

## Best Practices

Essential workers are critical to developing and maintaining technological infrastructures. Supporting both the well-being of workers and the advancement of emergent workplace systems requires attunement to their day-to-day routines and the cadences of existing practices.

This document outlines a set of best practices derived from research across essential sectors that seeks to provide organizations considering deploying new technologies with a foundation to recognize the role essential workers' play in introducing and maintaining such technologies.

### **Recommended approach: treat workers as experts of their domain and apply a worker-centered framework to design and implementation.**

#### **1. Training & onboarding**

- **New hire:** Hire or assign 1-2 individuals whose work is dedicated to overseeing the deployment and its performance
- **Co-design scope of work:** Collaborate with frontline workers to identify what will be required for day-to-day management of the new technology. Discuss expectations, disruptions to their existing work, required trainings, and the potential for unaccounted labor
- **Align protocols to co-designed scope of work:** Design day-to-day protocols, inclusive of maintenance, repair, un/loading, and recalibration of the tech. Base protocols on frontline workers' training, capabilities, and daily realities
- **Specialized & general training:** Design training sessions that equip both the management team and frontline staff with necessary information on how the technology functions and appropriate measures to address any issues that may arise over the course of operations
- **Prioritize essential workers' time:** Set times and locations for training to ensure that essential workers can take part (e.g., included in a daily stand-up meeting or as overtime scheduled in advance with associated added compensation)



#### **2. Measuring expectations versus reality**

- **Understand the existing day-to-day:** Chart existing day-to-day routines as experienced before the introduction of new technology to gain a deeper understanding essential workers' line of work
- **Track the accumulation of work:** On a regular basis, track unexpected tasks that cause deviation from existing tasks or accumulation of new forms of work

#### **3. Day-to-day management**

- **Align expectations to training materials and protocol:** Determine frequency of check-ins, daily/weekly assignments, and work progress based on the training underwent by staff
- **Adaptive approach:** Adjust protocols based on ongoing, changing circumstances due to health or weather emergencies, crises, and labor conditions (e.g., associated staffing shortages)

#### 4. Maintenance & care of the tech



- **Determine scope of work for technician(s):** Set expectations for all parties by clearly outlining the designated technicians' responsibilities and the types of requests they will respond to and how
- **Designate dates and times for software updates:** Determine specific days and times when essential workers are not working directly with the robots to conduct software updates

- **Identify a local maintenance company to perform daily tasks:** If the tech vendor's maintenance staff are not easily accessible to respond to issues, coordinate with the vendor to determine a locally-based third party to conduct maintenance tasks on a more regular basis

#### 5. Collaboration & communication between actors

- **View all members as equal to the team:** Avoid making assumptions about team members' work, and instead collaborate with frontline staff to base decision making on their experiences, concerns, and needs
- **Approach essential workers as experts of their domain:** Defer to essential workers' expertise when writing protocols and determining the cadence for communication
- **Arrive at a consensus on regular check-ins:** Across all parties and actors, determine what constitutes information that needs to be shared across the organization and when/how regular check-ins will occur
- **Incorporate a formal feedback and follow-up process:** Across all parties and actors, determine set times/dates for feedback and follow-ups regarding the performance of the new technology

#### 6. Design & utility of the deployment

- **Match the intention of the design to its context:** Identify the optimal conditions that a technology is designed for and determine the time and location for deployment based on these criteria
- **Determine an internal method to judge the efficacy of the technology:** In collaboration with frontline staff, determine ways to evaluate whether the technology is meeting set standards and expectations within the organization