Standards Announcement

Project 2007-02 Operating Personnel Communications Protocols

Successive Ballot and Non-binding Poll now open through Thursday, December 13, 2012

Now Available

A successive ballot of COM-003-1 **– Operating Personnel Communication Protocols** and a non-binding poll of the associated Violation Risk Factors (VRFs) and Violation Severity Levels (VSLs) is now open through **8 p.m. Eastern on Thursday, December 13, 2012.**

In response to comments received during the last comment period and other input, the drafting team has adopted many of the recommendations of commenters and incorporated them into draft 4 of COM-003-1, as summarized below:

- Combined Requirements R1 and R3, and R2 and R4 to emulate CIP version 5. The language calls for an applicable entity to "implement documented communication protocols in a manner that identifies, assesses and corrects deficiencies……."

- Added additional language to clarify the definition of "Operating Instructions," as commenters expressed concerns over the scope of the term.

- Clarified that R1 and R2 now apply to Operating Instructions between Functional Entities.

This version was drafted in conjunction with the development of the Reliability Standard Audit Worksheet (RSAW). Changes were made to the RSAW to reflect the changes in draft 4 of COM-003-1 and changes suggested by some commenters. The RSAW is posted for an informal comment period along with COM-003-1.

Instructions

Members of the ballot pools associated with this project may log in and submit their vote for the Standard and opinion in the non-binding poll of the associated VRFs and VSLs by clicking here.

Next Steps

The ballot results will be announced and posted on the project page. The drafting team will consider all comments received during the formal comment period and, if needed, make revisions to the standard. If the comments do not show the need for significant revisions, the standard will proceed to a recirculation ballot.

Background

The purpose of this project is to require that real-time system operators use standardized communication protocols during normal and emergency operations to enhance the clarity of communications, improve situational awareness, shorten response time and ultimately serve reliability. As requested in the SAR, in the development of this proposed standard, the drafting team reviewed communication protocols in other NERC standards and considered the use of alert level guidelines and three-part communications to achieve consistency across regions. The proposed standard is designed to ensure that reliability-related information is conveyed effectively, accurately, consistently and in a timely manner to ensure mutual understanding by all key parties, both during alerts and emergencies and during the communication of routine operating instructions.

There are two projects that include the modification of the COM family of standards in the scope of their SAR. This project, Project 2007-02 – Operating Personnel Communications Protocols, is concerned with communication protocols for normal and emergency operations. The other project, Project 2006-06 – Reliability Coordination, is concerned with ensuring that the reliability-related requirements applicable to the Reliability Coordinator are clear, measurable, unique, enforceable, and sufficient to maintain reliability of the Bulk Electric System.

The Project 2006-06 Reliability Coordination standard drafting team (RC SDT) has limited the scope of its modifications to those that address communication during emergency operations. The RC SDT has developed a new term, "Reliability Directive," to specifically address those communications, and this term has been approved by the ballot pool. The proposed definition of Reliability Directive is "A communication initiated by a Reliability Coordinator, Transmission Operator or Balancing Authority where action by the recipient is necessary to address an Emergency or Adverse Reliability Impact." The RC SDT is proposing to require three-part communication for Reliability Directives, with a High Violation Risk Factor for those requirements.

Since Project 2007-02 – Operating Personnel Communications Protocols addresses communication protocols for normal *and* emergency operations, the drafting team has proposed a new term, "Operating Instruction," to define the scope of communications to which the COM-003-1 protocols would apply. The proposed definition of Operating Instruction is:

 "Operating Instruction —A command by a System Operator of a Reliability Coordinator, or of a Transmission Operator, or of a Balancing Authority, where the recipient of the command is expected to act, to change or preserve the state, status, output, or input of an Element of the Bulk Electric System or Facility of the Bulk Electric System. Discussions of general information and of potential options or alternatives to resolve BES operating concerns are not commands and are not considered Operating Instructions."

The two standards complement each other. COM-003 establishes the practice of using communication protocols for all Operating Instructions, and provides for an entity to identify, assess and correct any deficiencies with that practice. COM-002 is focused on communications during emergency situations.

Additional information is available on the project page.

Standards Process
The Standard Processes Manual contains all the procedures governing the standards development process. The success of the NERC standards development process depends on stakeholder participation. We extend our thanks to all those who participate.

For more information or assistance, please contact Wendy Muller,
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