

NERC

NORTH AMERICAN ELECTRIC
RELIABILITY CORPORATION

ALIGN

Regional Entity Newsletter

July 2022

INSIDE THIS EDITION

[FERC Order on ERO SEL](#) | [Release 4 and 4.5 Update](#) | [Future Governance](#) | [Canada](#) | [Accessing Align and the ERO SEL Quick Links for Reference](#) | [Want to Learn More? Key Contacts and Resources](#) | [About the Align Newsletter](#)

LET'S GET ALIGNED: KEY TAKEAWAYS

CIP-014-2 FERC Ruling and ERO SEL Impact

On June 16, 2022, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) issued an order regarding the use of the ERO Secure Evidence Locker (SEL) for the collection of evidence related to Reliability Standard CIP-014-2. In its ruling, FERC stated that it approved NERC's petition to remove the on-site evidence viewing requirement for this specific standard and that the ERO SEL "now offers a secure and more flexible alternative for compliance evidence collection and review for Reliability Standard CIP-014-2." In addition, the ruling states that the removal of the evidence provision in this standard "will allow NERC to monitor compliance more effectively without compromising the confidentiality of sensitive information."

Release 4 and 4.5

On June 21, 2022, the Align project team deployed Release 4 into production. Release 4 included additional required features and enhancements for compliance monitoring, audit, and scheduling activities.

Release 4.5, which is the final release planned under the current business case, is scheduled for September 2022. Development is complete, and acceptance testing is in progress. Release 4.5 includes features to enable development of inherent risk assessments (IRAs) and compliance oversight plans (COPs). The release date is dependent upon the execution and results of third-party system performance testing, which is currently scheduled for August 2022. The results will be shared with the regional subject matter experts and project team members to ensure system confidence prior to production release.

Data Migrations from Legacy Systems

The completion of Release 4.5 will also mean the retirement of legacy systems (webCDMS and Guidance). The data team (a sub-group of the Align project team) is executing a data migration plan for data identified by each Region that is needed from these legacy systems. This data will include a subset of past scheduled engagements as well as closed and open violations. Not all historical data will be migrated. The data migration is the final key element to completing the scope outlined in the Align business case and is scheduled for completion in January 2023.

Data migration activities, in particular closed violations, are also dependent on the performance testing results. Once the performance testing is complete, the team will determine the schedule to import closed violations from the legacy systems. Migration of open violations, which is a much smaller subset of data, is currently underway and has not impacted system performance to date.

The schedule for violation data migration is below. Closed violations for some Regions are yet to be scheduled and will continue into 2023.

Violation Data Migration Schedule		
Region	Data Migration Type	Date
MRO	Open Violations	November 2022
NPCC	Open Violations	September 2022
ReliabilityFirst	Open and Closed Violations	January 2023
SERC	Open and Closed Violations	December 2022
Texas RE	Open Violations	Complete
WECC	Open Violations	August 2022

Transition to Governance Model

As mentioned in a previous edition of the Align Newsletter, releases of Align and the ERO SEL in 2023 and beyond will come under the future governance model. The model, approved by the Align Steering Committee, consists of three tiers: Operations Leadership Team (OLT), the Product Management Team, and the Align Users Group (AUG).

Registered entity insight and input is heard through representation on the AUG. The Compliance and Certification Committee (CCC) provides three representatives on the AUG and will be seeking input from stakeholders on the future priorities for Align and the ERO SEL.

The transition to the governance model will be completed by December 2022.

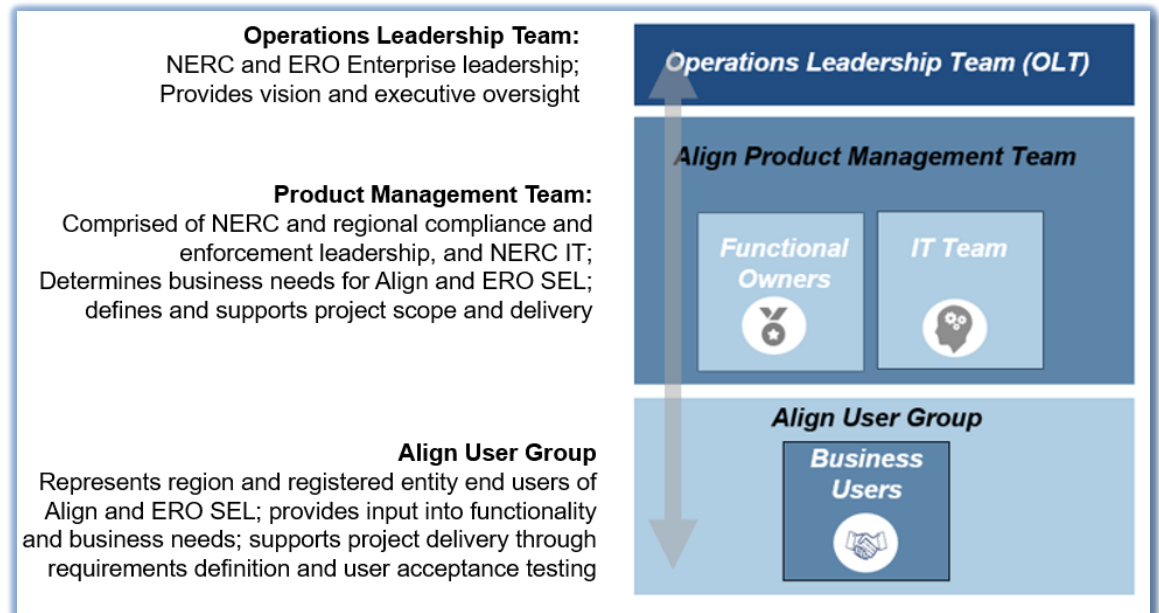


Figure 1

Canadian Jurisdictions' Use of Align

The Align project team continues to work with those Regional Entities that support Canadian regulators—MRO, NPCC, and WECC—to execute project plans and activities in support of using Align. These activities include determining detailed requirements by province, importing provincial standards data into Align, and defining the appropriate user roles.

The requirements definition work is completed and a project schedule is as follows (subject to change if issues arise):

- MRO: October 2022
- NPCC: Q1 2023
- WECC: November 2022

Accessing Align

An important part of the project's success is ensuring appropriate access to the system. An active ERO Portal Account is required to access Align and the ERO SEL. **Please follow the instructions below to verify an existing account or set up a new account and note that it takes 48 hours for a new account to be activated.** For password resets, select the "Forgot Password/Username" to reset a password. For questions or problems concerning ERO Portal accounts, please submit a support ticket [here](#).

All registered entities' primary compliance contacts (PCCs) should also have an ERO Portal Account and be set up as Align Registered Entity Submitters and the Entity Administrators responsible for approving access requests. Users approved by the PCCs are automatically given an ERO SEL submitter role. Additional access to the ERO SEL outside of Align access must be handled with a support ticket. Refer to the [Registered Entity User Access Guide](#) for detailed instructions.

To Set Up an ERO Portal Account:

1. Navigate to <https://eroportal.nerc.net>.
2. Select "Register" in the upper left-hand corner.
3. Complete the registration form and click "Submit."

To Verify an ERO Portal Account:

1. Navigate to <https://eroportal.nerc.net>.
2. Select "Sign In" in the upper left-hand corner.
3. Enter your credentials to confirm access to ERO Portal.

Quick Links for Reference

Here is a list of links to commonly requested project materials for Align and the ERO SEL. Please reach out to your Change Agents for additional materials.

Quick Links
FAQs
ERO Enterprise BES Artifacts Submittal Exception Process
Align Governance Model
Registered Entity SEL Requirements
NERC Training Site
CEA SEL User Guide
Release 1 CEA User Guide
Release 2 CEA User Guide
Release 3 CEA User Guide
Registered Entity User Access Guide
Data Handling Guide to Align and ERO SEL
Align Business Case

Want to Learn More? Key Contacts and Resources

Please submit questions to AskAlign@NERC.net or reach out to your Regional Change Agent. The change agents meet monthly and have the latest project updates. They are another resource for asking questions or sharing comments and feedback on the project.

Align Change Agents	
Organization	Change Agents
MRO	Desiree Sawyer , Marissa Falco
NERC	Jamie Calderon , Farzaneh Tafreshi , Sara Minges
NPCC	Jason Wang , Kimberly Griffith
ReliabilityFirst	Anthony Jablonski
SERC	Janice Carney , Melinda Montgomery , Rick Dodd , Todd Curl
Texas RE	Tammy Thomas , Rachel Coyne
WECC	Angie Shapiro , Ben Aldous , Mailee Cook

Release 3 Training Contacts	
Region	Training Leads
MRO	Desiree Sawyer ; Jeremy Mattke
NPCC	Jason Wang ; Kimberly Griffith
ReliabilityFirst	Bob Folt ; George Spila ; Anthony Jablonski ; Ron Ross
SERC	Serge Beauzile ; Clay Shropshire ; Robert Vaughn ; Rick Dodd ;
Texas RE	Ben Gregson ; Dennis Glass ; Devin Kitchens ; Eric Newnam
WECC	Angie Shapiro ; Jessica King ; Holly Peterson ; Phil O'Donnell ; Brittany Crosby

ABOUT THE ALIGN NEWSLETTER

This newsletter compiles a list of important Align project updates with actionable deadlines, as well as upcoming events, recently posted resources, and other relevant news and information. Please email AskAlign@nerc.net with feedback on this newsletter. Current and future newsletters and additional project resources, including the regularly updated [Align FAQs](#), can be found on the [Align Project Site](#).