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Reflective Journal #1  
5/22/2023

Over the past 50 hours, I have been called out on multiple damage calls which involved critical networks being down in the Hampton Roads area. At my job, damage calls are when a fiber optic network has been physically damaged due to an outside source and network technicians are needed to analyze and repair the damage. The outside sources that cause these damages vary from hurricanes to car accidents. Working on these damages has helped me progress towards one of my primary learning objectives, which is to apply working knowledge to emergency network building and troubleshooting.

This past week, I worked on a team of four people to bring eight networks up overnight. These networks had been down for hours, and one of the networks belonged to Sentara healthcare. For every second that one of these networks is down, thousands of dollars and critical infrastructure is on the line. During these damages, everyone is on high alert and it is a high stakes environment. Even the smallest error when handling and splicing one of the fibers can lead to additional hours of work, thousands of dollars in damage, and more hours that these networks are down.

These damage calls are the most challenging part of my work. For hours on end, I am required to be at the top of my game. I must stay alert, constantly analyze the situation, and meticulously handle the fragile fiber cables and calculate my every splice carefully. I collaborate with other network technicians, construction professionals, network designers, and other IT and telecommunications professionals to help bring these networks online. Although the work is challenging, the high stakes environment has helped me quickly grow my knowledge not only in fiber optic network repair, but also in teamwork and communication with other professionals.