at SRS and elsewhere, however, keeping security at its required high level needed special attention in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The SRNS Safeguards & Security team, in coordination with their Centerra-SRS and DOE Office of Safeguards, Security and Emergency Services partners, reviewed the Site's security posture and actions to be taken in accordance with the response to COVID-19. "We have been monitoring all actions," said SRNS Safeguards, Security and Emergency Services Director Lee Schifer, "and remain flexible to changing conditions."

Some new or revised measures are visible to employees. To ensure the Site's security while at the same time protecting the health of personnel, for example, the Badge Office limited the hours that customers could visit in person, and limited the number of customers who could be in the Badge Office at the same time to support social distancing. Methods used for personnel security investigations were adjusted as appropriate on a case-by-case basis. While the Site always restricts the unneeded items employees bring through the barricades, the Site has been taking a stricter approach. Employees with excessive belongings in their personal vehicles were turned away at the barricades, so that Centerra personnel could perform adequate searches while limiting their risk of exposure to the virus.

Other measures took place behind the scenes, like many of the Site's routine security measures.

What did not change under COVID-19 is the importance of each employee's role in security, whether they were teleworking or continuing to physically come to the Site. Employee vigilance, with an eye toward reporting any suspicious acts, remained a key element of the Site's security processes. Equally important was employees' patience, as everyone adjusted to changing conditions. "As Stuart MacVean said, these are 'unprecedented' times," Schifer said. "I would add that SRS employees in general, and our Security team in particular, always rise to the occasion when they come face-to-face with a new challenge."



Safety and Security begin with me.  
SAVANNAH RIVER SITE



*To the SRS Workforce during Essential Operations,*

**thank you.**

*For your selfless devotion to our community,*

**thank you.**

*For being our heroes and making our world safer,*

**thank you.**

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