

## SERC Vegetation Outage Reporting Guidelines

### *General*

NERC requires applicable registered entities to report vegetation-related sustained outages on a quarterly basis. The NERC Glossary defines Sustained Outage as “The deenergized condition of a transmission line resulting from a fault or disturbance following an unsuccessful automatic reclosing sequence and/or unsuccessful manual reclosing procedure.”<sup>1</sup>

It is not necessary to report sustained outages caused by circumstances that are beyond the control of an applicable Transmission Owner or applicable Generator Owner subject to FAC-003-X, including:

- natural disasters such as earthquakes, fires, tornados, hurricanes, landslides, wind shear, fresh gale, major storms as defined either by the applicable Transmission Owner or applicable Generator Owner or an applicable regulatory body, ice storms, and floods;
- human or animal activity such as logging, animal severing tree, vehicle contact with tree, or installation, removal, or digging of vegetation.<sup>2</sup>

### *Reporting Expectations*

In the event the entity experiences a reportable outage, the following is a guide for completing entries on the SERC quarterly vegetation outage form available on the SERC Compliance & Committee Portal<sup>3</sup>:

- a. Entity Name and NERC ID should be prepopulated.
- b. Check the function as GO or TO as applicable for the reportable outage, but not both.
- c. Name of Circuit Affected should be the common name such as “Mallard – Kinsey 230 kV”.
- d. Has the reported circuit experienced a previous vegetation-related outage? If “yes”, then:

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<sup>1</sup>Glossary of Terms Used in NERC Reliability Standards, updated July 3, 2018, available at [https://www.nerc.com/pa/Stand/Glossary%20of%20Terms/Glossary\\_of\\_Terms.pdf](https://www.nerc.com/pa/Stand/Glossary%20of%20Terms/Glossary_of_Terms.pdf).

<sup>2</sup>See FAC-003-4 Footnote 4, available at <https://www.nerc.com/pa/Stand/Reliability%20Standards/FAC-003-4.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup>SERC Compliance & Committee Portal, available at: <https://portal.serc1.org>.

1. Enter a quarter and year when the outage occurred in this field and
  2. NERC will be looking for an explanation of mitigating actions or substantial differences between the two outages in the description of the outage. The fact that the outages occurred on different segments of the line is usually sufficient to justify that no additional action was necessary.
- e. Voltage of Circuit, - use the nominal operating voltage.
  - f. Element of IROL – is the affected line an element of an IROL?
  - g. The flow – as a percentage of the Facility Rating.
  - h. Outage start date – use MM/DD/YYYY format.
  - i. Outage start time - use 24-hour clock hh:mm (seconds are optional).
  - j. Time zone – where the outage occurred as in EST or CST.
  - k. Outage duration should be listed in minutes.
  - l. Detailed description – this field should include any contributing circumstances such as:
    - i. Did the tree hang on the line or brush it? Was there line or structure damage?
    - ii. Describe weather conditions such as locally high winds, saturated soil, etc. Note that if the outage occurred during a disaster or major storm as determined by the TO or GO, then the outage is not reportable.
    - iii. A description of the tree, including its type and its health can be included, but is redundant with later fields.
  - m. Category
    - i. Use the Category type as described in FAC-003-X.
    - ii. Category 3 sustained outages are not violations of FAC-003-X. Any other Category could possibly result in a self-reported noncompliance in addition to this form.
  - n. Location – “On ROW” or “Off ROW” is sufficient.
  - o. Distance to edge of right-of-way (ROW) and distance to the line should be in units of feet.
    - i. The distances should be measured perpendicular to the line and the ROW along the ground.
    - ii. Please confirm distances when the location is very near the ROW edge.

- p. Tree type should be the common name of the species of tree (white pine, maple, black cherry...)
- q. Tree height in feet - Use decimals (e.g., 95.00). Be sure the response makes sense with the distances to the ROW and conductor.
- r. Tree condition
  - i. This should be a few words to describe the health of the tree
  - ii. “Healthy” or “dead” is sufficient, but “green” or “live” is not because green trees may be diseased and rot may exist in live trees.
    - 1. “Green with root rot”, “alive with internal insect damage”, and the like are acceptable.
    - 2. Some descriptions include the abbreviation DBH for diameter breast high. This is useful but usually unnecessary information for this purpose.
- s. Mitigation – At a minimum, NERC expects the entity to remove the tree and survey the area for any additional problems. If such a response is not given, SERC will need to contact the entity to learn of any action taken.
- t. Was the outage weather related? - This is asking if wind, saturated soils, or any other weather phenomenon contributed to the outage. Remember that Category 3 outages caused by natural disasters do not require reporting.
- u. Did the outage occur on federal lands? - Was the tree located on federal lands? If yes then please include a statement regarding any inhibitions that may have imposed. See (w) below.
- v. Complete the contact name, email, and phone number SERC should contact if SERC needs more information.
- w. Other comments – these are things that don't fit cleanly in the other fields, such as an explanation that two reports are identical because the tree affected two different lines in a co-occupied ROW. NERC also requests a comment regarding whether or not the tree was on Federal land and if that interfered with maintenance activities.

Contact [serccomply@serc1.org](mailto:serccomply@serc1.org) if you have any questions.