

Keep Critical Services Operating

BACKGROUND

TRSA represents the linen, uniform and facility services industry. TRSA members are commercial laundry and facility services companies and the supplier partners who manufacture and supply the needed supplies and infrastructure to the industry. Combined, the industry serves life-sustaining businesses allowing them to safely operate. TRSA members support the safe operation of healthcare facilities, grocery stores, infrastructure maintenance, food processing, public utilities (water and energy), first-responders, federal and state governments, laboratories, pharmaceutical and other manufacturing, and other fundamental supply chain businesses.

Essential workers and the public depend on the laundry and facility services industry to produce and process PPE including healthcare contact textiles (HCTs), flame-resistant and high visibility clothing, first aid and safety items and other protective garments. Many PPE products must be cleaned by commercial laundries that use specialized processes to ensure their safety and integrity. As evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, laundry processing interruptions threaten the safe operation of healthcare facilities as well as other critical infrastructure businesses.

TRSA POSITION

The linen, uniform and facility services industry has been designated as a Critical Infrastructure industry according to the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency (CISA) of the Department of Homeland Security due to its importance in providing hygienically clean and safe personal protective equipment (PPE) to individuals responsible for ensuring public safety (i.e., healthcare workers, public utility workers, law enforcement and fire fighters). This industry is imperative to emergency preparedness, response, and recovery.

The laundry processing industry supplies and launders textiles for healthcare facilities, laboratories, pharmaceutical manufacturing, first responders, public utilities and other fundamental supply chain businesses, as well as locations used as emergency shelters to house displaced residences and emergency workers from other areas in case of natural disasters. Access to hygienically clean and safe linens and uniforms is imperative to safely restore a community after natural disasters.

In addition to promoting a stronger and safe supply chain stability, reusable products processed by commercial laundries are environmentally sustainable. One reusable gown can replace 75 single-use disposable gowns. Hospital gowns cleaned after each use create four times less solid waste than paper gowns. Reusables conserve resources and reduce pollution and waste.

ACTION

Through the appropriations process, compel the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) to designate commercial laundries as an essential industry to restore operations in the case of a catastrophic disaster (i.e., hurricane disruption) to ensure the safe processing of HCTs and other PPE to keep workers and the public safe.