



NERC, AGA Launch Security Information Sharing Effort to Leverage Gas-Electric Interdependency, Cooperation

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – The North American Electric Reliability Corporation and the American Gas Association have launched a new grid and energy delivery security partnership that takes advantage of the growing interdependency and collaboration of the natural gas and electricity industries.

Under the partnership, staff from the Downstream Natural Gas Information Sharing and Analysis Center (DNG-ISAC) will join the Electricity Information Sharing and Analysis Center (E-ISAC) in Washington, D.C., to improve coordination on potential security risks related to critical electricity and natural gas pipeline infrastructure.

The partnership between the E-ISAC and the DNG-ISAC builds on the long-standing efforts of the gas and electricity industries to address supply interdependencies by developing a robust information exchange on shared security risks.

Through a variety of tools, the E-ISAC and DNG-ISAC monitor and analyze potential physical and cyber security threats to their respective industries and use their secure portals to alert and advise members on mitigating real threats. The goals of the E-ISAC and the DNG-ISAC under the partnership include exchanging information on threats within their industries that have the potential to impact critical infrastructure in either or both industries. Currently, more than 45 percent of the gas utilities represented by the DNG-ISAC are also E-ISAC stakeholders.

The partnership has three primary objectives to better serve both industries' members:

- Improve security collaboration on common threat information and incident response.
- Provide more joint analysis of security concerns and events.
- Advance shared processes for information sharing and situational awareness.

Benefits of the partnership include the opportunity for E-ISAC members to participate in monthly DNG-ISAC security briefings, the opportunity for DNG-ISAC members to participate in monthly E-ISAC briefings, and the development of consistent information sharing protocols for both industries.

“Partnering with the DNG-ISAC helps strengthen E-ISAC products and services for all members and especially those with a significant amount of gas-fired generation,” said Marcus Sachs, NERC senior vice president and chief security officer.

The operational and security interdependency of the industries include electric utilities’ need for a steady supply of gas from pipelines and gas pipelines’ use of electric pumps. Pipelines are able to operate with temporary supply disruptions, provided the gas pressures are maintained within acceptable limits. A prolonged supply disruption could result in a loss of generation that exceeds available electricity reserves. Similarly, pipelines that rely on electric pumps may have difficulty maintaining pressure during a power disruption or sustained outage.

“This collaboration with the E-ISAC gives us the ability to provide natural gas and electric companies with comprehensive threat information and analysis in a more timely and efficient manner,” said Jim Linn, executive director of the DNG-ISAC and managing director of information technology at AGA.

The E-ISAC and DNG-ISAC have agreed to use existing policies and procedures at NERC and AGA for safeguarding sensitive information under the partnership.

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The North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) is a not-for-profit international regulatory authority whose mission is to ensure the reliability of the bulk power system in North America. NERC develops and enforces Reliability Standards; annually assesses seasonal and long-term reliability; monitors the bulk power system through system awareness; and educates, trains, and certifies industry personnel. NERC’s area of responsibility spans the continental United States, Canada, and the northern portion of Baja California, Mexico. NERC is the electric reliability organization for North America, subject to oversight by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and governmental authorities in Canada. NERC’s jurisdiction includes users, owners, and operators of the bulk power system, which serves more than 334 million people.

The American Gas Association represents more than 200 local energy companies committed to the safe and reliable delivery of clean natural gas to more than 69 million customers throughout the nation.