

# Summary of Proposed Revisions to the NERC Standard Processes Manual

## Appendix 3A to the NERC Rules of Procedure

Revisions are proposed to Sections 2.1, 3.7, 6.0, 7.0, 8.0, and 11.0 of the [NERC Standard Processes Manual \(SPM\)](#), Appendix 3A to the NERC Rules of Procedure.

A redline of the proposed revisions is available on the [Revisions to the NERC SPM](#) page.

The proposed revisions are posted for a 45-day formal comment period from March 20, 2017 through May 3, 2017. An initial ballot will be conducted from April 24, 2017 – May 3, 2017. All comments should be submitted through the NERC [Standards Balloting and Commenting System \(SBS\)](#).

### Background Information

Under the oversight of the NERC Standards Committee (SC), a small group consisting of Standards Committee Process Subcommittee (SCPS) members and NERC staff have reviewed specific sections of the NERC SPM for the purpose of proposing revisions to clarify and improve existing language and processes. Below is a summary of the revisions, which have been endorsed by the SCPS and the SC and are posted for ballot and comment.

### Section 6.0 - Process for Conducting Field Tests

In March 2015, the SC endorsed developing draft revisions to the SC Charter and Section 6 of the SPM to develop more concise language and provide NERC's technical committees with additional oversight and authority over the technical aspect of field tests associated with Standards Authorization Requests and standards projects. NERC staff, along with members of the NERC Operating Committee, Planning Committee, and Critical Infrastructure Protection Committee, worked together to develop the proposed revisions. The revisions were posted for informal comment from September 29, 2015 through October 28, 2015. In response to comments, revisions were made to clarify roles, responsibilities, and process steps.

Section 6.1 is revised to streamline the requirements for field tests to validate concepts that support the development of requirements (current Section 6.1) and field tests of technical concepts in a proposed new or revised Reliability Standard (current Section 6.2). Three new subsections are created:

Proposed Section 6.1.1 summarizes the requirements for seeking approval of a field test. Under the proposed revisions, the requesting team must first identify a NERC technical committee to lead the effort to conduct the field test and seek approval from that technical committee to conduct the field test before seeking SC approval. The technical committee shall provide the SC with a recommendation regarding approval.

Proposed Section 6.1.2 provides that the lead NERC technical committee overseeing the field test may stop or modify the field test if it determines that the field test activity poses a reliability risk to the Bulk Power System. Prior to restarting a stopped field test, the requesting team must receive approval from the lead NERC technical committee and the SC in accordance with proposed Section 6.1.1.

Proposed Section 6.1.3 describes that a field test may be continued, modified, or terminated in the event a conclusion cannot be formulated within the time allotted in the field test plan, subject to the approval of the lead technical committee overseeing the field test.

Proposed Section 6.2 clarifies the processes governing communication and coordination for field tests. The proposed revisions clarify the process for seeking, approving, and making notifications with respect to compliance waivers for participating entities unable to comply with currently-enforceable Reliability Standards due to their participation in the field test. Proposed Section 6.2 also contains requirements for reporting on field test progress and results, including requirements to keep the NERC Board of Trustees informed regarding new and ongoing field tests and any requested compliance waivers.

## **Section 7.0 - Process for Developing an Interpretation**

Revisions are proposed to improve the organization of the section. Additional revisions are proposed to clarify language regarding what constitutes a valid Interpretation, including clarifying that requests for approval of specific compliance approaches are not proper Interpretation requests and should instead be pursued through the applicable NERC and Regional Entity guidance processes (Section 7.2.1).

Recognizing that Interpretations provide clarity to existing standards and do not create new compliance obligations, revisions are proposed to streamline the process for posting and balloting Interpretations. Specifically, revisions are proposed to: (i) reduce the time for comment from 45 days to 30 days; (ii) eliminate the requirement for Interpretation drafting teams to respond in writing to each submitted comment; and (iii) eliminate the need for a separate final ballot following a successful initial or additional ballot.

## **Section 8.0 - Process for Appealing an Action or Inaction**

Revisions are proposed to Sections 8.1 and 8.2 to specify that an appellant may withdraw its Level 1 or Level 2 appeal by providing written notice to the NERC Director of Standards. These revisions, which are based on lessons learned from previous appeals, would allow an appellant to withdraw its appeal in the event the issue is resolved to the appellant's satisfaction prior to the formal conclusion of the appeal.

## **Section 11.0 - Process for Approving Supporting Documents**

Revisions are proposed to clarify that the scope of Section 11 is to define a process for approving the posting of supporting documents to approved Reliability Standards (i.e., Reliability Standards approved by applicable governmental authorities). New subsections are created to improve organization. The revisions are summarized as follows:

Section 11.1 defines the types of documents that may be posted as a supporting document to an approved Reliability Standard (Reference, Lessons Learned, White Paper). This section specifically excludes documents that contain specific compliance approaches, which are properly addressed through the applicable NERC and Regional Entity guidance processes.

Section 11.2 defines the process to be used to review and vet proposals for supporting documents. This process is designed so that each supporting document posted alongside an approved Reliability Standard: (i) is a Reference, Lessons Learned, or White Paper as defined in Section 11.1; (ii) is consistent with the purpose and intent of the associated Reliability Standard; and (iii) has had adequate stakeholder review to assess its technical adequacy. For example, stakeholders may have reviewed the document for technical adequacy during the standard development process for the associated standard. Alternatively, Section 11 provides a process for posting for stakeholder review those proposed supporting documents that have not yet been sufficiently vetted.

Section 11.3 provides for SC approval to post the supporting document along with the approved Reliability Standard on the NERC website.

## **Updates to Other Sections**

Updates are made to Section 2.1 - Definition of a Reliability Standard, to reflect the currently effective definition of this term in the NERC Rules of Procedure.

Updates are made to Section 3.7 - Governmental Authorities, to allow for the inclusion of federal and provincial governments of non-U.S. North American jurisdictions that may approve Reliability Standards in the future.