



Resource Developed to Help Organizations Update Pandemic Response Plans

May 14, 2020

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in unprecedented challenges for utility planning, operations, and response, prompting organizations to review existing or create epidemic/pandemic-response plans. To assist in these efforts, the North American Transmission Forum (NATF), the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC), the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) jointly developed a resource to help utilities create, update, or formalize their plans.

The [Epidemic/Pandemic Response Plan Resource](#) focuses on planning/preparedness, response, and recovery activities for a severe epidemic/pandemic. Noting that these types of events are unpredictable, an effective response depends on flexible and scalable management strategies and preventative measures taken in advance of potential events.

“Pre-planning for events such as the current pandemic ensures staff is healthy and safe, while still sustaining their effectiveness,” said NERC Senior Vice President and Chief Engineer Mark Lauby. “This resource can provide a road map for organizations to create or supplement their existing plans.”

A response plan should provide guidance and direction to promote and protect the health and safety of personnel and staff by implementing approaches and processes to ensure the secure and uninterrupted conduct of mission-critical operations, business, and supporting functions identified in business or operations continuity plans.

Due to the emergent need, the document provides examples and information specifically related to COVID-19, including aspects for “returning to normal.” This resource will be updated on a periodic basis over the next several months as the situation evolves.

“This work is a great example of electric industry response and coordination and a continuation of the NATF’s concerted efforts on resilience,” noted NATF President and CEO Tom Galloway. “We are dedicated to leveraging NATF processes and expertise to maintain and enhance the resource over time.”

The document is intended to be complementary to other pandemic resources and has a specific and granular focus on operational aspects. Though developed for electric transmission organizations, the information may be adaptable to other critical infrastructure sectors and subsectors.

FERC Director of Office of Energy Infrastructure Security Joe McClelland added, “I wish to thank the NATF, DOE, and NERC for their partnership in producing this pandemic plan. FERC is committed to keeping America’s energy flowing and its critical infrastructure secure during this time of vital need. I believe that this resource will aid in the extraordinary efforts already being taken by energy providers during this unprecedented emergency and deeply appreciate their dedication to the American public.”

About the NATF

The NATF promotes excellence in the reliability, resiliency, and security of the electric transmission system. The NATF is built on the principle that the open and candid exchange of information among its members is the key to continuously improving the operation of transmission systems in the United States and Canada. NATF members include investor-owned, state-authorized, municipal, cooperative, U.S. federal, and Canadian provincial utilities, and ISOs/RTOs. For more information visit:

<http://www.natf.net>.

About the DOE

The DOE's mission is to ensure America's security and prosperity by addressing its energy, environmental, and nuclear challenges through transformative science and technology. DOE has worked closely and continuously with industry during the COVID-19 pandemic, across a number of initiatives, such as the development of this plan, to ensure that our Nation's lights remain on.

About FERC

FERC is an independent federal agency that regulates the interstate transmission of electricity, natural gas, and oil. FERC also reviews proposals to build liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminals and interstate natural gas pipelines as well as licenses for hydropower projects. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, FERC has worked closely with industry and its government partners to provide regulatory relief and collaborative support.

About NERC

NERC is a not-for-profit international regulatory authority whose mission is to assure the effective and efficient reduction of risks to the reliability and security of the grid. NERC develops and enforces Reliability Standards; annually assesses seasonal and long-term reliability; monitors the bulk power system through system awareness; and educates, trains, and certifies industry personnel. NERC's area of responsibility spans the continental United States, Canada, and the northern portion of Baja California, Mexico. NERC is the Electric Reliability Organization (ERO) for North America, subject to oversight by FERC and governmental authorities in Canada. NERC's jurisdiction includes users, owners, and operators of the bulk power system, which serves more than 400 million people.