

Media Release

GridEx V Report Recommends Emergency Response Plan Reviews, Enhanced Cross-Sector Coordination

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Utilities and Reliability Coordinators should review their emergency response plans to account for the complex collaboration with all levels of government in North America that would be required should a grid security event occur, NERC recommended in its GridEx V after-action report. This report focuses on lessons learned and recommendations highlighted throughout the two-day exercise. NERC held the grid security exercise, which had 7,000 participants from across North America — including industry and U.S. and Canadian government partners — in November 2019.

The [GridEx V Lessons Learned Report](#) focuses on participant observations and recommendations from the cyber and physical security exercise's distributed play and complementary executive tabletop. The recommendations target actions for the Electricity Information Sharing and Analysis Center (E-ISAC), electricity industry and cross-sector and government partners in North America to improve future GridEx events and enhance the security posture.

"Each GridEx is an important milestone in the ongoing cyber and physical security training of industry members and government partners," said Manny Cancel, NERC senior vice president and E-ISAC chief executive officer. "This report notes the success of GridEx V and starts the planning process in earnest for GridEx VI as an enhancement to its predecessor."

GridEx V achieved six of its seven objectives, the report finds. The objectives achieved were exercise incident response plans; expand local and regional response; engage critical interdependencies; improve communication; engage senior leadership; and gather lessons learned. Based on participant feedback, the report lists the "increase supply chain participation" objective as being partially achieved and having significant room for improvement in GridEx VI.

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The report's recommendations include:

- Incorporating natural gas providers and pipeline operators into restoration planning and drills
- Enhancing coordination with communications providers to support restoration and recovery
- Building consensus with the U.S. Department of Energy on the design, issuance and liability protections for grid security emergency orders issued under Section 215A of the Federal Power Act
- Continuing to strengthen the operational industry and government coordination between the United States and Canada

The report's observations include:

- The flexible scenario structure enabled exercise planners to customize their GridEx experiences and maximize learning to improve their organizations' incident response preparations and capabilities.
- Early planning allowed planners to benefit from the scenario's flexibility, but planners whose organizations joined later struggled to adequately prepare for the exercise.
- While many utilities used GridEx to strengthen their relationships with Reliability Coordinators, law enforcement and government agencies, others lacked the resources needed to coordinate responses to the challenges in the scenario.
- The GridEx distributed play and executive tabletop should occur on different dates so that leadership teams can achieve maximum training value for their organizations.

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Electricity is a key component of the fabric of modern society and the Electric Reliability Organization Enterprise serves to strengthen that fabric. The vision for the ERO Enterprise, which is comprised of NERC and the six Regional Entities, is a highly reliable and secure North American bulk power system. Our mission is to assure the effective and efficient reduction of risks to the reliability and security of the grid.