

**RELIABILITY FIRST**

July 1, 2026

To: ReliabilityFirst Compliance Contacts
Subject: RF Compliance Program Update Letter – July 2026

REMINDER! NERC Reliability Standard Effective July 1, 2026

- **CIP-012-2** [Cyber Security – Communications between Control Centers](#) | [Implementation Plan](#)

REMINDER - If any of the above-mentioned standard versions is included in an active Coordinated Functional Registration (CFR) agreement, the respective CFR agreement(s) must be revised to include the updated versions of the Standards and Requirements. Any changes or updates to existing CFR agreements and respective division of compliance responsibilities must be made using the NERC CFR portal.

NEW! Registration now open for RF Fall Reliability & Security Summit

Join RF at our annual Fall Reliability & Security Summit, hosted this year at the Ohioan Hotel & Event Center just outside of Columbus.

This year's event begins Monday, Sept. 14, with closed meetings of the Compliance User Group (CUG) and Critical Infrastructure Protection Committee (CIPC) as well as an optional tour of a nearby data center.

Then our General Session on Tuesday, Sept. 15, features a full day of insightful presentations, panel discussions, networking, on-site breakfast and lunch, and an awards reception to close the day. Half-day programming follows on Wednesday, Sept. 16, with guests choosing from one of three breakout sessions, focusing either on energy policy, critical infrastructure protection, or data submittals.

There will also be an optional tour of an agrovoltaic site on Wednesday afternoon.

Stay tuned for full agenda details to be posted to our [website](#). [Click here](#) to register.

NEW! NERC Webinar on Registration for Computational Loads

NERC is actively working on developing criteria for a new registered entity (or entities) as it seeks to mitigate risks associated with "computational loads." NERC staff will [host a webinar](#) on **July 13th** to provide updates on the progress of this development effort and to share additional information about the registration process for entities that may fall under these new criteria.

The first half of the webinar will provide an update on possible changes to the [initial draft criteria language](#) released on April 1, 2026. The proposed shifts were informed by the [comments](#) received from stakeholders during the first formal comment process that concluded on May 15, 2026. Additionally, NERC staff will provide an overview of next steps in the registry criteria development process.

The second half of this webinar will provide entities that may meet the new criteria with a broader understanding of NERC registration. It will address common questions about what happens once the new registry criteria are finalized. Furthermore, it will outline the anticipated process and the key participants involved in the registration process.

NEW! Updated 2026 ERO Enterprise Data Submittal Schedule

The [2026 ERO Enterprise Data Submittal Schedule](#) was updated with the revised process for the submittal of Corrective Action Plan extensions and Generator Cold Weather Constraints associated with EOP-012-3. The process was updated to provide clarity around reporting timelines and communications. Additionally, a flowchart outlining the Generator Cold Weather Constraint submittal process was added. Related, the [CMEP Practice Guide – Cold Weather Preparedness](#) has been updated to reflect changes associated with EOP-012-3. Most notably, these changes include the addition of reference material for the evaluation of Corrective Action Plan Extensions and Generator Cold Weather Constraint submittals as well as possible examples of Generator Cold Weather Critical Components.

NEW! NERC Posts Two New Lessons Learned

Two new lessons learned have been posted on the NERC website on the [Lessons Learned](#) page.

The new lessons address the following topics:

- SCADA Failover Event
- Loss of Telecommunications due to Lack of Contractor Oversight

NEW! 2026 State of Reliability Now Posted

The North American bulk power system (BPS) continued to perform reliably in 2025 even as the grid experienced increasing operational complexity. [NERC's 2026 State of Reliability](#) (SOR) finds both measurable reliability improvements and emerging risks associated with changing resource characteristics, growing demand, and more challenging operating conditions. New and emerging risks are evolving and reducing the margin for error, amplifying the potential for serious events on the bulk power system. Ongoing grid reliability will depend not only on maintaining and expanding

infrastructure and resource adequacy, but also on improving industry's ability to anticipate, model, and mitigate these risks. The SOR reviews BPS performance in 2025, identifies trends and emerging reliability risks, reports on the relative health of the interconnected system, and measures the success of mitigation activities deployed.

NEW! Align Release Notes Posted

Align Release 7.7.0 was successfully deployed on June 27, 2026. This deployment included the following modifications: ensuring the Compliance Oversight Plan (COP) report is saved onto the COP record at the time it is set to complete; fixing an issue with the Risk Category justification language is visible on a completed COP; removing the Bulk Reaffirmation button on the relevant attestation section of PDSs; requiring a justification when a registered entity terminates a TFE; automatically passing the Preliminary Screening after 10 business days if no action by the Regional Entity; correction to when an entity is allowed to send Finding Updates; update to the Mitigation form to show the workflow history section; update to the My Align dashboard to correctly show RFIs for correctly for Coordinated Oversight. The Align Release Notes 7.7.0 provide specific changes and indicate the users affected, as well as if any training materials were modified. These details are documented in the Align Release Notes 7.7.0, published on June 27, 2026, and can be found on the [Align and SEL webpage](#) under the "Release Materials" section.

REMINDER! NERC Issues Level 3 Alert, Reliability Guideline Focused on Large Load Challenges

NERC released a [Level 3 Essential Action Alert](#), Computational Load Modeling, Studies, Instrumentation, Commissioning, Operations, Protection, and Control, outlining seven actions registered entities must implement to address immediate risks posed by computational loads interfacing with the BPS. The Level 3 Alert was issued as NERC observed customer-initiated large load reductions and significant oscillations that occur in seconds, leaving little or no room for real-time responses, threatening BPS reliability. **The deadline for registered entities** (Transmission Planners, Planning Coordinators, Transmission Owners, Balancing Authorities, Reliability Coordinators, and Transmission Operators) **to submit their responses is August 3, 2026.**

NERC invites you to attend a live FAQ session regarding the Level 3 NERC Alert Essential Actions to Industry on July 8th. This webinar seeks to share some frequently asked questions about the required response as well as answer questions from participants. This webinar will be open to the public, but questions from alert recipients will be prioritized. [Register here.](#)



IMPORTANT REMINDER – UPDATE COMPLIANCE CONTACT INFORMATION in CORES

Registered entities are expected to review and update their compliance contacts information as changes occur. Updating compliance contact information is critical to ensure that our contact data remains fresh, accurate and is current always. **Please verify and update as necessary the names, addresses, phone numbers (cell) and email addresses for your Compliance Contacts (PCC/ACC/PCO) in the ERO Portal/CORES system.**



NEW! Monthly Technical Talk with RF Call

July 2026 Technical Talk with RF

ReliabilityFirst (RF) offers a regularly scheduled monthly call to provide entities and stakeholders with a forum for addressing topics and questions relevant to reliability, resilience and security.

While RF Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) will provide presentations and updates, they will not address entity-specific questions and issues. These types of questions can be handled offline by using the RF [Assist Visit program](#). If you have any questions, please reach out to Mike Hughes, Entity Engagement Manager, 216-503-0617.

Event Information

July 2026 Technical Talk with RF
Monday, July 13, 2026, 2-3:30 p.m. ET

Join link:

<https://reliabilityfirst.webex.com/reliabilityfirst/j.php?MTID=md8dc073ed4ef43a2150d50b2adbc2e6d>

Meeting number: 2319 217 3492

Meeting password: 0123456 (0123456 when dialing from a phone or video system)

Join by phone: 1-650-479-3207 Call-in toll number (US/Canada)

Access code: 231 921 73492

Please join us on Slido.com using #TechTalkRF as the event code

Agenda

Power plant winterization best practices

Mike Hughes, Manager, Entity Engagement, RF

Mike Hughes will provide an overview of RF's Cold Weather Winterization Program and highlight some best practices our team has noted from generators across our footprint.

Winterization strategies for success from Lawrenceburg Power

Lawrenceburg Power, LLC

A representative from Lawrenceburg Power, LLC, will discuss the program at their plant, located in Lawrenceburg, Indiana. The plant has dedicated significant resources to upgrading heat trace panels that now feature control room alarms, which has considerably improved the operators' situational awareness. Through its program, Lawrenceburg Power also maintains a fuel strategy that ensures reliable fuel supply and sustained operations during periods of extreme cold, among other key initiatives.

IMPORTANT! NERC Registration and Certification Information

Notification of Additional Changes in Registration Status

Section 501.1.3.5 of NERC's Rules of Procedure requires the **registered entity to notify NERC through its corresponding Regional Entity of any changes in registration, ownership, corporate structure, or similar matters that affect the entity's responsibilities with respect to the Reliability Standards**. Failure to notify NERC through its corresponding Regional Entity will not relieve the registered entity from any responsibility to comply with the Reliability Standards or liability for any penalties or sanctions associated with failing to comply with such standards. **RF requests that registered entities provide RF Registration with 30-60 days advance notice of any such changes impacting NERC Registration**. Contact Beth Smail, Senior Analyst, Registration and Entity Services, with any questions at beth.smail@rfirst.org.

IMPORTANT! NERC Alert System Registration

NERC's Alert System is the tool used to disseminate information that is critical to ensuring the reliability of the BPS in North America. NERC distributes alerts broadly to owners, operators, and users of the BPS utilizing the listing of the NCR. Entities registered with NERC are required to provide and maintain up-to-date compliance and cyber security contacts.

As a separate part of the NERC registration process and inclusion on the NCR, please contact NERC via email at NERC.Alert@nerc.net to register or revise your listing for the NERC Alert System. Alternatively, you may call the NERC Alerts Hotline at 404.446.9797 to speak with someone. Each registered entity identified in the NCR is required to notify NERC Alert of any corrections, revisions, deletions, changes in ownership, corporate structure, or similar matters that affect the registered entity's responsibilities with respect to the Reliability Standards.

Remember to always keep your NERC Alert Contacts current and up-to-date at all times.

E-ISAC Membership Registration

It is important, and expected, that qualified registered entities will join the Electricity Information Sharing and Analysis Center (E-ISAC).¹ E-ISAC membership is available to qualified North American asset owners and operators (AOOs) and select partner organizations, and there is no cost to join. The E-ISAC encourages individuals with cyber, physical, or operational technology security responsibilities to apply for membership on behalf of your organization. This individual will serve as a point of contact for E-ISAC security-related communications and will have access to emerging threat information and analysis.

Please complete the E-ISAC Membership application here: <https://www.eisac.com/portal>. You may also contact the E-ISAC at memberservices@eisac.com with any questions.

^[1] Created in 1999 and located in Washington, D.C., the E-ISAC is operated by NERC. The E-ISAC acts as the primary communications channel for industry members and partners to voluntarily exchange cyber and physical security threat information. E-ISAC security experts analyze this information to identify patterns and trends, providing industry with a detailed view of the threat landscape and advice on how to navigate it. Both NERC and the E-ISAC adhere to a strict [code of conduct](#) that reinforces the E-ISAC's organizational isolation from NERC's enforcement activities.



Align Training Resources

The [NERC Align Project page](#) and FAQ document contain helpful information for registered entities. Self-service training resources provided for registered entity staff, including training videos and user guides, are available on the [NERC Training Site](#).

NERC's training site provides training and materials on a variety of topics for Align and other tools used by NERC, Regional Entity, and registered entity staff. Your Primary Compliance Contact is the designated Access Approver for Align for your company. Remember to check out NERC's Align project page or reach out to AskAlign@NERC.net for additional information.

Align Violations Reporting

As a reminder, any new violation of a Reliability Standard identified by a registered entity should be immediately self-reported to RF via the ERO Align system. Contact [Shirley Ortiz](#), Senior Paralegal, at (216) 503-0674 with any questions concerning self-reports.

Align support – ERO Help Desk Ticketing System

If users encounter any access or system problems with Align, CORES or any of the other NERC applications, first and foremost, try to resolve the issues yourself by using any one of the many self-service resources, guides and videos NERC has made available to you at training.nerc.net.

If you are unable to resolve the issue on your own, place a ticket using the NERC Helpdesk Ticket Submission System: support.nerc.net. The ERO Help Desk Ticketing System (Footprints) is available to registered entity users 24/7 and is monitored by the regions and NERC. We will do our best to address your questions, issues, and tickets as promptly as possible during normal business hours.

Upcoming Standards Subject to Future Enforcement

TOP-003-7	Transmission Operator and Balancing Authority Data and Information Specification and Collection	Oct. 1, 2026
PRC-024-4	Frequency and Voltage Protection Settings for Synchronous Generators, Type 1 and Type 2 Wind Resources, and Synchronous Condensers	Oct. 1, 2026
PRC-029-1	Frequency and Voltage Ride-through Requirements for Inverter-Based Resources	Oct. 1, 2026
PRC-030-1	Unexpected Inverter-Based Resource Event Mitigation	Oct. 1, 2026
BAL-007-1.1	Near-term Energy Reliability Assessments	April 1, 2027
MOD-032-2	Data for Power System Modeling and Analysis	April 1, 2028
CIP-002-8	Cyber Security - BES Cyber System Categorization	July 1, 2028
CIP-003-10	Cyber Security – Security Management Controls	July 1, 2028
CIP-004-8	Cyber Security — Personnel & Training	July 1, 2028
CIP-005-8	Cyber Security — Electronic Security Perimeter(s)	July 1, 2028
CIP-006-7.1	Cyber Security — Physical Security of BES Cyber Systems	July 1, 2028
CIP-007-7.1	Cyber Security — System Security Management	July 1, 2028
CIP-008-7.1	Cyber Security — Incident Reporting and Response Planning	July 1, 2028
CIP-009-7.1	Cyber Security — Recovery Plans for BES Cyber Systems	July 1, 2028
CIP-010-5	Cyber Security — Configuration Change Management and Vulnerability Assessments	July 1, 2028
CIP-011-4.1	Cyber Security — Information Protection	July 1, 2028
CIP-013-3	Cyber Security - Supply Chain Risk Management	July 1, 2028
CIP-015-1	Cyber Security – Internal Network Security Monitoring	Oct. 1, 2028

IRO-010-6	Reliability Coordinator Data and Information Specification and Collection	April 1, 2029
TOP-003-8	Transmission Operator and Balancing Authority Data and Information Specification and Collection	April 1, 2029
CIP-003-11	Cyber Security – Security Management Controls	July 1, 2029

Please refer to the [U.S. Effective Dates](#) page on the NERC website for additional detail.

Periodic Data Submittals Due in July 2026

07/20/2026	FAC-003-5	GO, TO	FAC-003-5 - Transmission Vegetation Management: Q2, 2026 Vegetation Outage Reporting – Align Data Submittal
------------	-----------	--------	--

Periodic Data Submittals Due in August 2026

08/29/2026	PRC-004	GO, TO, DP	Protection System Misoperations – Section 1600 data request for Q2-2026 (April 1 – June 30). Submit in MIDAS portal.
------------	---------	------------	---