

SOCCED Rollover Hours FAQ

September 28, 2021

Background

In Q2 2021, NERC, the Personnel Certification Governance Committee (PCGC), and the Credential Maintenance Working Group (CMWG) became aware that there was an issue with how System Operator Certification Continuing Education Database (SOCCED) was calculating system operator rollover hours.

The SOCCED system was rolling over more than the allowed 30 Continuing Education Hours (CEHs), Standards, and Simulation hours per certification period. The issue occurs when a system operator renews several months *prior* to their expiration date. Per the System Operator Certification Program Manual¹: Chapter 2 Credential Maintenance, Rollover Hours:

“For all credentials, some continuing education hours (CEHs) may be carried over to the next certification period. Up to 30 CEHs accumulated in the six months prior to the certificate expiration date that are not used for credential maintenance or change of credential type may be carried over. Categorization of CEHs in the “standards” category or the “simulation” category will not be carried over into the next period. To satisfy the CEH requirement, CEHs will be used starting with the first learning activity that occurred, according to the calendar, then sequentially by the date of the learning activities.”

Potential Issues

Incorrect rollover hours (operating, standards, and simulation CEHs) in system operators’ current certification period will be adjusted. See the FAQ below.

Next Steps

NERC has been in constant communication with the SOCCED site vendor to develop a plan to correct this issue, which is scheduled to be completed by October 15, 2021. Following this correction, only 30 CEHs will rollover per certification period—no standard or simulation hours will rollover.

Following the system update, we will conduct a review of rollover hours and make any needed adjustments manually. The update will not adjust hours automatically. Once extent of the condition is ascertained, we will notify any affected system operators prior to any adjustment to their operating CEHs or standards and simulation hours.

¹ https://www.nerc.com/pa/Train/SysOpCert/System%20Operator%20Certification%20DL/SOC_Program_Manual.pdf

Frequently Asked Questions

Question: What is the extent of the calculation issue?

Answer: The calculation issue only affects system operators that renew several months *prior* to their expiration date and continue to accumulate CEHs after renewal in excess of the maximum allowable rollover of 30 hours. The current issue also allows rollover of standards and simulation hours.

Question: How far back does the rollover hour issue go?

Answer: The issue may affect the transcripts of system operators that renewed in 2018 to present. Once the software correction is made (October 15), NERC will look at each case individually and make any manual corrections required. All affected system operators will be notified.

Question: How does NERC plan to address the possibility that system operators may have recertified based on incorrect calculations without actually having earned enough CEHs to recertify?

Answer: NERC and the PCGC determined that previous recertification's are not affected.

Question: How does NERC plan to award rollover hours to users who recertified with more CEHs than SOCCED had given them credit for?

Answer: After the SOCCED rollover issue is corrected, NERC and the PCGC will review credentials that expire in 2022 and beyond. Each system operators' rollover hours will be examined for hours in excess of the permitted 30 rollover CEHs, and standards and simulations. If rollover hours need adjustment, the system operator will be contacted.

Question: Will any system operators have their certifications suspended?

Answer: No, system operators will not have their certifications suspended due to the rollover issue. Most of these issues are from system operators completing an *excess* of CEHs within their certification period, rather than not enough CEHs.

Question: Will entities with system operators affected by this issue be adversely affected?

Answer: No, registered entities with system operators performing work related to PER-003-2 – Operating Personnel Credentials² will not be adversely affected. Again, most of these issues are from system operators completing an *excess* of CEHs within their certification period, rather than not enough CEHs.

Question: How should individuals who are recertifying this year ensure that they have earned enough CEHs to recertify?

Answer: System operators with certification expiration dates in Q4 2021 will not be affected by any CEH corrections for their current credential cycle. However, system operators who did not obtain the required CEHs for their credential during their three-year cycle will go into suspension.

Question: When can we expect NERC to issue an industry-wide communication or guidance regarding this issue?

Answer: NERC plans on informing the SOCCED community by sending an email to system operators and continuing education providers by September 30, 2021, and posting a note on the SOCCED site explaining the issue and providing contact information for any questions. Once the extent of condition is known and mitigated, we will provide an update for industry at large via our newsletter and bulletins.

² <https://www.nerc.com/ layouts/15/PrintStandard.aspx?standardnumber=PER-003-2&title=Operating%20Personnel%20Credentials&Jurisdiction=United%20States>