



## **TMA Virtual Town Hall Meeting Minutes**

Tuesday, March 24, 2020, 3:00-4:30 PM [ET] *via* Zoom

**Hosts:** TMA President Don Young, ADT and TMA Executive Director Celia T. Besore

**Special Guests:** Steve Schmidt and Alan Cavers, UL

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The meeting opened with a brief welcome and orientation to the functionality of the Zoom forum, specifically pertaining to the process for question presentation. Introductions by the hosts followed with a review of the meeting's brief agenda.

President Young began by speaking about TMA's recent Long-range Planning Meeting (LRP), which took place in Dallas this February. He spoke to the goals for his two-year term as president, which are:

1. **ASAP-to-PSAP service** – *to strengthen its structure and increase adoption of the service.*
2. **Standards** – *to identify key areas of practice and performance within security monitoring for which TMA can lead standards development.*
3. **FirstNet** – *to expand and grow the number of security services companies who are FirstNet certified.*

President Young went on to state that TMA's highest priority at this time is to support and provide for our members amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. This has taken precedence over TMA's organizational goals at present.

Ms. Besore spoke of the various activities in which TMA staff and leadership has engaged to protect and safeguard the interests of its members' businesses, staff, and customers. She went on to highlight several of these initiatives, which are ongoing:

1. Early March, TMA set-up a dedicated web page containing a repository of curated resources for TMA members and other industry professionals. From city, state, and federal guidelines to UL, OSHA, and SHRM regulations, the page offers valuable, timely references.
2. TMA is working very closely with the executive leadership of the Electronic Security Association (ESA) and the Security Industry Association (SIA) to advocate for security service providers and manufacturers during the COVID-19 pandemic. The organizations' top leaders are meeting by phone each evening to discuss COVID-19 response to ensure that the industry is well represented, informed, and equipped.

Ms. Besore also briefly reviewed and provided an update on TMA's core programs and services for attendees.

President Young opened the meeting for attendee Q&A.

***Question #1: Are any monitoring centers preparing to work remotely? If so, how?***

**Answer/Discussion**

Yes, there are several companies that have made preparations to work remotely, or are already working remotely, either entirely or partially. One respondent said that his first step was to reach out to UL to discuss specific guidelines.

President Young invited UL representatives to speak to the question since they were present.

Steve Schmit, UL, stated that he and his colleagues met to discuss how UL could best facilitate the safety of businesses and families during this time. As a result, UL published a set of guidelines for remote monitoring for U.S. and Canadian companies. These are available on the TMA website for download. Schmit stated, "Do what you need to do, the best way that you know how." He went on to state that UL is available for additional guidance and to offer suggestions.

***Question #2: Do the UL guidelines apply across the country?***

**Answer/Discussion**

Steve Schmit stated that yes, the guidelines can be applied anywhere in North America. Federal, state, and local guidelines should be adhered to and in combination with the UL guidelines. In some cases, organizations are proactively also developing and issuing guidelines for their staff in response to internal risk assessments.

***Question #3: What about UL2050 accounts? Can they be monitored remotely, as well?***

**Answer/Discussion**

Steve Schmit reported that UL has had discussions with several government agencies on the topic of remote monitoring. Many have expressed discomfort with home monitoring. If the contracted monitoring center cannot maintain conditions to comply with UL2050 and UL827 Standards, defense contractors may have to take actions as if their facilities and assets were not being professionally monitored. U.S. Federal security requirements spell out specific actions for such a situation, which often involve implementing guard services. Defense contractors will need to be in communication with their cognizant security agencies to determine requirements and needs during this time.

Alan Cavers, UL, Canada, stated that the Canadian guidelines are in line with the U.S. version. He urged larger companies to aid smaller companies during this time, and reinforced Schmit's offer of support and assistance on behalf of UL.

***Question #4: What is UL 2050?***

**Answer/Discussion**

Steve Schmit explained that UL2050, the Standard for National Industrial Security Systems, was first developed in the 1990s in collaboration with the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency. UL2050 was intended to leverage, to the greatest degree possible, commercially available intrusion detection alarm service for the purpose of securing confidential/sensitive material held by defense contractors. In time, other federal agencies and the intelligence community adjusted their security requirements to invoke, use, and rely on UL2050 for the same purpose.

UL2050 works in concert with the federal security requirements that call it out. Defense contractors who hold classified/sensitive materials, and the professional alarm service & monitoring companies that serve them, are obligated to meet all the requirements in the federal security requirements, some of which go above and beyond the baseline UL2050 requirements for intrusion detection. For example, operators monitoring UL2050 accounts are required to go through background checks and hold specific government security clearance credentials – an activity conducted/controlled by the U.S. government with no UL involvement. For this reason, UL is not the final authority on alternate monitoring arrangements. Monitoring stations should contact the defense contractors for whom they deliver monitoring services if they are unable to comply with UL827 and UL2050 during the current crisis

***Question #5: Are monitoring centers required to notify customers that operators are now working remotely?***

**Answer/Discussion**

Steve Schmit offered, “UL is not suggesting or requiring that customers be notified as a condition of maintaining their Certification. We do not anticipate that happening.”

One of the attendees acknowledged that he has operators working remotely. His company is not notifying customers. He highly recommended that monitoring centers formally document all measures undertaken during this time for protection.

***Question #6: Is anyone changing their standard operator script?***

**Answer/Discussion**

A discussion initiated on the subject of monitoring center operators proactively asking callers if they have or suspect exposure to COVID-19 with the intent of conveying the information to the PSAP. See follow-up question below.

***Question #7: Can a monitoring station ask a subscriber that has agreed to have law enforcement contacted whether there are any cases of COVID-19 in the premises? Is this a HIPAA breach? Is it OK to ask but maybe not to write down the answer?***

**Answer/Discussion**

Participants were uncertain.

***Question #8: What should employers do if employees refuse to work for fear of being infected by COVID-19? What role does time and attendance play?***

**Answer/Discussion**

One of the respondents recommended employers should follow guidelines to reduce the spread of the virus within the workplace (Standard of Care). Ultimately, it is a company-by-company decision. Attendees were also referred to the TMA website for additional information.

***Question #9: Are any monitoring centers using AI technology to compensate for less workforce?***

**Answer/Discussion**

None of the attendees are using AI in that manner. While many companies have an appetite for AI, one participant said he has not heard of a company using it. He believes that the technology has not reached the correct level of maturity that would enable its use during this time. In addition, monitoring stations are putting their efforts on other issues.

***Question #10: Is there a list of jurisdictions that are not responding to alarm calls?***

**Answer/Discussion**

TMA's Besore responded that TMA made a conscious decision to not publicly post information or a list of jurisdictions that have implemented a non-response policy, as it could be used by bad actors in a malicious manner. She said TMA would give further consideration to posting it behind the member login.

***Question #11: How should remote workers be supervised, supported and kept informed?***

**Answer/Discussion**

A respondent indicated that they are employing the same tools that companies nowadays use to collaborate with employees and others remotely such as Zoom, MS Team, and Slack. He went on to add that video can also be a very efficient and effective tool during this time. The technology can be deployed virtually anywhere, anytime to check in with employees and to get a sense of their remote workspace. In fact, he believes that this experience will impact the way in which companies use video in their day-to-day operations once we return to "normal."

***Question #12: (Recommendation) Companies should encourage their commercial clients to notify their local public-safety personnel (law enforcement) if their business is reducing hours or closing all-together.***

**Answer/Discussion**

It is especially important now that there are some bad actors who are preying on closed businesses for profit. Advise your customers to be vigilant in communicating changes in hours of operation with you. If they plan to enter the premises at an odd hour, ask that they contact you in advance.

***Question #13: Should employees who are using their cell phone for remote monitoring be reimbursed?***

**Answer/Discussion**

No one on the call had any experience with this scenario.

***Question #14: (Recommendation) Consider using Unified Communications as a Service (UCaaS) providers for hosted PBX.***

**Answer/Discussion**

Some service providers can set-up a system within 24 hours. Some are offering month-to-month agreements during this time.

**Question #15: (Recommendation) Send a message to your customers letting them know what your company is doing during this time.**

**Answer/Discussion**

Customers are very anxious. It is helpful to communicate clearly the steps your company is taking to ensure continuation of service.

**Closing Statements:**

- Leverage TMA staff for information, tools, and solutions
- Share relevant information with TMA and peers
- Think of others - we are in this together. Let's be a force-multiplier

**Next Steps:**

- TMA will set up weekly, open discussion forums for members and others to discuss their challenges and best practices for addressing COVID-19.