

Project 2007-07 Vegetation Management

Consideration of Issues and Directives

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Issue or Directive	Source	Consideration of Issue or Directive
<p>We will not direct NERC to submit a modification to the general limitation on applicability as proposed in the NOPR. However, we will require the ERO to address the proposed modification through its Reliability Standards development process. As explained in the NOPR, the Commission is concerned that the bright-line applicability threshold of 200 kV will exclude a significant number of transmission lines that could impact Bulk-Power System reliability. Although the regional reliability organizations are given discretion to designate lower voltage lines under the proposed Reliability Standard, none have designated any operationally significant lines even though there are lower voltage lines involving IROL as suggested by Progress and SERC. We continue to be concerned that this approach will not prospectively result in the inclusion of all transmission lines that could impact Bulk-Power System reliability.</p>	<p>FERC Order 693, P706</p>	<p>The standard applies to the following facilities, including but not limited to those that cross lands owned by federal, state, provincial, public, private, or tribal entities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 - Each overhead transmission line operated at 200kV or higher. 2 - Overhead transmission line operated below 200kV identified as an element of an IROL under NERC Standard FAC-014 by the Planning Coordinator. 3 - Each overhead transmission line operated below 200 kV identified as an element of a Major WECC Transfer Path in the Bulk Electric System by WECC. 4 - Each overhead transmission line identified above located outside the fenced area of the switchyard, station or substation and any portion of the span of the transmission line that is crossing the substation fence.

<p>In proposing to require the ERO to modify the Reliability Standard to apply to Bulk-Power System transmission lines that have an impact on reliability as determined by the ERO, we did not intend to make this Reliability Standard applicable to fewer facilities than it currently is with the 200 kV bright line applicability, but to extend the applicability to lower voltage facilities that have an impact on reliability. We support the suggestions by Progress Energy, SERC and MISO to limit applicability to lower voltage lines associated with IROL and these suggestions should be part of the input to the Reliability Standards development process. Similarly, the ERO should evaluate the suggestions proposed by LPPC, APPA and Avista.</p>	<p>FERC Order 693, P706</p>	<p>The standard applies to the following facilities, including but not limited to those that cross lands owned by federal, state, provincial, public, private, or tribal entities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 - Each overhead transmission line operated at 200kV or higher. 2 - Overhead transmission line operated below 200kV identified as an element of an IROL under NERC Standard FAC-014 by the Planning Coordinator. 3 - Each overhead transmission line operated below 200 kV identified as an element of a Major WECC Transfer Path in the Bulk Electric System by WECC. 4 - Each overhead transmission line identified above located outside the fenced area of the switchyard, station or substation and any portion of the span of the transmission line that is crossing the substation fence.
<p>Accordingly, the Commission directs the ERO to develop a Reliability Standard that defines the minimum clearance needed to avoid sustained vegetation-related outages that would apply to transmission lines crossing both federal land and non-federal land.</p>	<p>FERC Order 693, P732</p>	<p>The standard includes Minimum Vegetation Clearance Distances based on the Gallet equations, as specified in FAC-003 Table 2.</p> <p>The standard applies to facilities that meet specific criteria, including (but not limited to) those that cross lands owned by federal, state, provincial, public, private, or tribal entities.</p>

The Commission also directs the ERO to collect outage data for transmission outages of lines that cross both federal and non-federal lands, analyze it, and use the results of this analysis and information to develop a Reliability Standard that would apply to transmission lines crossing both federal and non-federal land.

FERC Order 693,
P732

The ERO is currently collecting and publishing all outage data related to FAC-003. This data is received through quarterly reporting and self reporting of violations. Additionally, the TADS initiative is currently collecting data on all automatic interruptions, including those caused by vegetation, both on and off the right of way. This action is equally applicable to federal and non-federal lands. The SDT has requested the TADS project team to modify its database to include fields to identify Federal and non-Federal land transmission facilities such that this data can be collected.

We recognize that many commenters would like a more precise definition for the applicability of this Reliability Standard, and we direct the ERO to develop an acceptable definition that covers facilities that impact reliability but balances extending the applicability of this standard against unreasonably increasing the burden on transmission owners.

FERC Order 693, P708

The standard applies to all Transmission Owners, for the following facilities, including but not limited to those that cross lands owned by federal, state, provincial, public, private, or tribal entities:

- 1 - Each overhead transmission line operated at 200kV or higher.
- 2 - Overhead transmission line operated below 200kV identified as an element of an IROL under NERC Standard FAC-014 by the Planning Coordinator.
- 3 - Each overhead transmission line operated below 200 kV identified as an element of a Major WECC Transfer Path in the Bulk Electric System by WECC.
- 4 - Each overhead transmission line identified above located outside the fenced area of the switchyard, station or substation and any portion of the span of the transmission line that is crossing the substation fence.

<p>FirstEnergy and Xcel suggest that if the applicability of this Reliability Standard is expanded, the Commission should allow flexibility in complying with this Reliability Standard for lower-voltage facilities, or allow lower-voltage facilities one year before the Reliability Standard is implemented. The ERO should consider these comments when determining when it would request that the modification of this Reliability Standard to go into effect.</p>	<p>FERC Order 693, P709</p>	<p>The Implementation Plan requests that the standard become effective as follows:</p> <p>“The first calendar day of the first calendar quarter one year after the date of the order approving the standard from applicable regulatory authorities where such explicit approval is required. Where no regulatory approval is required, the standard becomes effective on the first calendar day of the first calendar quarter one year after Board of Trustees adoption.”</p> <p>Additionally, the Implementation Plan proposes four transition cases to address specific situations.</p>
<p>The Commission continues to be concerned with leaving complete discretion to the transmission owners in determining inspection cycles, which limits the effectiveness of the Reliability Standard. Accordingly, the Commission directs the ERO to develop compliance audit procedures, using relevant industry experts, which would identify appropriate inspection cycles based on local factors. These inspection cycles are to be used in compliance auditing of FAC-003-1 by the ERO or Regional Entity to ensure such inspection cycles and vegetation management requirements are properly met by the responsible entities.</p>	<p>FERC Order 693, P721</p>	<p>The VM SDT has tightened the Inspection Cycle requirement. Minimum inspection frequency of once per calendar year is now required.</p>

<p>FirstEnergy suggests that rights-of-way be defined to encompass the required clearance areas instead of the corresponding legal rights, and that the standards should not require clearing the entire right-of-way when the required clearance for an existing line does not take up the entire right-of-way. The Commission believes this suggestion is reasonable and should be addressed by the ERO. Accordingly, the Commission directs the ERO to address this suggestion in the Reliability Standards development process.</p>	<p>FERC Order 693, P734</p>	<p>The VMSDT developed a new definition of Active Transmission Line ROW for inclusion in NERC Glossary. This definition includes the statement “The ROW width in no case exceeds the Transmission Owner’s legal rights but may be less based on the aforementioned criteria.”</p> <p>The Standard does not require the clearing the entire legal easement for a particular parcel of land to ensure reliability. Rather, the Standard requires vegetation maintenance to adequately prevent outages from vegetation on the right of way but also requires the TO to prevent encroachment within the MVCD.</p>
<p>It was pointed out that an entity did not need to be registered as a TO for FAC-003-1 to apply to them, only that they have transmission lines operated at 200 kV and above. This could include radial lines as well as generation leads at the 200kV and above level. This could mean functions other than TO would require FAC-003-1 to be in the audit scope. How are you looking at the applicability of FAC-003-1 as it applies to DPs, LSEs, GOs etc. This could be applicable to many entities registered in multiple regions.</p>	<p>NERC Audit Observation Team</p>	<p>This is currently addressed through entity registration and is also being addressed through Project 2010-07 Generator Requirements at the Transmission Interface</p>
<p>TO's shall demonstrate compliance through self certification. Compliance monitoring shall conduct an on-site audit every five years or more frequently as deemed appropriate. Does this override the six year audit cycle for TO's?</p>	<p>NERC Audit Observation Team</p>	<p>The standard has been updated with the most current compliance information, eliminating this potential concern.</p>

With regards to the vegetation management standard, what type of event would trigger a compliance investigation?	NERC Audit Observation Team	This question is outside the scope of the drafting team's work.
Format inconsistencies	Version 0 Team	The proposed standard has been formatted consistently.
RA vs. RRO	Version 0 Team	The proposed standard no longer refers to RAs or RROs. Additional, the Planning Coordinator has replaced the Region in a number of areas in which discretion might be required (e.g., identifying the criticality of an element).
Too weak on compliance	Version 0 Team	The Compliance section of the proposed standard now includes Time Horizons, Violation Severity Levels, and Violation Risk Factors to support a stronger position regarding compliance.