Ten Benchmarks of an Excellent Reliability Standard

1. Applicability — Each reliability standard shall clearly identify the functional classes of entities responsible for complying with the reliability standard, with any specific additions or exceptions noted. Such functional classes[1] include: reliability coordinators, balancing authorities, transmission operators, transmission owners, generator operators, generator owners, interchange authorities, transmission service providers, market operators, planning authorities, transmission planners, resource planners, load-serving entities, purchasing-selling entities, and distribution providers. Each reliability standard shall also identify the geographic applicability of the standard, such as the entire North American bulk power system, an interconnection, or within a regional entity area. As applicable, a standard may also identify any limitations on the applicability of the standard based on electric facility characteristics, such as generators with a nameplate rating of 20 megawatts or greater, or transmission facilities energized at 200 kilovolts or greater.

2. Purpose — Each reliability standard shall have a clear statement of the purpose of the standard. The purpose shall describe how the standard contributes to the reliability of the bulk power system.

3. Performance Requirements — Each reliability standard shall state one or more performance requirements, which if achieved by the applicable entities, will provide for a reliable bulk power system, consistent with good utility practice and the public interest. Each requirement is not a "lowest common denominator" compromise, but instead achieves an objective that is the best approach for bulk power system reliability, taking account of the costs and benefits of implementing the proposal.

4. Measurability — Each performance requirement shall be stated so as to be objectively measurable by a third party with knowledge or expertise in the area. Each performance requirement shall have one or more associated measures used to objectively evaluate compliance with the requirement. If performance can be practically measured quantitatively, metrics shall be provided to determine satisfactory performance.

5. Technical Basis in Engineering and Operations — Each reliability standard shall be based upon sound engineering and operating judgment, analysis, or experience, as determined by expert practitioners in the particular field.

6. Completeness — Reliability standards shall be complete and self-contained. The standards shall not depend on external information to determine the required level of performance.

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[1] These functional classes of entities are derived from NERC's reliability functional model. When a standard identifies a class of entities to which it applies, that class must be defined in the Glossary of Terms Used in Reliability Standards.

7. Consequences for Noncompliance — In combination with guidelines for penalties and sanctions, as well as other ERO and regional entity compliance documents, the consequences of violating a standard are clearly known to the responsible entities.

8. Clear Language — Each reliability standard shall be stated using clear and unambiguous language. Responsible entities, using reasonable judgment and in keeping with good utility practice, are able to arrive at a consistent interpretation of the required performance.

9. Practicality — Each reliability standard shall establish requirements that can be practically implemented by the assigned responsible entities within the specified effective date and thereafter.

10. Consistent Terminology — To the extent possible, reliability standards shall use a set of standard terms and definitions that are approved through the NERC reliability standards development process.

Version History

Version	Date	Owner	Change Tracking
1	March 16, 2010		
1	May 16, 2014	Standards Information Staff	Updated template
1	May 31, 2023	Standards Information Staff	Updated template