

Standards Program

2007 Work Plan

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Standards Mission

An essential element of NERC's mission is to "set standards for the reliable operation and planning of the bulk power system." Effective reliability standards, coupled with a strong enforcement program, are the cornerstones for improving the reliability of the bulk power system.

Process

NERC's reliability standards development process will be overseen by a Standards Committee whose purpose is to see that all stakeholder interests are fairly represented in the standards development process. The Standards Committee will be a broad-based, representative committee consisting of two representatives from each segment of the Registered Ballot Body ("RBB".) Participation in the RBB, which consists of multiple, defined segments, is open to any person or entity with an interest in the reliability of the bulk power system.

Among other responsibilities, the Standards Committee will review each proposal for development of a new reliability standard, or modification of an existing reliability standard, to determine if the proposal should be pursued; if it so determines, the Standards Committee will appoint a reliability standard drafting team that has the necessary technical expertise, competencies, and diversity of views needed to develop the proposed standard.

Development of each reliability standard will include at least one time period for receipt of public comment before the proposed standard is submitted for an approval vote. For the purpose of adopting each proposed reliability standard a separate "ballot pool" will be established for members of the RBB (that have an interest in the standard) to join, in order to vote on approval of the reliability standard. After receiving an affirmative vote by a ballot pool of the RBB, a reliability standard will be submitted to NERC's Board of Trustees for approval. Finally, if approved by the Board of Trustees, the reliability standard will be submitted to FERC for its approval in accordance with Section 215(d) of the FPA and 16 C.F.R. § 39.5.

As noted earlier, FERC must find that a proposed reliability standard is just and reasonable, not unduly discriminatory or preferential, and in the public interest. Once FERC approves a standard, it is legally binding on all owners, operators, and users of the bulk power system in the United States. NERC is working with the governmental authorities in eight Canadian provinces, along with the National Energy Board of Canada, to achieve mandatory reliability standards in those jurisdictions.

The standards development process is designed to build and verify consensus for each standard. The open, inclusive, balanced, and transparent process ensures that the resulting standards are just, reasonable, and nondiscriminatory. Participation by industry experts and compliance personnel ensures that the standards are technically sound, unambiguous, and measurable.

NERC coordinates its reliability standards development activities with business practices developed by the North American Energy Standards Board (NAESB) and with the ISO/RTO Council (IRC). The three organizations coordinate their activities through a Joint Interface Committee (JIC).

Transition to Electric Reliability Organization

A base set of 102 reliability standards was filed on April 4, 2006 with FERC and the appropriate governmental authorities in Canada for the purpose of making the standards mandatory for all owners, operators, and users of the bulk power system beginning January 1, 2007, or soon thereafter. The principle focus of the 2007 standards work plan is to complete the work necessary to ensure all of NERC's existing and future standards meet statutory and regulatory requirements as ERO standards. The focus is also on completing the highest priority new standards and improving the quality of existing standards. NERC will annually review its standards work plan with FERC and the applicable governmental authorities in Canada to coordinate work priorities and expectations.

Standards Program Goals

The goals of the standards program for 2007 are to:

1. Meet all directives of ERO governmental authorities with regard to standards development and procedures.
2. Develop and approve all 2007 high priority standards.
3. Initiate a comprehensive program to review and improve existing reliability standards to meet the 10 benchmarks of excellent standards.
4. Meet stated targets in the regional "fill-in-the-blank" standards work plan.
5. Establish a baseline for consistency and quality of regional reliability standards.
6. Streamline and improve the standards process and associated tools.
7. Work closely with NAESB in coordinating business practices and reliability standards.
8. Communicate with stakeholders and regulators regarding standards development.

Standards Program Objectives

The standards program objectives for 2007 are grouped into five categories: standards development; regional reliability standards development; standards improvement; business practice interface; and process improvement.

Standards Development

- Develop standards and revise standards as directed by FERC and other governmental authorities.
- Approve standards for the training of system operating personnel.
- Approve standards for certifying entities as reliability coordinators, transmission operators, and/or balancing authorities.
- Complete field tests and approve four Phase III-IV planning standards.
- Approve new standards on transmission planning.
- Approve a frequency response standard.
- Propose new standards on operator/situation awareness tools.
- Propose new standards on undervoltage load shedding.

- Propose new standards on reactive power reserves.
- Propose new standards on phasor measurements.
- Propose new standards resulting from lessons learned by other NERC programs (e.g., reliability performance assessment, compliance enforcement, readiness audits, training, situation awareness and infrastructure protection).

Regional Standards Development

- Complete first 10 highest priority regional “fill-in-the-blank” standards.
- Review and approve three regional standards development procedures.
- Review and approve 40 regional standards.

Standards Improvement

- Initiate a program to review and, as needed, update existing standards to meet the 10 benchmarks of excellent standards (one-third of existing standards to be reviewed in 2007): applicability; purpose; performance requirements; measurability; technical basis; completeness; known consequences; clear language; practicality; and consistent terminology.

Business Practice Interface

- Develop three joint NERC-NAESB standards.

Standards Process Improvement

- Revise standards development rules and procedures in response to governmental agency directives.
- Timeliness — for high-priority standards, shorten average development time of a standard to 12 months through stakeholder ballot.
- Perform a time management study of use of staff and industry resources to determine areas for improvement.
- Develop a relational database for standards management, including an online tool for managing stakeholder comments.
- “Flatten” the standards process by increasing the number of conference calls, Web casts, and e-mail actions to greater than 50 percent of all committee and drafting team meetings.
- Evaluate and improve ballot performance (quorums and balance.)