# Revision History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date/Version Number</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Change Description</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5/30/2019 Version 1.0</td>
<td>Margaret Quispe</td>
<td>Initial document.</td>
<td>Approved by WRWG on 7/16/2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Table of Contents

Revision History .................................................................................................................... 2  
Table of Contents .................................................................................................................. 3  
Purpose .................................................................................................................................... 4  
Communications Protocol ....................................................................................................... 4  
Example Operating Instruction Script .................................................................................... 6
Purpose

The purpose of the SPP Reliability Coordinator (RC) Communications Protocol for the Western Interconnection is to improve communications for the issuance of Operating Instructions to reduce the possibility of miscommunication that could lead to action or inaction harmful to the reliability of the Bulk Electric System (BES). This communications protocol apply to both Emergency and non-Emergency situations where:

1. An oral or written two-party, person-to-person Operating Instruction is issued or received by an SPP operator, and
2. An oral or written single-party to multiple-party burst Operating Instruction is issued by an SPP operator.

An Operating Instruction is defined in the NERC Glossary of Terms as:

A command by operating personnel responsible for the Real-time operation of the interconnected Bulk Electric System 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.

(A discussion of general information and of potential options or alternatives to resolve Bulk Electric System operating concerns is not a command and is not considered and Operating Instruction.)

Further, the communications protocol will also be adhered to during general communication, whether or not an Operating Instruction is being issued.

Communications Protocol

All SPP operators communicating with other entities shall adhere to the protocol below:

- All communications will be issued and received using the English language.
- Operating Instructions will be issued in the form of a directive, command, or instruction to perform an action and may be used to address either Emergency or non-Emergency situations.
- The receiver of an Operating Instruction shall comply with the Operating Instruction unless such actions would violate safety, equipment, or regulatory or statutory requirements. If the receiving Operator is unable to comply, he shall immediately inform the issuer of the inability to perform the requested action so that the issuing Operator may implement alternate remedial actions.

**NOTE:** Compliance with Operating Instructions includes those based on the next day assessments.

- Prior to issuing an oral Operating Instruction, the operator will inform the recipient that an Operating Instruction is about to be issued.
- Prior to issuing an oral Operating Instruction, the SPP RC will verify which operator should receive the Operating Instruction.
• For oral or written Operating Instructions issued based on a known Emergency situation or condition, the SPP operator is expected to indicate to the receiving party that it is related to an Emergency.

**EXAMPLE:** Reasons for an Emergency Operating Instruction could include, but are not limited to: EEA conditions, real-time overloads, potential IROL exceedances, etc.

• If a discussion of general information exchange and of potential options or alternatives to resolve operating concerns is necessary and time allows, it should be fully completed prior to the point of issuing the actual Operating Instruction to always ensure the effectiveness of the command is delivered in a clear, concise and definitive manner without undue interference from the other supplemental discussion.

• When an oral Operating Instruction has been issued, the receiving party shall repeat it back, but not necessarily verbatim, to the issuer in order to ensure proper understanding has been reached.
  o If the information is repeated back correctly, the issuer shall acknowledge the response as “correct” to complete the three-part communication.
  o If the information is repeated back incorrectly, the issuer shall repeat the original Operating Instruction to resolve any misunderstandings. If the recipient is unable to repeat or understand the information, the issuer shall take alternate action to ensure reliability of the BES.

• As a best practice, the SPP operator will use prepared scripts as necessary.

• When time notation is necessary:
  o All parties will use 24-hour time notation.
  o The SPP operator will confirm the time zone the entity is using and will establish this as the time zone to use for the communication.
  o In the event multiple entities in multiple time zones are parties to the communication, the SPP operator will establish a time zone to use for the communication and all parties will adhere to this time zone for the duration of the communication.
    ▪ For communications with other RCs, the SPP operator will also follow this process.
  o The entity will repeat back in 24-hour time notation in the established time zone for the communication.
  o The SPP RC will ensure the time is correct in the established time zone for the communication before acknowledging the communication or Operating Instruction as correct.

• Nomenclature used to describe Transmission interface Elements and Transmission interface Facilities (e.g. tie lines and tie substations) will be a common name used and understood by both parties.
  o Transmission Facilities (circuits) will be identified according to the name of the substations they are connected to, as well as the voltage level and other relevant circuit identifier if multiple circuits are connected between the substations as documented in CROW.

  **EXAMPLE:** “Metropolis to Urban circuit 345kV”.

###
o Transformers will be identified according to the substation where they are located. If there are multiple transformers connected at the same substation and voltage levels then further differentiating identification of the transformer will be made by referencing the circuit ID of the transformer as documented in CROW.

EXAMPLE: “Metropolis transformer number 1”, or “Urban 138/69kV transformer East”.

o CROW contains the officially designated and coordinated Transmission interface Facility and Element identifiers, and should be used for clarification if the nomenclature method referred to above results in unclear identifiers to the Operating Instruction receiver.

- In the event that the person(s) receiving an oral Operating Instruction ends the call prior to repeating the information back for confirmation, the issuing Operator shall immediately call the person(s) back and require that the Operating Instruction be correctly repeated back for confirmation.

- For the issuance of written Operating Instructions to a single party, the receiver shall acknowledge receipt in the communication medium the Operating Instructions were received (e.g. R-Comm). Alternatively, the receiving party of written Operating Instructions can acknowledge by a phone call to the issuer.

- For the issuance of multi-party burst oral and written Operating Instructions, the issuer shall verify that at least one recipient received the Operating Instruction.

- Oral operating Instructions should be conducted on recorded phone lines.
  
  o In the event a recorded phone line is not available, the SPP operator will use alternate telecommunications equipment, even if it is not recorded.
  
  o Alternate telecommunications capability includes the desk cell phone, followed by the satellite phone.

- Any observed failure of SPP’s primary or alternate communication capability will be communicated by the SPP Shift Supervisor to the Transmission Operators and Balancing Authorities within the SPP RC footprint and adjacent RCs within 60 minutes of the observed failure (if the failure is expected to last longer than 30 minutes).

---

**Example Operating Instruction Script**

The SPP RC calls the Recipient to issue an Operating Instruction. This may occur as a separate call or after all other discussion is complete. This script involves a situation where a time notation is necessary. If no time notation is necessary, then steps related to establishing a time zone will not be part of the discussion. When time notation is not necessary, the SPP RC will use relative terminology, such as, “at this time” and/or “until further notice.”

SPP RC: I am going to issue an Operating Instruction to you to perform X Action. Are you the operator qualified to receive Operating Instructions to perform X Action?

Recipient: Yes, I am qualified to receive Operating Instructions to perform X Action. I am ready to receive the Operating Instruction.
SPP RC: I would like to confirm that you are operating in MPT. Is that correct?
Recipient: Yes, I am operating in MPT.
SPP RC: Ok, Recipient, the SPP RC is instructing you to perform X Action at 1700 MPT.
Recipient: SPP RC, I understand that you are instructing me to perform X Action at 1700 MPT.
SPP RC: That is correct.

For Operating Instructions being performed “until further notice,” the SPP RC will call to release those.
SPP RC: Recipient, I am calling regarding a previous Operating Instruction to perform X Action. Are you the operator qualified to receive Operating Instructions regarding X Action?
Recipient: Yes, I am. I am also aware of the previous Operating Instruction to perform X Action.
SPP RC: Ok, Recipient, at this time, the SPP RC is releasing the previous Operating Instruction to perform X Action.
Recipient: I understand that at this time the SPP RC is releasing the previous Operating Instruction to perform X Action.
SPP RC: That is correct.