

Announcement

NERC Takes Steps to Prevent Coronavirus Impacts

March 11, 2020

ATLANTA – Planning for emergencies, specifically health-related emergencies, requires much preparation and forethought due to the potential for impacts to staff, supply chain and support services. With that in mind, NERC has taken on a number of initiatives to inform stakeholders and protect the health of its workforce regarding the novel coronavirus known as COVID-19. This is a rapidly developing situation, and NERC is balancing concerns for the health and welfare of its own workforce and the many stakeholders they interact with while staying focused on its mission to assure the reliability and security of the bulk power system across North America.

On February 5, the E-ISAC issued an all-points bulletin related to the coronavirus through the Critical Broadcast Program. The bulletin highlighted the risks of a pandemic, addressed potential supply chain issues stemming from a manufacturing slowdown in Asia, alerted entities to the possibility of workforce constraints and suggested entities review their supply chain risk and business continuity plans.

On March 10, NERC issued a public [level 2 alert](#) on contingency planning as related to COVID-19 and asked registered entities to report the status of their emergency pandemic plans. Responses are due back to NERC by March 20 and an informational report will be filed to FERC.

NERC also is involved with the Electricity Subsector Coordinating Council (ESCC) and participates in the bi-weekly joint ESCC calls with key government partners (i.e., Department of Energy, Department of Homeland Security, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Department of Health and Human Services) for situational awareness and best practices. As part of these efforts, NERC worked with trade organizations and other entities to help develop and distribute a guidance document for dealing with the virus. The "[Assessing and Mitigating the Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)" guidance document, which is posted on the E-ISAC Portal, outlines:

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- Mitigation and response stages, including situational awareness, preparation, initial mitigation and response.
- Planning considerations, including enterprise-wide planning, travel considerations, information technology; facility management; and employee wellness. Also highlighted was supply chain, messaging and mutual assistance programs.

Industry trade associations and ERO Enterprise Regional Entities will share the document to help utilities assess and guide their pandemic response. The ESCC continues to convene regular calls with government partners to ensure the most up-to-date information is being shared during this ever-changing outbreak.

Internally, NERC activated its Business Continuity Plan on March 2 and is continuously reviewing its policies and procedures to ensure the health and safety of its employees is safeguarded. NERC is reviewing its meeting schedule on a case-by case basis and has shifted the majority of its upcoming meetings to conference calls or videoconferences. NERC also initiated travel restrictions, as have most of its stakeholders. Both the Atlanta and D.C. offices remain open, but a temporarily expanded work from home policy has been put in place, which allows NERC staff to socially distance themselves from potentially infected individuals.

These efforts enable the company to fulfill its unique and vital mission of assuring the reliability and security of the North American bulk power system during this uncertain time. Electricity is essential to modern society, and NERC and the Regional Entities (who are taking similar actions) work to strengthen the fabric of the industry.

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Electricity is a key component of the fabric of modern society and the Electric Reliability Organization Enterprise serves to strengthen that fabric. The vision for the ERO Enterprise, which is comprised of NERC and the six Regional Entities, is a highly reliable and secure North American bulk power system. Our mission is to assure the effective and efficient reduction of risks to the reliability and security of the grid.