



Continuing to keep our people and partners safe.

Safety remains at the heart of our business and foremost in the minds of our employees; it is who we are and the foundation on which the business is built. We are trusted to keep the nation's households safe and warm every day of the year and we take that trust very seriously indeed. We aim to ensure that every aspect of our work is as safe as it can be, whether that's as part of our gas operations or in our non-operational activities. We also understand that only by being transparent about our performance can we continue to deserve that trust.





Working safely

We have maintained our focus on ensuring our colleagues and contractors are safe whilst at work, and that members of the public are safe in the vicinity of our works. We have also worked hard to address the risk of damaging underground assets, both in terms of our impact on other utilities, but also the impact of third-party encroachment or damage of our assets. We have continued to improve our safety record, delivering a Lost Time Injury Frequency Rate of 0.66. In addition, we have seen improvements in our main safety metrics compared to 2019/20.

We have updated and simplified our Safety Management System to allow our colleagues to ensure that gas is delivered safely and reliably. We work actively to manage both personal safety and major hazard safety (often referred to as process safety). This has included training our senior leaders in process safety and introducing a higher proportion of leading measures into our monitoring of process safety performance. We share learning from incidents at the monthly Safety and Engineering Committee and have a dedicated Board Safety Committee to ensure we set the right tone from the top.

We have several Safety Improvement Groups which have been set up to drive improvements in areas of risk for us: these include Culture, Process Safety, Cable Avoidance, Road Safety and protecting the general public from our works. These groups are chaired by Operational Directors who report regularly on their plans to drive continuous improvements in our ways of working.

Safety Improvement Programme

Our main measure for safety is known as the Lost Time Injury Frequency Rate ('LTIFR'). Over the last year, we reduced this rate from 1.13 injuries per million hours worked at the end of 2018/19 to 0.70 as at the end of March 2020, ahead of the target of 0.90. In addition to this, we have also seen improvements against key metrics this year.

Our goal is to achieve a further improvement in our safety performance and deliver on our safety commitments. We recognise that we need to do more to ensure all employees understand what is required of them and to do the right thing every time. To achieve this, they will be involved in a range of improvement and engagement activities underpinned by a clear Safety, Health, Environment and Security ('SHES') framework.

An important part of building a strong foundation for safety was to redesign our SHES management system. This redesign simplifies the system, making it easier to understand. We have continued our work on culture and behaviour across the company, using workshops and leadership visits to reinforce this focus.

Cable strikes

The accidental striking of an electrical cable, known as a cable strike, is a significant risk that our people and contractors are exposed to when working on our buried pipes and equipment. We are focused on reducing these cable strikes as a priority both to reduce the potential injuries to our people and to reduce damage to other's assets.

Process Safety KPIs

Process Safety Risk Management is controlled by the adoption of 12 Risk Control Standards, each addressing a part of a 'Process Safety' management system that covers a specific risk or activity. For each Risk Control Standard, we have developed separate measures designed to provide a comprehensive measure of the health of these controls.

Following the review of existing process safety KPIs and learning from IChemE training, we are in the final stages of introducing revised, simplified process safety KPIs to provide greater visibility and focus. This has resulted in an increased number of leading indicators.



Did you know?

Lost Time Injury Frequency Rate

0.66

compared to last year 0.7

Responding to emergencies

We operate the National Gas Emergency Service contact centre, taking calls and giving safety advice on behalf of the UK gas industry. In 2020/21, we answered 1.3m gas emergency calls of which 91% were answered within 30 seconds. During the year, we attended 328,698 reported gas escapes. Of these, approximately 68,809 were directly related to our network. The rest of the calls were for other matters such as suspected carbon monoxide, faulty boilers or meter problems for which we provide assistance to ensure public safety.

Responding to gas emergencies	2020/21		2019/20		% change
	Total	%	Total	%	
Calls to emergency number (for the whole of the UK gas sector)	1.35m		1.6m		-18%
Answered within 30 seconds	1.2m	91%	1.4m	92%	-14%
Reported gas escapes	328,698		356,879		-8%
Escapes related to Cadent's network	68,809	21%	75,297	21%	-9%
Escapes related to other matters (CO, boilers etc. – including from other gas distribution networks)	295,930		281,582	79%	5%

We aim to respond to gas escapes and potential risks from carbon monoxide poisoning as soon as possible. In 2020/21, our average response was 32 minutes (34 minutes in 2019/20) for those cases where the reporter was unable to remove the hazard based on our safety advice.

The table below shows that our standards of service exceeded the regulatory target for response times, which is 97% within one hour for uncontrolled** escapes and 97% within two hours for controlled* escapes.

Standards of service	East of England	North London	North West	West Midlands
2020/21 Controlled*	99.3	99.0	99.4	99.7
2020/21 Uncontrolled**	98.7	98.9	99.0	99.4

* Controlled refers to those gas escapes where the customer has confirmed that they have turned off their supply at the emergency control valve and the smell of gas has ceased.

** Uncontrolled refers to all other escapes.

Springers into action: The pawsome sniffer dogs assisting North West gas engineers

Our pipes can run for long distances underneath footpaths and verges, gardens and driveways. It is hugely disruptive if engineers need to dig it all up to find the source of problems such as leaks or water in our pipes. We heard about former police dog instructor Steve Foster and his specially trained English Springer Spaniels, and brought them to the North West network. Over two days, they worked in Skelmersdale, Huyton, Blackburn, Stockport, Oldham and Middleton, looking for previously elusive points through which water was getting into gas pipes. The clever canines amazed even the most experienced engineers by tracking down small hairline fractures in the underground gas pipes; the dogs are going to be a great asset for us. We're determined to find innovative ways to tackle this and prevent our customers from losing supply. Introducing the gas detection dogs into the network has seen fantastic results.

