

## Technology & Maintenance Council



*Turning Experience Into Practice*

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### *Impacts of COVID-19 on Maintenance Operations of Fleets and Service Providers: Results From Survey 1 (March 31, 2020)*

Developed by ATA's Technology & Maintenance Council (TMC)

#### **ABSTRACT**

In March 2020, ATA's Technology & Maintenance Council (TMC) decided to conduct a series of member surveys to assess the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the maintenance operations of fleets and service providers. TMC's first survey, conducted in the early phase of the event in late March 2020, investigated current and anticipated impacts on technician labor force readiness and commercial vehicle component supply chains.

The survey found actual average impacts in both areas were minor as of March 31. However, shop support supplies were more moderately impacted. TMC members say they expect minor-to-moderate impacts on labor and supply chain categories during April 2020. The ability to recruit, hire and train new or replacement technicians is reported to be a more immediate problem, with moderate disruptions currently being encountered.

TMC intends to repeat this survey periodically during the pandemic event to measure the ongoing risk to maintenance operations and essential transportation functions.



**Technology & Maintenance Council (TMC)**

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## INTRODUCTION

In March 2020, ATA's Technology & Maintenance Council (TMC) decided to conduct a series of member surveys to assess the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the maintenance operations of fleets and service providers. TMC's first survey, conducted in the early phase of the event in late March 2020, investigated current and anticipated impacts on technician labor force readiness and commercial vehicle component supply chains. TMC intends to repeat this survey periodically during the pandemic event to measure the ongoing risk to maintenance operations and essential transportation functions.

The March 2020 survey asked whether a

fleet or service provider had experienced confirmed exposures or cases of infections by the SARS-CoV-No.2 (i.e., COVID-19 virus), the effects upon the organization's technician workforce availability and if the supply chains providing parts and supplies to sustain these maintenance operations were currently being compromised. The survey also asked for the organization's projections on impacts during the next 30 days (i.e., April 2020).

To help ensure only one survey would be submitted per company, TMC distributed the survey instrument only to primary TMC Full(fleet) and Service Provider members, instructing them to complete the survey themselves or, if necessary, share it with the best person to

respond for that organization. All responses were kept strictly confidential and only aggregated results are reported herein. Respondents were given the option of providing contact information for follow-up or answering anonymously.

**COUNCIL OF  
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Safe. Essential. Sustainable.

**From ATA's Technology & Maintenance Council TMC**

**IMPORTANT TMC SURVEY: COVID-19 IMPACTS ON MAINTENANCE OPERATIONS**  
**ATTENTION TMC FLEET  
and SERVICE PROVIDER MEMBERS**

If you have already completed the survey, thank you. If not, please read on!!

**COVID-19 MAINTENANCE IMPACTS SURVEY #1**  
Please [Complete this Important Survey](#) by  
5 PM EDT on Monday, March 30, 2020

ATA's Technology & Maintenance Council (TMC) is conducting a survey regarding the impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic upon maintenance operations for commercial vehicles. This will assist TMC in assessing whether these impacts pose a threat to trucking operations and the industry's ability to continue to deliver both critical medical supplies to the health care industry, as well as life-sustaining provisions for the general public during a time when business restrictions and even city, regional or statewide lockdowns are in effect. This survey seeks to evaluate whether trucking operations are currently or potentially jeopardized by an inability to sustain fleet and service provider shops to keep commercial vehicles in safe operating condition.

TMC will utilize the survey data to apprise ATA, and through the organization to governmental emergency planning agencies of any impending effects upon the crisis response situation, so that necessary actions can be properly evaluated. TMC will likely again repeat this survey in mid-April, and as necessary depending upon the duration of this crisis.

The survey, which should take no more than 10 minutes to complete, asks for your qualitative response to several questions regarding whether your company has experienced confirmed exposures or cases of infections by the COVID-19 virus, the effects upon your technician workforce availability and if the supply chains providing parts and supplies to sustain your maintenance operations are currently being compromised. We also ask for your projections on impacts over the next 30 days.

While we ask for contact information at the end of the survey, in order to follow up with you should questions arise, you may also choose to answer anonymously.

We ask that only one survey be submitted per company. If you are not the best person to respond, please coordinate within your company to ensure the the best person submits the response. All responses will be kept strictly confidential and only aggregated results will be reported by TMC.

Figure 1

## METHODOLOGY

Survey alerts were sent via e-mail (see **Figure 1**) to Full (fleet) Executive and Service Provider Corporate Level Council members using Bluehornet's High Roads e-mail management system. The survey was programmed and conducted using Survey Monkey. The survey was activated on March 25, 2020, and closed March 30, 2020.

## RESULTS

Fifty-one unique completed responses were submitted — 36 by fleets and 15 by service providers. Company/fleet size varied from very small to large, and included local, regional and national organizations. The summary responses to the survey questions are as follows:

## Demographics

The first set of questions identified organizational demographics.

Company Operational Types	Percent	Number
Private Carrier (For Hire)	37.25%	19
Vocational	7.84%	4
Intermodal	3.92%	2
Leasing (full service)	1.96%	1
Truckload	21.57%	11
Less-Than-Truckload	0.00%	0
Pickup & Delivery	5.88%	3
Service Provider	29.41%	15
<b>Total Respondents:</b>		<b>51</b>

Primary Area of Operations	Percent	Number
Nationally	35.29%	18
Northeast	25.49%	13
Northwest	11.76%	6
Mid-Atlantic	7.84%	4
Midwest	29.41%	15
Southeast	15.69%	8
South Central	7.84%	4
Southwest (Including Hawaii)	0.00%	0
Alaska	0.00%	0
Canada	9.80%	5
Mexico	1.96%	1
<b>Total Respondents:</b>		<b>51</b>

## Fleet Size

Operational fleet size was reported as follows:

Fleet Size	Percentage
0-50 vehicles	Approx. 20%
50-100	4%
100-500	44%
500-1000	12%
More than 1000	20%

## Maintenance Operations

Sixty percent of the respondents conducted maintenance operations with both in-house and outside (third-party) shops, 36 percent conducted maintenance at exclusively in-house facilities and only four percent contracted maintenance to outside third-party facilities. It is noteworthy that even service provider

companies reportedly assign at least some of their work to third parties.

## Disaster Planning

Forty-eight percent of the respondents confirmed that they have formal maintenance operational disaster mitigation plans similar to the guidance provided in TMC RP 537, *Disaster Recovery for Vehicle Maintenance Operations*. Forty-six percent did not and the remainder declined to comment.

## WORKFORCE IMPACTS

The survey asked a series of questions regarding impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic upon maintenance operations' labor force, both in the current time frame (March 2020) and during the next 30 days (April 2020).

## **COVID-19 Case Experience**

Of the responding organizations:

- Thirty (61 percent) reported no employee exposures
- Fourteen (28 percent) reported exposures or suspicions of exposure outside the workplace
- Five (10 percent) reported exposures or suspicions of exposure inside the workplace
- One (four percent) reported a confirmed, but asymptomatic COVID-19 diagnosis
- Four (eight percent) reported a confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis with symptoms
- One respondent did not know

## **Current COVID-19 Impacts on In-House Maintenance Labor Force Availability**

### **Full Time Technicians**

- Twenty-seven reported no impact
- Seventeen reported minor impact
- Two reported moderate impact
- Two reported severe impact

### **Part-Time or Contract Technicians**

- Thirty-seven reported no impact
- Eight reported minor impact
- Two reported moderate impact
- Two reported severe impact

### **Maintenance Supervisors**

- Thirty-seven reported no impact
- Eight reported minor impact
- Two reported moderate impact
- Two reported severe impact

### **Maintenance Managers/Execs**

- Twenty-six reported no impact
- Fifteen reported minor impact
- Four reported moderate impact
- One reported severe impact

## **Ability to Recruit/Hire and Train New or Replacement Technicians**

- 15 reported no impact

- 12 reported minor impact
- 11 reported moderate impact
- Eight reported severe impact

## **April 2020 Projections of COVID-19 Impacts on In-House Maintenance Labor Force Availability**

### **Full Time Technicians**

- Twelve project no impact
- Twenty-three project minor impact
- Eleven project moderate impact
- Two project severe impact

### **Part-Time or Contract Technicians**

- Twenty-seven project no impact
- Thirteen project minor impact
- Five project moderate impact
- Two project severe impact

### **Maintenance Supervisors**

- Twenty project no impact
- Twenty-one project minor impact
- Five project moderate impact
- One project severe impact

### **Maintenance Managers/Execs**

- Eighteen project no impact
- Twenty-two project minor impact
- Six project moderate impact
- One project severe impact

## **Current COVID-19 Impacts on Outside (Third-Party) Maintenance Availability**

- Fourteen reported no impact
- Seventeen reported minor impact
- Five reported moderate impact
- None reported severe impact

## **April 2020 Projections of COVID-19 Impacts on Outside (Third-Party) Maintenance Availability**

- Eight project no impact
  - 17 project minor impact
  - Nine project moderate impact
  - Four project severe impact

## SUPPLY CHAIN IMPACTS

The survey also asked a series of questions regarding impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic upon deliveries of fleet equipment and parts (including fuels and lubricants), as well as deliveries of shop support supplies (e.g., uniforms, gloves, cleaning supplies, etc.). The question was posed for the current time frame and projections for the next 30 days.

### Current COVID-19 Impacts on Deliveries of Fleet Equipment and Parts (Including Fuels and Lubricants)

- Seventeen reported no impact
- Twenty-seven reported minor impact
- Nine reported moderate impact
- One reported severe impact

### April 2020 Projections of COVID-19 Impacts on Deliveries Of Fleet Equipment And Parts (Including Fuels And Lubricants)

- One projects no impact
- Twenty-seven project minor impact
- Nineteen project moderate impact
- Two project severe impact

### Current COVID-19 Impacts on Shop Support Supplies (e.g., Uniforms, Gloves, Cleaning Supplies, etc.)

- Eleven reported no impact
- Nineteen reported minor impact
- Seventeen reported moderate impact
- One reported severe impact

### April 2020 Projections of COVID-19 Impacts on Shop Support Supplies (e.g., Uniforms, Gloves, Cleaning Supplies, etc.)

- Three project no impact
- Twenty-two project minor impact
- Twenty-one project moderate impact
- Three project severe impact

## WEIGHTED SCORING OF RESPONSES

In order to more readily assess the risk to maintenance operations, responses to each of the survey factors are presented with respect to their weighted averages in **Table 1**. Weighting is assigned as follows:

- "No Impact" = 0
- "Minor Impact" = 1
- "Moderate Impact" = 3
- "Severe Impact" = 5

**TABLE 1: WEIGHTED AVERAGES FOR CUMULATIVE SURVEY RESPONSES  
EVALUATION DATE – MARCH 30, 2020**

Evaluation Factor	Current Impact	Projected (30-Day) Impact
<b>Labor Factors</b>		
In-house Maintenance Labor Force - Full Time Technicians	0.69	1.38
In-house Maintenance Labor Force - Part Time Technicians	0.34	0.81
In-house Maintenance Labor Force - Maintenance Supervisors	0.34	0.86
In-house Maintenance Labor Force - Maint. Managers/Execs	0.70	0.96
Ability to Recruit/Hire and Train Technicians	1.85	N/A
Impacts on Outside (Third-Party) Maintenance Availability	0.89	1.68
<b>Supply Chain Factors</b>		
Deliveries Of Fleet Equipment And Parts	1.10	1.56
Deliveries Of Shop Support Supplies	1.92	2.04
<b>Impact Index: 0 = None, 1= Minor, 3 = Moderate, 5 = Severe</b>		

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The survey found in late March 2020, actual average impacts in both the shop labor force and parts/equipment availability areas were minor. However, shop support supplies deliveries were more moderately impacted. TMC members said they expected minor-to-moderate impacts on labor and supply chain categories during April

2020. The ability to recruit, hire and train new or replacement technicians was reported to be a more immediate problem, with moderate disruptions currently being encountered. TMC intends to repeat this survey periodically during the pandemic event to measure the ongoing risk to maintenance operations and essential transportation functions. □