SPP RE News: September 2013

Don't Forget to Register for Fall Workshop/Book Hotel by 9-17

It’s not too late to register for our Fall Workshop, Oct. 8-9 in Little Rock and via webinar. A full agenda of compliance presentations is available through net conference, and in-person attendees may choose from among 12 small group discussions. The workshop is at the SPP Corporate Center; a $119 room block is available at the Embassy Suites Little Rock through Sept. 17. We have negotiated rates at other local hotels, too. If you are attending the Oct. 9-10 RTO Forum, please register separately! Visit our Workshop page for more details.

From Ron's Desk: Continued CMEP Improvements

We’ve often heard the complaint that the Compliance Monitoring and Enforcement Program (CMEP) just keeps growing. I’d like to discuss several efforts to streamline the CMEP and increase flexibility and consistency across regions. NERC just published the 2014 CMEP Annual Implementation Plan and Actively Monitored List (AML). This year, NERC and the REs worked together to publish a continent-wide plan rather than individual regional plans. The tier system was removed from the 2014 AML, which has significantly fewer requirements than in previous years. Requirements with a low BES impact or that were infrequently violated were removed. Interestingly, the team that assessed which requirements should be removed from the AML came to very similar conclusions as the independent experts who recently reported on requirements they believe should be retired. We are working on the SPP RE 2014 audit scope, audit schedules, and regional appendix to the NERC plan, which we’ll discuss at our fall workshop and in a webinar later in the year.

A pilot program is underway with Registered Entities in several regions concerning the handling of minor violations. While Find, Fix, Track (FFT) has been deemed a success by NERC and the REs, FFT hasn’t necessarily reduced the amount of “red tape” for Registered Entities. The pilot program allows Registered Entities to compile minor violations into a bundled reporting process rather than self-reporting each individually. Program results should be available mid-2014. If the pilot is a success, we hope to implement it later in 2014 or in 2015.
Finally, NERC and the REs are completing development of an Auditor Practices Handbook. We expect this handbook to be rolled out in 1Q 2014; it will be used by auditors in all regions and should greatly enhance consistency across regions.

Sincerely,
Ron Ciesiel, General Manager

**CIP Tip: Microsoft Ending XP Support 4-8-14**

In case you are not aware, Microsoft will end all support of its Microsoft Windows XP operating system after 4-8-14. This means there will be no more security patches to address existing vulnerabilities. Windows XP continues to be widely used in the electricity sector, especially in control centers. If you are not already doing so, you should be working with your vendors to migrate off Windows XP as soon as possible to avoid the risk of a successful cyber attack against an unsupported and vulnerable operating system. As always, if you have any questions, please contact anyone on our CIP team for assistance.

**webCDMS Tip: TFE Amendments**

When submitting an amendment to a Technical Feasibility Exception request, add an entity comment briefly describing why the amendment was necessary. For example, you might add a comment that states *Amended to add 2 devices* or *Amended to change the proposed termination date.*

**Revised CIP Transition Guidance Posted**

NERC updated its Cyber Security Standards Transition Guidance on Sept. 5 to address challenging issues and commonly asked questions. NERC's Tom Hofstetter will present on the CIP Transition at our Oct. Workshop.

**SOLs & Winter Assessment Webinars**

Sept. 19, 2:30 p.m. CST - **2013 Winter Reliability Assessment** We will give a brief overview of the draft 2013 Winter Reliability Assessment and solicit your feedback and input on the report before it is finalized.

Sept. 20, 9:30 a.m. CST - **Determining and Communicating TOP System Operating Limits (SOLs)** We will discuss common issues related to SOL determination, such as voltage/stability limits; how planning SOLs should be communicated to operations staff; and when to reassess SOLs.

**Regional Standards Update**

The Standard Drafting Team for the Revised SPP RE Regional Standards Development Process Manual has responded to comments received during the NERC comment period. The Manual was approved by the SPP RE Trustees in June.
In July, the SPP Board, MOPC, and SPP RE Trustees approved recalling the SPP regional UFLS standard from FERC.

The NERC Board of Trustees will consider both items at their November meeting.

**Transmission Planners: Oct. 2 Deadline for 300 kV+ Data Submittal**

Last August, NERC issued a Request for Data regarding protection system single points of failure to determine if the transmission planning standards adequately address analysis and discovery of failures. The data collection portal is now open. Each U.S. Transmission Planner is required to submit data for voltages 300 kV and above by 10-2-13. Please listen to or review webinar slides before submitting data. Submit questions to DataRequest754@nerc.net. Visit the Order 754 Data Collection project page for more information.

**NERC Industry Advisory: 345 kV Breaker Failures**

NERC issued an Industry Advisory regarding a potential trend of 345 kV SF6 puffer type breakers failing. High voltage circuit breaker failures are one of the leading contributors to severe BES disturbances. To view the alert, please log in to the NERC Secure Alert System or visit NERC’s public alerts page.

**Are you getting NERC’s short weekly standards recap?**

This handy publication lists standards posted for comment/out for ballot, open ballot pools, schedule of upcoming postings, ballot results, Standard Drafting Team vacancies, and upcoming events. Read back issues and other standard notices. Contact Mallory Huggins to subscribe. Subscribe to general NERC news by emailing subscribe-nercnews@listserv.nerc.com.

**Save the Dates! 2014 Workshops/Forums**
- Feb. 25-26, RE Workshop – Dallas, TX
- Feb. 26-27, RTO Forum – Dallas, TX
- June 3-4, RE Workshop – Little Rock, AR at SPP
- June 4-5, RTO Forum – Little Rock, AR at SPP
- Sept. 30-Oct. 1, RE Workshop – Oklahoma City, OK
- Oct. 1-2, RTO Forum – Oklahoma City, OK
- Dec. 4-5, RTO Forum - Little Rock, AR at SPP

Bookmark the SPP RE Events and Compliance Calendar webpages to access the latest information.

More NERC News

Documents

Visit the Webinar Library for slides and recordings of recent webinars on:
- Geomagnetic Disturbance Monitoring Mitigation (EOP-010-1)
- Order No. 754 Data Request Portal
- EOP Five-Year Review and IRO Five-Year Review Industry Webinar
- Definition of Bulk Electric System - Phase 2
- Atlanta and Denver Conferences on MOD B, MOC C, PER and VAR

NERC Events

- 9-24 to 9-26, Atlanta - Standards and Compliance Fall Workshop | Registration | Hotel (use code ILTILTA) or call 800-241-3333 by 9/2/13 | Additional Details

- 10-15 to 10-17, Jacksonville, FL - Grid Security Conference

- 10-24, Arlington, VA – 2013 Reliability Leadership Summit - Details and Registration – The summit is a moderated forum in which industry leaders can openly discuss reliability threats, challenges, and opportunities. These discussions will provide NERC’s Reliability Issues Steering Committee a foundation on which to base future recommendations for ERO reliability priorities.

- 11-13 to 11-14 - Grid Security Exercise | GridEx II Website

Our Staff

We are happy to help you with any questions or concerns.

RE Trustees

John Meyer, Chairman and Trustee
Gerry Burrows, Trustee
Dave Christiano, Trustee

You may share concerns or feedback directly with the SPP RE Trustees by calling 888-394-2292. The phone line is staffed by a third-party provider who will ask if you want to remain anonymous. While SPP RE staff is always available to answer questions and discuss issues, this phone line gives stakeholders another tool for addressing compliance concerns.

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This newsletter was sent to:
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Critical Infrastructure Protection Working Group exploder
Markets and Operations Policy Committee exploder
Operating Reliability Working Group exploder
RE Authorizing Officers
RE News exploder
RE Primary Compliance Contacts
RE Standards Development exploder
RE Trustees exploder
SPP Compliance Contacts exploder

To subscribe, visit our email list page and select Regional Entity News. Back issues are also posted. If you have questions about this publication, please contact Emily Pennel at (501) 614-3337.

SPP RE is an independent and functionally separate division of SPP, Inc. that promotes and works to improve bulk electric system (BES) reliability. SPP RE monitors and enforces Registered Entities’ compliance with reliability standards; assesses and evaluates BES reliability; and provides technical expertise and assistance to Registered Entities located within SPP RE’s eight-state footprint that includes all or parts of Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas.

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