Pandemic Cause Code and Examples for GADS Reporters
Event Reporting

Background
The NERC GADS Working Group has had several questions about how events impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic should be handled. There is an expectation that NERC and other regulators may ask how the pandemic affects reliability. In order to track how the pandemic affects reliability, the NERC GADS Working Group has taken several steps.

New Cause Code
The first step was to create a new cause code. NERC has added cause code *9015 – Pandemic* for reporting events that are affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. It is an OMC cause code listed within the *External: Catastrophes* table and it applies to all unit types.

Applicable Data Reporting Instructions (DRI)
The next step was to find any applicable instructions in the DRI. As listed on the NERC website, in Section III, page III-7 (page 20 of the PDF file), of the 2020 DRI, under the heading "PE and ME Rules and Regulations", the fourth paragraph states:

> "Do not use ME and PE in instances where unexpected problems or conditions are discovered during the outage which render the unit out of service beyond the estimated end date of the PO or MO. Report these delays as Unplanned (Forced) Outage-Immediate (U1)."

Because the COVID-19 pandemic is classified as an OMC catastrophe, it falls under the definition of "unexpected problems or conditions" stated above. It is not part of the scope of an outage and cannot be used as the reason for an extension. *Therefore, you must add a forced event to account for pandemic effects instead of an extension of the original event*.

Examples for Usage
Other steps include creating examples. Several examples have been created for guidance on how to use the new cause code.

Forced Outages
A generating unit operating without equipment failure shuts down because of staff shortages caused by employees sick from the COVID-19 virus. Use a Forced Outage Immediate (U1) event with cause code *9015 – Pandemic* to report this outage.

> **U1 CC 9015**

A forced outage that is extended due to COVID-19 issues will be handled as per Section III of the DRI. In this case, a second forced outage would need to be entered with cause code *9015 - Pandemic*. It will be a U1 even if the original event was a U2 or U3, with a good description of how COVID-19 made the forced outage take longer, to explain the extension.

FO CC XXXX	U1 CC 9015

Where FO = U1, U2, or U3 and CC XXXX = cause code for the forced outage.

Planned or Maintenance Outage Extensions
Examples: Work is continuing, but at a slower pace
A unit is on planned outage for a turbine overhaul. The outage is scheduled for 45 days. The outage takes 51 days due to COVID-19 social distancing guidelines. There were no other issues that extended the outage. Report the outage using a Planned Outage (PO) event with cause code *4400 - Major Turbine Overhaul* for 45 days. As per Section III of the DRI, add a Forced Outage Immediate (U1) event using cause code *9015 – Pandemic*, with a good description of how COVID-19 made the planned outage take longer, to explain the additional 6 days.

PO CC 4400	U1 CC 9015

A plant was on planned outage which included valve work. A valve repair crew had members that exhibited COVID-19 symptoms, so they were sent for testing and then sent home to await results. No one tested positive, but another crew had to be brought in to complete the work. The outage ran over by 24 hours. As per Section III of the DRI add a Forced Outage Immediate (U1) event using cause code *9015 – Pandemic*, with a good description of how COVID-19 made the planned outage take longer, to explain the additional 24 hours.

PO CC XXXX	U1 CC 9015

Where CC XXXX = cause code for the planned outage.

A similar case can be made for extended maintenance outages. As per Section III of the DRI add a Forced Outage Immediate (U1) event using cause code *9015 – Pandemic*, with a good description of how COVID-19 made the maintenance outage take longer, to explain the extension.

MO CC XXXX	U1 CC 9015

Where CC XXXX = cause code for the maintenance outage.

Example: Work has stopped due to pandemic
A hydro unit was scheduled for a planned outage expected to take two months for repair of wicket gates. The outage started and contractors were on site for the first week. A decision was made to send the contractors home due to concerns around the COVID-19 pandemic. For a variety of reasons, the owner determined that the outage would be pushed into the fall time frame. In the interim, the unit sits partially dismantled and out of service and will remain that way until the planned work is completed, now scheduled for the fall. Enter a PO with cause code *7140 - Wicket Gate Assembly*. This PO should end when the crews were sent home and a Forced Outage Immediate (U1) should be started after the first week using cause code *9015 - Pandemic*. When work resumes in the fall, the unit will be returned to the original PO.

PO CC 7140	U1 CC 9015	PO CC 7140

Deratings
Handle derates like outages but use a Forced Derate Immediate (D1) instead of a U1. Example: A coal pulverizer has a roll that must be replaced before the end of the weekend but can wait until late tonight. The job normally takes 3 hours, but it took 6 hours because of social distancing. Report the original derating as a D3 with the cause code *0310 – Pulverizer mills*. The extra 3 hours should be coded as a D1 using cause code *9015 - Pandemic*. Make sure you add a good description to the D1 event explaining why COVID-19 made the original derating take longer.

D3 CC 0310	D1 CC 9015

Finally, the GADS Work Group wants to remind reporters that it always a best practice to include a good description with any event you report to help explain the cause code and assist in event analysis.