Pragmatic Guidance Working Group: Kick-Off Call Executive Summary

Executive Summary:
The Pragmatic Guidance Working Group is focused on producing **simple, actionable resilience guidance for operators of life-safety-critical functions that lack sufficient incentives, information, personnel, technology, or other resources to implement conventional cybersecurity best practices**. The group is intended to translate the broader Fragile Foundations effort into guidance that operators can realistically use during the 100-day sprint and beyond.

The emerging framework is organized around four actions: **Start, Stop, Strengthen, and Survive.** "Start" identifies practices operators should begin; "Stop" identifies activities that unnecessarily increase risk; "Strengthen" focuses on improving existing capabilities; and "Survive" addresses what organizations should do during an actual disruption or crisis. The framework is intentionally simple and will be tested with operators to determine whether it is understandable and implementable.

The group stressed that recommendations should not default to conventional cybersecurity solutions. For organizations with limited capacity, **engineering, operational, continuity, or emergency-management measures may provide greater immediate value**. Examples discussed included understanding whether an organization can operate without internet connectivity or SCADA, testing assumptions about technology dependencies, and applying cyber-informed engineering approaches where conventional security controls are impractical. The immediate priority is keeping essential services **safe and available**, after which organizations can progress toward more mature cybersecurity practices.

The anticipated deliverables include **top-line strategies for managing technology dependencies; Start/Stop/Strengthen/Survive guidance; critical questions operators should ask third parties; a prioritized cross-reference to existing resources; contributions to the project's glossary; and documentation of the methodology used to develop the recommendations.** The group expects particularly close coordination with the OT/ICS Sector Engagement and Novel Mitigation working groups.

Guidance distribution emerged as a significant challenge. Traditional cybersecurity information sharing channels may reach only a small fraction of the intended audience. Participants therefore discussed using **rural associations, state and local networks, industry conferences, university extension systems, sector-specific organizations, and other trusted intermediaries**. Guidance should be written in the language operators themselves use rather than expecting them to adopt cybersecurity terminology.

The group will address both sides of an incident: **prevention/preparation and immediate survival.** The goal is not a comprehensive cybersecurity framework, but a small number of high-value actions—potentially framed as what an operator should do in the first minutes or hours of a disruption and how they should seek assistance.

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Immediate next steps: Members will contribute ideas and resources to shared documents, after which the co-chairs will organize the material around the four pillars and establish smaller working teams and a core writing group. Operator feedback will be incorporated into development. The group plans to meet weekly, with approximately **1–2 hours of participant work per week** expected.