CONCEPT

Process Utility Systems: Instrument Air, Nitrogen, Steam, Water and Fuel Gas

11 – 22 April 2027
Jeddah - Corniche four-star



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Ref: 763_19644 **Date:** 11 – 22 April 2027 **Location:** Jeddah - Corniche four-star **Fees:** 35100 SAR

Introduction:

Process utility systems keep every unit running, yet a wet instrument air header, a nitrogen shortfall during purging, a collapsed steam header or unstable fuel gas pressure can trip a whole refinery or gas plant within minutes. Many sites still manage each utility in isolation, without a shared balance or a clear view of which units fail first. This Core Concept course trains utility and process staff to map, operate, balance and troubleshoot air, nitrogen, steam, water, fuel gas and flare services as one network. Participants produce a Utility System Reliability and Failure-Impact Study for a case plant.

Course Objectives:

- Build a site utility balance and consumer register that shows generation, demand and spare capacity for each utility header
- Operate instrument air, plant air and nitrogen generation packages to hold pressure, dew point and purity within the limits consumers need
- Control steam, condensate, cooling water, demineralised water and potable water distribution so each header stays stable under load changes
- Run fuel gas conditioning and verify flare, relief and closed drain headers are ready to receive loads from process units
- Analyse loss-of-utility scenarios and rank their process impact, recovery time and required sparing
- Measure utility energy use and reliability with metering and indicators, and diagnose recurring utility faults from header trends

Target Audience:

- Utility operators who run compressors, dryers, nitrogen packages, letdown stations and water treatment trains on shift
- Process engineers who set utility demand for their units and assess the effect of utility upsets on production
- Maintenance and reliability engineers who keep utility rotating and static equipment available and plan sparing
- Utility area supervisors who authorise header line-ups, load shedding and standby equipment changeovers
- Energy and performance engineers who meter and allocate air, nitrogen, steam and fuel gas consumption

Course Outline:

Day 1: Utility Roles, Site Utility Balance and Header Mapping

- Utility Block Diagram: Air, Nitrogen, Steam, Water, Fuel Gas and Flare Interfaces
- Site Utility Balance Sheet: Generation, Consumers and Headroom per Header
- Utility Consumer Register Built from P&IDs and Line Lists
- Header Pressure Levels and Tie-In Points Between Process Units and the Utility Area
- Utility Criticality Ranking by Units That Trip on Loss of Each Service

Day 2: Instrument Air and Plant Air Generation

- Screw, Centrifugal and Reciprocating Air Compressor Selection and Load-Unload Control
- Air Receiver Sizing for Hold-Up Time After a Compressor Trip
- Refrigerated Versus Heatless and Heated Desiccant Dryer Selection by Pressure Dew Point
- Instrument Air Quality Limits for Particles, Moisture and Oil Content
- Instrument Air Priority Valve and Plant Air Shedding Logic

Day 3: Nitrogen Generation, Blanketing and Purging

- PSA Nitrogen Generator Cycle with Carbon Molecular Sieve Beds
- Hollow Fibre Membrane Nitrogen Units and the Purity Versus Flow Trade-Off
- Liquid Nitrogen Storage and Vaporiser Backup for Peak and Emergency Demand
- Tank Blanketing Regulators and Breather Valve Settings
- Purge Volume Calculation for Equipment Freeing and Oxygen Analyser Verification

Day 4: Steam and Condensate Distribution Networks

- High, Medium and Low Pressure Steam Header Control and Letdown Station Design
- Desuperheater Sizing and Spray Water Supply at Letdown Stations
- Turbine Extraction and Exhaust Steam in the Header Balance
- Condensate Collection, Contamination Monitoring and Polishing Before Return
- Drip Leg Spacing and Trap Station Layout on Long Steam Mains

Day 5: Week-One Case: Air, Nitrogen and Steam Header Integration

- Case Plant Air Demand Profile Versus Installed Compressor Capacity
- Dryer Dew Point Excursion Case and Moisture Carryover to Valve Positioners
- Nitrogen Header Pressure Decay Case During Simultaneous Purging Jobs
- Steam Header Collapse Case After a Letdown Valve Failure
- Week-One Utility Balance Update and Header Findings Log

Day 6: Cooling Water, Demineralised Water and Potable Water Distribution

- Once-Through, Open Recirculating and Closed Loop Cooling Water Circuits
- Cooling Water Supply and Return Header Hydraulics and Exchanger Allocation
- Demineralisation Train with Cation, Anion and Mixed-Bed Ion Exchange Regeneration
- Demineralised Water Storage with Conductivity and Silica Monitoring
- Potable Water Network Segregation, Backflow Prevention and Chlorine Residual Checks

Day 7: Fuel Gas, Flare, Relief and Closed Drain Headers

- Fuel Gas Knock-Out, Heating and Margin Above Hydrocarbon Dew Point
- Fuel Gas Mixing Drum and Pressure Control to Fired Equipment
- Flare Header Back Pressure, Knock-Out Drum and Water Seal Drum Operation
- Flare Purge Gas and Pilot Gas Supply Reliability
- Closed Drain Header, Drain Drum Pump-Out and Hydrocarbon Routing

Day 8: Utility Failure Cases, Process Impact and Operating Interfaces

- Loss of Instrument Air: Valve Fail-Safe Positions and Unit Response
- Loss of Cooling Water: Relief Load Generation and Flare Header Impact
- Loss of Steam, Power or Nitrogen: Cascading Effects Across Process Units
- Failure Mode and Effects Analysis Worksheet for Utility Equipment
- Utility Outage Response Procedure, Load Shedding Priorities and Operator Handover Notes

Day 9: Reliability, Redundancy, Energy Use and Metering

- N+1 and Duty-Standby Sparing Philosophy for Compressors, Pumps and Generators
- Reliability Block Diagram and Availability Calculation for a Utility Train
- Utility Metering Plan with Flow Meters, Totalisers and Allocation to Units
- Specific Energy of Compressed Air, Nitrogen and Steam per Unit Delivered
- Utility Indicator Dashboard for Header Stability, Leak Rate and Standby Readiness

Day 10: Capstone: Utility System Reliability and Failure-Impact Study

- Utility Troubleshooting Drill Using Header Trends and Operator Logs
- Capstone Case Plant Utility Map and Criticality Matrix
- Capstone Failure-Impact Scenarios with Recovery Times per Utility
- Utility System Reliability and Failure-Impact Study Assembly
- Study Presentation to a Mock Plant Technical Review Panel

Skills You Will Gain:

- Utility Balance Construction
- Compressed Air Dryer Selection
- Nitrogen Purity and Purge Control
- Steam Header Letdown Control
- Fuel Gas Conditioning
- Flare Header Readiness Checks
- Utility Failure Mode Analysis
- Utility Metering and Allocation

Why Attend This Course:

- Leave with a Utility System Reliability and Failure-Impact Study for a case plant, reviewed by a mock technical panel
- Spot the weak utility header before it trips a unit, using trends, balances and a criticality ranking
- Justify spare compressors, nitrogen backup or metering to management with availability and impact figures
- Compare utility practice with operators and engineers from refining, petrochemicals, gas processing and power generation

Conclusion:

Utilities fail quietly and then all at once, so plants need a single view of how air, nitrogen, steam, water, fuel gas and flare services support each unit. Week one builds the utility balance and works through instrument air, nitrogen and steam headers in a guided case. Week two adds cooling, demineralised and potable water, fuel gas and flare headers, loss-of-utility cases, sparing, metering and troubleshooting. The final day produces a Utility System Reliability and Failure-Impact Study ready for plant review.