

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

GENERAL QUESTIONS

Q. When is the 'Go-Live' date for the new Standard Balloting System (SBS)?

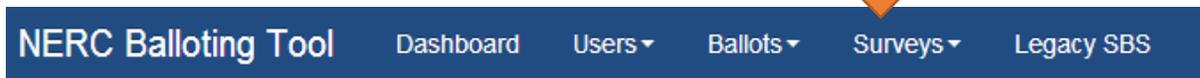
- A. The SBS go-live date is February 2, 2015. From February 2nd forward, all new projects will be balloted and commented in the new system.

Q. Where can I access instruction manuals for the new system and the webinar training materials?

- A. Training materials are posted under **Support and Important Links** on the Balloting and Commenting web page.

Q. What are Surveys?

- A. 'Survey' is the term used for the new commenting tool in the SBS. You will notice a link to 'Surveys' on the top tool bar when you access the balloting and commenting system.



You will also be able to access 'Surveys' on the left-hand navigation panel:

Contributor View

Surveys
View Surveys



Any reference you see to 'Surveys' is the same as the term 'Commenting' that you are used to seeing in the current system.

Voter View

Surveys
View Surveys
My Survey Activity



Q. What is a Social Survey?

- A. Social Survey is the term used for the commenting on projects. You can access the Social Survey tool by clicking on the icon that resembles a megaphone (📣). Each Survey is associated with a project number and Standard.

There are two ways in which you can contribute using Social Survey:

By submitting a comment, and by using the thumbs up/thumbs down feature – to agree or disagree with another individual's comments.

Q. What are the system requirements?

- A. Internet Explorer version 9 or later. Firefox and Chrome - current version or no more than two previous versions back.

Q. How can I communicate with other members of the ballot pool?

- A. The ability to communicate to other ballot pool members via a ballot pool distribution list has changed in the new SBS, based on the functionality of the new balloting system. Instead of emailing the ballot pool members using the email distribution list, you will have the ability to view real-time posted comments using the new Survey tool. Once you submit responses to an open survey, you can ‘thumbs up/thumbs down’ to a comment you agree or disagree with.

Q. Will I need a username and password for the new SBS?

- A. Yes. To perform the roles of a voter, proxy or contributor, you will need to register creating a username and password for the new Standards Balloting System. If you are already a NERC Registered Ballot Body member in the legacy system, you must also register for access to the new application. However, you may use the same username and password to create your account if it included an email address. All registrations will go through a vetting process with a turnaround time frame of three business days. (Six business days during the first 30 days the registration period is open due to the large volume of new registrants.)

Please allow yourself ample time to register so that the vetting process will be completed in time for you to join a ballot pool and vote during the open windows.

(Do not use a personal email address for your registration.)

- ** Passwords need to be at least 8 characters, with at least one capital letter and at least one number.**

- ** If you already have an ERO account for BESnet, do not register for the SBS. Log into your BESnet account and navigate between the two applications instead. Go to “User” tab in the top navigation and select “My User Profile.” Click “Edit Profile” and the system will navigate you back to the ERO Platform where you can select BES Exceptions or SBS depending on which system you will be accessing.**

Q. Do I need to change my password each time I receive the email for verification of my account?

- A. The first time you create an account you will receive an email asking you to verify your username and pin number. The security validation is good for six months. You will receive a verification request email every six months – please be sure to validate your username and pin number upon request so that you can log into the SBS system. The additional verification is part of our ERO security validation and just

takes a couple of minutes to perform and will not interfere with your commenting or voting.)

The verification requests are similar to those used for banking, Linked in, and Facebook, etc.

Please complete the following steps in the revalidation process to successfully log into the application:

1. Once you receive the error message, you will receive a validation email shortly thereafter
2. Open the validation email and click the link (in the email) to validate your email address (*The validation times out at 10 minutes.*)
3. Copy and paste the confirmation pin and enter your username (email address)
4. Click submit (to be automatically logged into the ERO platform)
5. Select the SBS link on the left-hand navigation
6. Click login in the top right-hand corner to refresh the page and reveal contributor status

If you do not receive the revalidation email, please follow the steps below:

1. Navigate to the login page
2. Select reset password
3. Complete the reset password form
4. Select submit query
5. Open the validation email and click the link (in the email) to validate your email address
6. Copy and paste the confirmation pin and enter your username (email address)
7. Enter your security answers in the fields provided
8. Select submit
9. Enter a new password (case sensitive)
10. Select Save (this should automatically take you to the login screen)

In addition, each user will have to revalidate in the Standards Balloting System every (6 months) for security purposes. You will receive email notification at that time. Please note you will not have to change your password.

****** For those already registered, your passwords have expired. When you login, click on **Reset Password** in the ERO Platform window and follow the steps. Note, the validation email expires in 10 minutes.

Q. What does Legacy SBS mean in the top right-hand corner of the tool bar?

- A. The Legacy SBS link will bring you to the original balloting software system.

Q. How do I change my password?

- A. Once you are logged into the balloting system, go to 'My User Profile', and 'Edit' your profile. Click on the 'Change Password' tab. It is important to save the changes and log out and log back in again for the changes to take effect.

Q. What is the difference among the user role options available in the SBS?

Contributor: An individual who would like to provide their opinion on proposed standards and other standards products available for comment using an electronic software tool.

Proxy: The person designated by the original voter of the ballot pool, authorized to place a vote on their behalf. Proxies can submit comments on proposed standards and other standards products available.

Voter: A registered voting member of the NERC Registered Ballot Body for the purpose of casting votes on proposed standards and non-binding polls. Voters can submit comments on proposed standards and other standards products available.

Q. What do the abbreviation of IN, AB, FN and NB stand for on the balloting page?

- A. The abbreviations stand for:

IN: Initial ballot

AB: Additional ballot

FN: Final ballot

NB: Non-binding poll

Q. I tried to log in to my account, and received a message indicating my sign in was unsuccessful and needed verification. What should I do? I already verified my account.

- A. If your login was unsuccessful, you will receive an email asking you to verify your username and pin. Click on the link in the email and enter your username and pin, and then click on 'Submit'. You should be directed to the program where you can select SBS in the left-hand navigation panel, and then Login in the upper right-hand corner to access your account.

PROXY QUESTIONS

Q. When can proxies be assigned?

- A. You can assign a proxy until the ballot window closes, and prior to a proxy or voter casting a ballot. Proxy pool assignment is no longer tied to the join ballot pool window.

Q. What steps do I take if I am a proxy for someone that retires from an entity and I want to change to a voter role?

A. The original voter would need to be removed from the NERC Registered Ballot Body by requesting removal to NERC Standards administrators by emailing: ballotadmin@nerc.net. The proxy will need to be removed from the proxy pool, and then register for voting rights. Email notification goes out to both the voter and proxy indicating the changes made.

Q. Do proxies have to be registered in the new SBS?

A. Yes, proxies need to complete the registration process.

Q. Is there a way for a proxy voter to vote for all open ballots at one time if you are designated as the proxy voter for multiple voters?

A. Proxy voters will need to cast a vote for each delegated vote separately. Enhancements in the new system provides increased manageability. Go to My Proxy Activity to see all projects available for voting in your proxy role.

Q. Are there certain requirements needed for being a proxy voter (entity, segment)?

A. No, you can have more than one proxy registered for an entity's segment. Once approved, the proxies become members of the proxy pool and just one proxy would be designated by the original voter assigned to the ballot pool.

Q. Can we delegate a proxy to handle all voting activities for the full ballot cycle of a project? Does that proxy remain in the ballot pool throughout the future voting on the Standard?

A. Yes, as long as the individual is a member of the proxy pool, that individual can be designated by the voter of a ballot pool which carries over to future ballots for that project.

Yes, the proxy will remain the designated voter. The proxy can withdraw voting rights back to the original voter up until the time the ballot is placed for that voting time period, and before the close of the ballot.

Q. Can proxies have proxy voting rights for more than one Registered Ballot Body member?

A. Yes, you can be a proxy for multiple Regions or segments.

Q. Can you be a voter and a proxy at the same time?

A. No, you can be registered as either a voter or a proxy, but not both at the same time.

Q. Can I remove myself from the proxy pool?

- A. You cannot remove yourself from the proxy pool. Send an email through ballotadmin@nerc.net with your name requesting to be removed. NERC Standards administrative staff will remove you. Once removed you will have Contributor permissions only.

JOIN BALLOT POOL

Q. What time does the join ballot pool window close?

- A. The close time for the join ballot pool window has changed to 8 p.m. ET to coincide with the ballot and comment 8 p.m. ET close times.

Q. Will I be able to withdraw from a ballot pool during an open voting period?

- A. No, a voting member can only withdraw from a ballot pool prior to the ballot pool closing. If the voter delegated a proxy to vote in a particular ballot pool, the voting rights would need to be revoked and then you can withdraw during the 30-day join ballot pool period.

REPLACEMENT VOTERS/REGISTRATIONS

Q. How do you register as a voter, proxy or contributor?

- A. Once you access the SBS system, click on the **‘Register’** link in the far right-hand upper corner of the web page:



Click on **‘Create an Account’**, a new window will open – select **‘Create New Account’**. Fill out the ERO Platform account information. **‘Verify’** by selecting the **‘Click here’** security tab. You will be asked to select three separate images. Once complete, select the **‘Create’** button below. An activation email will be sent to your email address for validation. Click on the validation link and enter the confirmation pin in the appropriate field.

Once you validate your email, you will be brought to the ERO Platform window with applications listed on the left-hand panel. Click on **‘SBS’** to access the balloting and commenting system. (Clicking on **‘NERC’** will bring you to the main NERC web page.)

After selecting **‘SBS’** you will be on the main SBS system web page called the **‘Dashboard’**. Currently, you will be listed as a **GUEST** role. Click on the **Login** link in

the upper right-hand corner and you'll see the role change to **Contributor**. On the tool bar, click on the drop down arrow under '**Users**', and select **My User Profile**.

Once on the **My User Profile** window, click on the '**Click here**' link on the bottom. Here is where you select your role: Voter or Proxy

Select your Segment and Entity. If you do not see your entity listed, click on the link to email your request to NERC administrative staff. Once complete, select '**Request**'.

Your registration will be in queue for vetting which will take six business days during the initial 30-day registration, and then three business days going forward.

While waiting for your voter or proxy registration to complete the vetting process, you can still access: Registered Ballot Body, Proxy Ballot Body, Ballot Events, Ballot Results and Surveys. You will also be able to access the original balloting page (Legacy SBS) from the tool bar.

Please see the **Standards Balloting and Commenting System (SBS) Tutorial** for more details, posted under **Support and Information**.

Q. If a voting member retires from the entity I work for can he/she be replaced in the ballot pool?

- A. Yes, the new balloting system allows for the replacement of the original balloters in all ballot pools they've joined. Registered Ballot Body members will not be able to remove themselves from the Registered Ballot Body; instead the NEW replacement voter will register for the appropriate segment and go through the vetting process. NERC administrative staff, through the vetting process, will approve the replacement if the segment is available and the entity meets the segment criteria. In this scenario, the replacement voter will take the place of the original voter in each ballot pool that member joined.

Note: The original voter does not need to take any action.

Q. What happens if you receive a registration from someone in our company to be a voting member for a segment that is already represented?

- A. A NERC administrator will email the original voter and the individual who is requesting to take their place, noting the policy that only one individual from an entity can vote for a segment. The new registration will remain pending until the parties decide if a voter change will be made.

Q. If I already have a NERC account do I need to register for the new SBS?

- A. Yes, you need to register to vote, submit comments or participate in the Social Survey.

Q. When registering, how can you prevent affiliated entities from registering for the same segment?

A. A NERC administrator approves registrations through the vetting process and checks for affiliations to ensure only one affiliated entity is registered for a segment. If a registration request is made for an already represented segment from your entity or an affiliate, both individuals will receive an email to clarify who should be the voter representative. Prior to submitting a registration request, you can view the Registered Ballot Body to see if the voting segment is vacant and that an affiliate is not currently registered in the segment.

Q. When selecting the entity name, if my entity is not listed in the drop down list, what should I do?

A. Please email a NERC administrator to have the new entity name added to the full list by emailing ballotadmin@nerc.net. Provide your full name, organization, phone number, and segment you are registering for.

BALLOTING

Q. How do I view ballot results?

A. The ballot results for projects balloted in the original balloting software system will continue to have results posted under the [Ballot Results](#) link in its current location. Two years of ballot history on projects balloted in the new SBS can be viewed on the 'My Ballot Activity' page.

Q. If I am entering a negative vote on a standard, I understand that in order for my vote to count in the calculation of consensus, I need to have a comment associated with the negative vote. If I use the 'thumbs up/thumbs down' feature or post a comment in the Social Survey tool instead of submitting comments, will either count for my negative vote in the total vote calculation?

A. Yes, there are two ways that you can associate a comment with the submittal of a negative vote to count in the calculation of consensus:

1. Submit comments on the standard, or have a representative from your company submit a comment under your entity's name, or indicate a comment was submitted and enter the 3rd party's name/entity.
2. Use the 'thumbs up/thumbs down' feature and agree or disagree with an already posted comment on the Social Survey tool.

Q. What do the abbreviations of IN, AB, FN, ST, and NB stand for on the balloting page?

A. The abbreviations stand for:

IN: Initial ballot

AB: Additional ballot

FN: Final ballot

NB: Non-binding poll

ST: Standard

OT: Other

COMMENTING/SOCIAL SURVEY

Q. If I cast a vote for a ballot that has a comment period open for the associated standard, do I have to submit a comment on the standard?

- A. It is not mandatory to submit a comment while casting a ballot, but your valuable input is appreciated by the Standard Drafting Teams who review them. With the new SBS and survey tool, you can submit a comment or select to ‘thumbs up/thumbs down’ to show your support of a real-time comment.

Note: Negative votes need to have an associated comment in order for the vote to count in the total vote calculation. Providing a ‘thumbs up/thumbs down’ counts toward a comment for negative votes.

Q. What is the difference between the two icons on the commenting page?

- A. The paper with pencil icon on the furthest left is to take the survey (submit comments). The megaphone icon to the right is to access the Social Survey in order to view real-time comments, and/or ‘thumbs up/thumbs down’ a comment. **Note:** You must complete a survey in order to thumbs up/thumbs down another individual’s posted comment.

The Survey tool provides the ability to answer each question in the survey or bypass the survey and go directly to Social Survey to view comments and submit a thumbs up/thumbs down. Before the first question of the survey there will be a yes/no checkbox to bypass the survey questions.



Q. On the main dashboard I see a header for ‘Surveys’ and links for ‘View Surveys’ and ‘My Survey Activity.’ Are the survey references for commenting?

- A. Yes, the new SBS uses the term ‘survey’ for commenting. ‘View Surveys’ will show you the available surveys to take. Once you see the icon turn black with a checkmark, you will know the survey has been completed.

The 'My Comment Activity' shows the list of surveys completed. You can click on the icon to view your responses.

Q. Documents can now be uploaded in the comment section. Can I update the Word version of the comment form which has all of our answers in one document?

- A. No, the upload document feature is only for including a supportive document or diagram with an individual question. Please do not upload the completed full Word version of the comment questions with your responses.

Q. If I create a group, is the group specific to a Region?

- A. No, when creating a group, the group members can be from different Regions. Please view the webinar training materials posted under **Support and Information** for guidance on creating a new group, editing or deleting the group, and managing the group.

NOTES:

It is important to create a group before you answer the comment form questions.

You will need to add yourself to any group you create in order to be associated with the group.

Q. An individual who typically submits comments from our entity is going to submit a survey using the SBS, and that individual is not a registered voter or proxy. Is there a way to submit comments without being a ballot body member?

- A. Any individual can submit comments, but they will need to register for the SBS as a 'contributor.' Once logged in, select 'Surveys' to see the available surveys, and 'My Survey Responses' to keep track of your survey submittals.

Q. Are you required to create a group? Currently we have several individuals who vote and comment on behalf of voters for our entity. Should we list the entity as a group with individual members listed?

- A. You can register either as a group, listing all individuals who participated in the comment – or you can submit the survey as an individual.

Q. If I create a group, can I access the group I created previously to use for future commenting?

- A. Yes, next to 'Manage my Groups' before the questions begin, click on the drop down arrow under 'Select a Group,' and you will see your previously created group listed, and you can reuse the group for each survey submitted or create new groups. You can edit or delete groups previously created. **Note:** You need to create a group before answering the survey questions.

Q. If I want to be listed under another entity's group, do I need to contact that group to be added to that group?

A. Yes, you would need to contact the creator of the group so that the group can be edited to include your name. You also have the option of using the Social Survey 'thumbs up/thumbs down' to agree with the group's comment, without having to join the group.

Q. Will the weight of the comments be looked at differently by Standard Drafting Teams if we submit comments as a group versus as a single entity?

A. Standard Drafting Teams review all comments in order to identify where there is consensus on the standard or other item they are developing. The purpose of allowing group submissions of comments is to minimize the need for duplicative submissions of the same comments. A group may be made up of individuals from multiple unaffiliated registered entities, or it may reflect the consensus of individuals from affiliated entities. In either case, Standard Drafting Teams are instructed to consider the weight of consensus reflected in the comments – essentially, how many individual votes a set of comments represents – as they are identifying the changes needed to reach consensus.

Q. Do I have to submit a comment on a ballot? Can I just use the thumbs up/thumbs down feature and have that count as my comment? Why would I want to do both 'submit a comment' and post a comment and thumbs up/thumbs down?

A. Using the new commenting tool there are two ways in which you can submit comments:

1. Provide comments using the survey tool
2. Use the thumbs up/thumbs down feature to agree or disagree with another individual's posted comment.

Q. Can you select multiple Regions when creating a group?

A. No, not at this time, but this will be evaluated as a possible future enhancement.

Q. Once I submit a survey, can I go back into the survey to make changes?

A. No, once a survey is submitted, you cannot edit your original comment. A corrected or clarifying comment can be submitted through the 'Ballot Event's page for surveys that have an associated ballot.

Q. What should I do if I submit a survey and then realize I made an error in the comment?

A. A corrected or clarifying comment can be submitted through the 'Ballot Event's page for surveys that have an associated ballot.

Q. Does the Standard Drafting Team read all of the comments submitted in the Social Survey?

- A. Yes, the Standard Drafting Team will receive a report that includes the comments submitted through the Survey tool and the thumbs up/thumbs down and posted comments through the Social Survey. The drafting teams are required to read and consider all comments.

Q. How do I get to the Social Survey section of the website?

- A. After logging in to the SBS, click on 'View Surveys' under the Survey header on your dashboard. Then, click on the icon that resembles a megaphone () next to the Social Survey you wish to access.

Note: You will need to complete an available survey before being able to thumbs up/thumbs down a survey

The Survey tool provides the ability to answer each question in the survey or bypass the survey and go directly to Social Survey to view comments and submit a thumbs up/thumbs down. Before the first question of the survey there will be a yes/no checkbox to bypass the survey questions.

Q. I submitted a comment, and then accessed an open ballot to vote. I was planning to vote negative on this particular Standard but I don't see a way to indicate that I already submitted a comment, and I know that I need to associate a comment with a negative vote – what should I do?

- A. If you cast a negative vote and already submitted a comment, an option to select that a comment was submitted will not be available. The system recognizes that you already submitted a comment.