

NERC News

April 2020

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ERO Executive Spotlight – Jason Blake President and CEO, SERC

Lead with Purpose: SERC Culture Supporting Its Mission

During these trying times, I would be remiss if I did not start my comments without first expressing our gratitude to the power companies across SERC and the rest of North America. The perseverance and unwavering commitment of these teams of individuals to ensure the reliability and security of the grid has been inspiring on many levels. In these times, the reliability and security of our grid — the backbone to the health, safety and prosperity of our communities

— is what we need most. And in these times, it becomes even more clear that leadership is not proven by a name or title; but rather by the selfless actions of these teams of individuals working together for the greater good.



Throughout this pandemic, we have observed countless examples of leadership arising from all levels of organizations within our footprint as they engage with SERC's various departments, outreach and assistance teams and our technical committees. Examples include exchanging best practices or creative approaches, identifying and sharing emerging challenges and possible solutions, simply raising a hand ask for guidance or help as well as staying actively engaged and leaning-in to help peers navigate these unusual waters. I also hear similarly impressive stories from my peers across the ERO Enterprise. [Continued on page 2](#)

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Lead with Purpose (cont'd)

The results of this active leadership across all levels of our stakeholders and their purposeful engagement is demonstrated not only through the reliable and secure performance of our grid during these times, but also through the quest for continuous improvement. This is something that is truly impressive and something that I believe is worthwhile to learn from and reflect upon.

One thing we have taken specific note of is the importance of culture and empowering leaders, no matter their job or title, across all levels of our respective organizations. In fact, our team at SERC has been modeling our corporate culture around this simple concept because we believe an empowered culture is critical to our success and ability to bring value to our stakeholders and help strengthen the reliability and security of the grid. In order to establish an empowered culture, our team has rallied around four cultural attributes that we believe we need to aspire constantly in order to deliver the most value. These attributes are:

- **Leader:** Have a positive vision and actively build support to execute it
- **Collaborative:** Partner and engage in focused communication with our stakeholders, NERC, our regional partners and FERC
- **Expert:** Be knowledgeable, credible, objective, disciplined and value intellectual curiosity and innovative creativity
- **Purposeful:** Strategically plan and pursue activities that deliver value with intended results

We are already seeing the benefits from this empowering culture. The freedom to question the status quo by asking questions rooted in purpose and sharing ideas across departments has been an enormous catalyst for us and, I believe, for our stakeholders. For example, stakeholder committee members are regularly bringing new and different ideas and approaches to our committees (including establishing new subcommittees to target specific opportunities) all in an effort to ensure we are making a positive impact and thoughtfully addressing risks and other challenges. The SERC Outreach and Assistance team also continues to partner

routinely with our stakeholders through remote engagements and are currently ramping up e-learning module productions. The SERC Critical Infrastructure Protection Committee is establishing a CIP tools working group and other committees are enhancing the usefulness of their respective studies, reports, processes and analytics. I know that similar progress and a general commitment for continuous improvement is occurring across NERC and all the Regions.

In short, there is much to learn from and be inspired by in our industry during these trying times. One of those key points is the power of the culture we all build, promote and aspire to achieve within our organizations, across our teams and with each other. We thank you for your commitment, and please continue to lead with purpose!



COVID-19 Headlines

ERO Enterprise Opts to Extend On-Site Activity Deferral

As first announced on March 18, the ERO Enterprise has postponed on-site audits and other on-site activities during this unprecedented health crisis. The ERO Enterprise has extended this date through September 7, 2020, to allow registered entities to continue to focus their resources on keeping their workforces safe and the lights on.

The ERO Enterprise recognizes that there are significant uncertainties regarding the duration of the outbreak and the subsequent recovery and will continue to evaluate the circumstances to determine when on-site activities may resume safely or whether additional regulatory relief is necessary. In the interim, the Regional Entities are actively involved in remote oversight activities and are experimenting with innovative approaches to work with registered entities during this pandemic to continue assuring the reliability and security of the bulk power system.

Workforce, Supply Chain Disruptions Key Elements in Ongoing Pandemic Preparations

Potential workforce disruptions, supply chain interruptions and increased cyber security threats caused by COVID-19 have elevated the electric industry's reliability risk profile. NERC's special report — [Pandemic Preparedness and Operational Assessment – Spring 2020](#) — reviews reliability considerations and operational preparedness during this pandemic. The pandemic introduces significant uncertainty that is without precedent and highly challenging even for the most prepared of industries. However, industry is rising to the challenge, coordinating effectively with government partners and taking aggressive steps to confront these threats to grid reliability.

Currently, NERC has not identified any specific threat or degradation to the reliable operation of the bulk power system. However, as pandemic mitigation and containment strategies continue, prolonged periods of operator sequestration and deferred equipment maintenance increase industry's risk profile and could exacerbate impacts to the bulk power system during the summer months, and potentially over the longer-term horizon.

"Industry appears well-positioned for spring operations and is currently preparing for the summer period, which we will focus on in our upcoming Summer Reliability Assessment next month," said John Moura, director of Reliability Assessment and Performance Analysis. "While we have not identified any specific threat to the reliable operation of grid, we are in unprecedented territory and must continue to be prepared for the cumulative unknowns that are increasing industry's risk profile."

The Electric Reliability Organization (ERO) Enterprise, which is comprised of NERC and the six Regional Entities, is coordinating with registered entities, regulators and government officials to assure the reliability of the bulk power system during this challenging time. As the pandemic unfolds, the ERO Enterprise is pursuing all available avenues to continue this coordination and identify reliability implications and lessons learned. All Reliability Coordinators have implemented their pandemic plans.

Pandemic risk differs from many of the other threats facing the grid in that it is a "people event." The fundamental risk is the loss of staff critical to operating and maintaining the bulk power system to the extent that firm loads could no longer be served safely. To both preserve bulk power system reliability and support the pandemic mitigation strategies, industry leaders are asking regulators and government agencies to take actions that include ensuring the following:

- COVID-19 testing is available and streamlined for essential personnel who work in shift environments (i.e., control center personnel)
- Relief from certain regulatory obligations is obtained to ensure the continued availability of control room operators
- Travel restrictions for the general public exclude personnel essential to the reliable operation of control centers
- Supplies for cleaning/hygiene are readily available
- In addition, FERC and the ERO Enterprise are using regulatory discretion to advise all registered entities that they will consider the impact of the coronavirus outbreak in complying with certain Reliability Standards.

NERC's *2020 Summer Reliability Assessment*, to be published in May, will provide further detail on the availability of capacity resources, expected peak demands and any potential reliability issues during the upcoming summer period.

FERC Approves NERC's Motion to Defer Implementation of Seven Reliability Standards Due to COVID-19

NERC is pleased that FERC has approved its April 6 [motion](#) to defer the implementation of several Reliability Standards that have effective dates or phased-in implementation dates in the second half of 2020. This action is a measure to help assure grid reliability amid the impacts posed by the coronavirus outbreak. Specifically, NERC requested that FERC defer the implementation of the following Reliability Standards:

- **CIP-005-6 – Cyber Security – Electronic Security Perimeter(s)**, by three months;

- **CIP-010-3 – Cyber Security – Configuration Change Management and Vulnerability Assessments**, by three months;
- **CIP-013-1 – Cyber Security – Supply Chain Risk Management**, by three months;
- **PER-006-1 – Specific Training for Personnel**, by six months;
- **PRC-002-2 – Disturbance Monitoring and Reporting Requirements** (phased-in implementation for Requirements R2-R4 and R6-R11), by six months;
- **PRC-025-2 – Generator Relay Loadability** (phased-in implementation for Requirement R1, Attachment 1, Table 1 Relay Loadability Evaluation Criteria Options 5b, 14b, 15b, 16b), by six months; and
- **PRC-027-1 – Coordination of Protection Systems for Performance during Faults**, by six months.

While this motion addresses only those Reliability Standards scheduled to become effective during the remainder of 2020, NERC recognizes that there are significant uncertainties regarding the duration of the outbreak and the subsequent recovery. As such, NERC will continue to evaluate the circumstances to determine whether additional implementation delays may be warranted and submit any appropriate filings with FERC at that time. [Filing](#) | [FERC Order](#)

NERC Publishes FAQs about Joint NERC–FERC Industry Guidance for COVID-19

NERC and FERC recently [announced](#) steps to ensure that operators of the Bulk Electric System can focus their resources on keeping people safe and the lights on during this unprecedented COVID-19 emergency. Since the announcement, NERC and the Regional Entities have received a number of questions from industry. This FAQ document is available on the [CMEP One-Stop Shop](#) on NERC’s website to help provide additional clarity on the provided guidance. NERC updates the FAQs regularly as the ERO Enterprise receives new questions. [COVID-19 ORC and CMEP Frequently Asked Questions](#). ■■■

Compliance

Three Reliability Standard Audit Worksheets Posted

Three new Reliability Standard Audit Worksheets (RSAWs) are available on the [RSAW page](#) of NERC’s website under the heading “Current RSAWs for Use.”

- [CIP-005-6 – Cyber Security – Electronic Security Perimeter\(s\)](#) becomes effective July 1, 2020.
- [CIP-010-3 – Cyber Security – Configuration Change Management and Vulnerability Assessments](#) becomes effective July 1, 2020.
- [CIP-013-1 – Cyber Security – Supply Chain Risk Management](#) becomes effective July 1, 2020.

RSAWs are guides provided by the ERO Enterprise that describe types of evidence that registered entities may use to demonstrate compliance with a Reliability Standard. The ERO Enterprise drafts these worksheets, which include information regarding how the ERO Enterprise may assess evidence, during the development of their corresponding NERC Reliability Standards, allowing for enhanced transparency around compliance expectations.

Compliance Guidance Update

A key factor in the success of compliance monitoring and enforcement of mandatory standards rests on a common understanding among industry and ERO Enterprise CMEP staff of how they can achieve and demonstrate compliance. For many standards, this is straightforward. For others, a variety of approaches may achieve the same objective. Industry develops Implementation Guidance, for industry, and the guidance requires ERO Enterprise endorsement. This guidance provides examples for implementing a standard.

NERC posted one new proposed Implementation Guidance document—[TPL-007-4 – Transmission System Planned Performance for Geomagnetic Disturbance Events \(2019-01 SDT\)](#)—to the [Compliance Guidance page](#). ■■■

Electricity Information Sharing and Analysis Center

GridEx VI Save-the-Date

NERC's Electricity Information Sharing and Analysis Center (E-ISAC) is planning the sixth biennial grid security exercise (GridEx VI) for November 16–18, 2021.

Stay tuned to the [E-ISAC Portal](#) and the [NERC](#) website for more GridEx VI information. Resources to look out for include:

- [GridEx VI registration link](#)
- [GridEx VI Fact Sheet](#)
- [GridEx VI Frequently Asked Questions](#)

GridEx VI is an operational exercise for electric utilities, related critical industries, and government partners in North America. Participants can engage in GridEx VI from their regular work locations during the two-day exercise. Participants simulate the actions they would take during an actual event under their organization's established incident response plans. Those actions include sharing information on the status of grid operations internally and externally. ■■■

Personnel Certification and Continuing Education

NERC System Operator Certification Exam Updates

The NERC System Operator Certification Program is publishing new cut scores for the NERC System Operator Certification Exams. The new exams and cut scores will begin June 1, 2020, at all PSI test centers. The exams will include questions based on updated content outlines and the most current NERC Reliability Standards. For additional information, see the [NERC System Operator Certification Exam Announcement](#) on the [System Operator Certification and Credential Maintenance Program](#) page.

Candidates can schedule on the current system up to May 19, 2020, and can test through May 31, 2020. There will be a blackout period for scheduling from May 20, 2020, through June 1, 2020. Candidates can begin scheduling on the new system on June 1, 2020. ■■■

Reliability Risk Management

Lessons Learned Posted

NERC posted three new lessons learned to the [Lessons Learned](#) page.

The [Loss of Automatic Generation Control During Routine Update](#) Lesson Learned addresses an incident during a weekly automatic generation control (AGC) software update in which a critical AGC task aborted at one of two fully redundant control centers, and the same critical task aborted at the other control center four minutes later. As a result, generation schedules could not be set, and area control error (ACE) could not be automatically calculated until the issue was resolved. The cause was a modified line of code.

The [Protracted Fault in a Transmission Substation](#) Lesson Learned addresses an incident in which electronic communications equipment utilized to transmit and receive information from the remote terminals of a transmission line automatically shut down within milliseconds when a bus fault occurred at one terminal of the line. Neither the primary nor the back-up relay protection cleared the fault. The fault continued for more than four minutes.

The [Misoperation of 87N Transformer Ground Differential Relays Causing Loss of Load](#) Lesson Learned addresses an incident in which gaps in implementing a modification and subsequent commissioning processes led to the omission of neutral connections for three separate transformer neutral differential relays, ultimately causing three simultaneous misoperations and a subsequent loss of load.

A successful Lesson Learned document clearly identifies the lesson, contains sufficient information to understand the issues, visibly identifies the difference between the actual outcome and the desired outcome and includes an accurate sequence of events, when it provides clarity. ■■■

Standards

With the implementation of the [Align Project](#) in 2020, there will be changes to the [Reliability Standards web page](#) and associated reports, including the One-Stop Shop, U.S. Effective Date Status/Functional Applicability spreadsheet and VRF and VSL matrices. NERC will provide more details in the coming months.

Webinar Resources Posted

NERC posted the [streaming webinar](#) and [slide presentation](#) for the April 13, 2020 Project 2015-09 – Establish and Communicate System Operating Limits webinar.

Survey Due Date Extended for Standards Efficiency Review Phase 2 Operational Data Exchange Simplification Standard Authorization Request

The Standards Efficiency Review (SER) Phase 2 Team seeks industry input on the [Operational Data Exchange Simplification Standard Authorization Request \(SAR\)](#). Please coordinate feedback into a single response for each organization or entity and complete the [survey](#) by 8:00 p.m. Eastern, May 27, 2020. See the [SER project page](#) for more information.

Nomination Period Open for Project 2020-03 – Supply Chain Low Impact Revisions Standard Drafting Team

NERC is seeking nominations for Project 2020-03 – Supply Chain Low Impact Revisions drafting team members through 8 p.m. Eastern, Wednesday, May 6, 2020. By submitting a nomination form, you are indicating your willingness and agreement to participate actively in face-to-face meetings and conference calls. Previous drafting team experience is beneficial but not required.

Use the [electronic form](#) to submit a nomination. Contact [Wendy Muller](#) regarding issues using the electronic form. An unofficial Word version of the nomination form is posted on the [Standard Drafting Team Vacancies](#) page and the [project page](#). The Standards Committee expects to appoint members to the drafting team in June 2020,

and will notify nominees shortly after they are appointed.

Nomination Period Open for Project 2020-04 – Modifications to CIP-012 SAR Standard Drafting Team

NERC is seeking nominations for Project 2020-04 – Modifications to CIP-012 SAR drafting team members through **8 p.m. Eastern, Monday, May 11, 2020**. By submitting a nomination form, you are indicating your willingness and agreement to participate actively in face-to-face meetings and conference calls.

The time commitment for this project is expected to be two face-to-face meetings per quarter (on average two full working days each meeting) with conference calls scheduled as needed to meet the agreed upon timeline the team sets forth. Team members may also have side projects, either individually or by sub-group, to present for discussion and review. Lastly, an important component of the team effort is outreach. Members of the team will be expected to conduct industry outreach during the development process to support a successful ballot. Previous drafting team experience is beneficial but not required. See the [project page](#) and nomination form for additional information.

Use the [electronic form](#) to submit a nomination. Contact [Linda Jenkins](#) regarding issues using the electronic form. An unofficial Word version of the nomination form is posted on the [Standard Drafting Team Vacancies](#) page and the [project page](#). The Standards Committee expects to appoint members to the SAR drafting team in June 2020 and will notify nominees shortly after they are appointed.

Deadline Extended for Project 2020-02 – Transmission-Connected Resources Standard Drafting Team Nomination Period

NERC is seeking nominations for Project 2020-02 – Transmission-connected Resources drafting team members. The deadline has been extended, and is now open through 8 p.m. Eastern, May 13, 2020. By submitting a nomination form, you are indicating your willingness and agreement to participate actively in face-

to-face meetings and conference calls. Previous drafting team experience is beneficial but not required.

Use the [electronic form](#) to submit a nomination. Contact [Wendy Muller](#) regarding issues using the electronic form. An unofficial Word version of the nomination form is posted on the [Standard Drafting Team Vacancies](#) page and the [project page](#). The Standards Committee expects to appoint members to the drafting team in June 2020, and will notify nominees shortly after they are appointed. ■■■

Regional Entity Events

Midwest Reliability Organization (MRO)

- [Virtual CIP Conference](#), May 13
- [MRO Protective Relay Subgroup Meeting](#), May 19
- [Reliability Advisory Council Meeting](#), June 3
- [CMEP Advisory Council Meeting](#), June 4
- [Organizational Group Oversight Committee \(OGOC\)](#), June 24
- [Security Advisory Council Meeting](#), June 24
- [MRO Board of Directors Meeting](#), June 25

Northeast Power Coordinating Council, Inc.

- [NPCC 2020 Virtual Spring Webinar](#), May 20

ReliabilityFirst (RF)

- [Reliability and Compliance Open Forum Call](#), May 18
- [Board of Directors Committee Meetings](#), June 3
- [Board of Directors Meeting](#), June 4
- [Reliability and Compliance Open Forum Call](#), June 15

SERC Reliability Corporation

- [Q2 Open Forum Webinar](#), May 11
- [Q3 Open Forum Webinar](#), July 27
- [System Operator Conference #3](#), August 25–27

Texas RE

- [Talk with Texas RE: Align, Are We There Yet?](#) May 7
- [Talk with Texas RE: The Midas Touch](#), May 14

- [Talk with Texas RE: PRC-027](#), May 21
- [Board, AG&F](#), and [MRC](#) meetings, May 27

WECC

- [Board Workshop, Near-Term Priorities](#), May 5
- [Board of Directors and Associated Meetings](#), June 16–17 ■■■

Upcoming Events

For a full accounting of NERC events, such as meetings and conference calls for standard drafting teams, other standing committees, subcommittees, task forces, and working groups, please refer to the [NERC calendar](#).

- [Supply Chain Working Group Webinar Series: Frequently Asked Questions: Small Group Advisory Sessions](#) — 1:00–2:00 p.m. Eastern, May 4 | [Register](#)
- [Supply Chain Working Group Webinar Series: Provenance](#) — 1:00–2:00 p.m. Eastern, May 11 | [Register](#)
- [Board of Trustees Committees, Member Representatives Committee, and Board of Trustees Meetings](#) – May 13–14 | [Meeting Registration](#) | [Schedule of Events](#)
- [Supply Chain Working Group Webinar Series: Risks Related to Cloud Service Providers](#) 1:00–2:00 p.m. Eastern, May 18 | [Register](#)
- [Standards Committee Conference Call](#) 1:00–3:00 p.m. Eastern, May 20 | [Register](#)
- [Electric Power Human Performance Improvement Symposium](#) – CANCELLED
- [GridSecCon 2020](#) – CANCELLED ■■■

Filings

NERC Filings to FERC in April

April 6, 2020

[NOPR Comments Regarding SER Retirements](#) | NERC submits comments on the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NOPR) regarding NERC's proposal to retire requirements in Reliability Standards under the Standards Efficiency Review (SER).

[Motion to Defer Implementation of Reliability Standards](#) | NERC submits a motion requesting FERC delay upcoming implementation

deadlines of certain Reliability Standards in response to coronavirus-related disruptions.

April 23, 2020

[Petition for approval of erratum to TPL-001-5](#) | NERC submits a petition for approval of erratum to Reliability Standard TPL-001-5.

NERC Canadian Filings to FERC in April

April 24, 2020

[NERC COVID-19 Compliance Response](#) | NERC submits a filing describing compliance measures taken to respond to COVID-19 impacts and offering to assist in the consideration of an implementation delay for Reliability Standards coming due in the second half of 2020. ■ ■ ■

Careers at NERC

E-ISAC Engagement and Outreach Coordinator

Location: Washington, D.C.

[Details](#)

E-ISAC - Resilience Policy and Partnerships Coordinator

Location: Washington, D.C.

[Details](#)

Manager, Cyber Security

Location: Atlanta

[Details](#)

Senior Auditor Internal Audit and Corporate Risk Management

Location: Atlanta

[Details](#)

Personnel Certification Program Coordinator

Location: Atlanta

[Details](#) ■ ■ ■