

Delegated Letter Order issued on 2/26/2025

Supporting Statement for
**FERC-725A, Mandatory Reliability Standards for the Bulk Power System: Revision
and Extension**

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC or Commission) requests that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) review and approve the information collection requirements in FERC 725A under OMB control no. 1902-0244 as modified by docket no. RD25-5-000. The FERC 725A is an existing information collection.

In Docket No. RD25-5-000, FERC approved one Reliability Standard being updated within the FERC-725A due to revisions in Docket No. RD25-5-000: Reliability Standard TOP-003-6.1 is being replaced with version TOP-003-7 that will supersede requirements in TOP-003-6.1.

1. CIRCUMSTANCES THAT MAKE THE COLLECTION OF INFORMATION NECESSARY

Background. On August 8, 2005, The Electricity Modernization Act of 2005, which is Title XII of the Energy Policy Act of 2005¹ (EPAAct 2005), was enacted into law. EPAAct 2005 added a new section 215 to the Federal Power Act (FPA),² which requires a Commission-certified Electric Reliability Organization (ERO) to develop mandatory and enforceable Reliability Standards, subject to Commission review and approval. Once approved by the Commission, the Reliability Standards may be enforced by the ERO, subject to Commission oversight, or by the Commission independently.

In 2006, the Commission certified North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) as the ERO pursuant to section 215 of the FPA.

In the order RD25-5-000, the Commission is approving TOP-003-7 (New-term ERA would provide the Balancing Authority with specific authority to collect the data necessary to perform the Near-Term ERAs to replace previous iterations of the Standard.

2. HOW, BY WHOM, AND FOR WHAT PURPOSE THE INFORMATION IS TO BE USED AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT COLLECTING THE INFORMATION

¹ 16 U.S.C. § 824d(a).

² 16 U.S.C. § 824o. The approved Reliability Standards are available on the NERC website, www.nerc.com.

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In general, information collections associated with Reliability Standards do not involve submission to, or audit by, FERC. Rather, the associated information is submitted to, or retained for audit by, NERC or the Compliance Enforcement Authority, as specified in each individual Reliability Standard. The purpose for the new reliability standard TOP-003-7 is to ensure that each Transmission Operator and Balancing Authority has the data and information it needs to plan, monitor, and assess the operation of its Transmission Operator Area or Balancing Authority Area.

Requirements and Measures

R1. Each Transmission Operator shall maintain documented specification(s) for the data and information necessary for it to perform its Operational Planning Analyses, Realtime monitoring, and Real-time Assessments. The specification shall include, but not be limited to:

1.1. A list of data and information needed by the Transmission Operator to support its Operational Planning Analyses, Real-time monitoring, and Real-time Assessments including non-BES data and information, external network data and information, and identification of the entities responsible for responding to the specification as deemed necessary by the Transmission Operator.

1.2. Provisions for notification of current Protection System and Remedial Action Scheme (RAS) status or degradation that impacts System reliability.

1.3. Provisions for notification of BES generating unit(s) during local forecasted cold weather to include:

1.3.1. Operating limitations based on:

1.3.1.1. capability and availability;

1.3.1.2. fuel supply and inventory concerns;

1.3.1.3. fuel switching capabilities; and

1.3.1.4. environmental constraints

1.3.2. Generating unit(s) minimum:

1.3.2.1. design temperature; or

1.3.2.2. historical operating temperature; or

1.3.2.3. current cold weather performance temperature determined by an engineering analysis.

1.4. Identification of a mutually agreeable process for resolving conflicts.

1.5. Method(s) for the entity identified in Part 1.1 to provide the data and information that includes, at a minimum, the following.

1.5.1. Specified deadlines or periodicity which data and information is to be provided;

1.5.2. Performance criteria for the availability and accuracy of data and information as applicable;

1.5.3. Provisions to update or correct data and information, as applicable or necessary;

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1.5.4. A mutually agreeable format;

1.5.5. Mutually agreeable method(s) for securely transferring data and information.

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M1. Each Transmission Operator shall make available its dated, current, in force documented specification(s) for data and information.

R2. Each Balancing Authority shall maintain documented specification(s) for the data and information necessary for it to perform its analysis functions, Real-time monitoring, and Near-Term Energy Reliability Assessments. The data specification shall include, but not be limited to:

2.1. A list of data and information needed by the Balancing Authority to support its analysis functions, Real-time monitoring, and Near-Term Energy Reliability Assessments, including non-Bulk Electric System data and information, and external network data and information, as deemed necessary by the Balancing Authority, and identification of the entity responsible for responding to the specification.

2.2. Provisions for notification of current Protection System and Remedial Action Scheme status or degradation that impacts System reliability.

2.3. Provisions for notification of BES generating unit(s) status during local forecasted cold weather to include:

2.3.1. Operating limitations based on:

2.3.1.1. capability and availability;

2.3.1.2. fuel supply and inventory concerns;

2.3.1.3. fuel switching capabilities; and

2.3.1.4. environmental constraints.

2.3.2. Generating unit(s) minimum:

2.3.2.1. design temperature; or

2.3.2.2. historical operating temperature; or

2.3.2.3. current cold weather performance temperature determined by an engineering analysis.

2.4. Identification of a mutually agreeable process in resolving conflicts

2.5. Methods for the entity identified in Part 2.1 to provide data and information that includes at a minimum the following.

2.5.1. Specific deadlines or periodicity in which data and information is to be provided;

2.5.2. Performance criteria for the availability and accuracy of data and information, as applicable;

2.5.3. Provisions to update or correct data and information, as applicable or necessary.

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2.5.4. A mutually agreeable format.

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2.5.5. A mutually agreeable method(s) for securely transferring data and information.

M2. Each Balancing Authority shall make available its dated, current, in force documented

specification(s) for data and information.

R3. Each Transmission Operator shall distribute its data and information specification(s) to

entities that have data and information required by the Transmission Operator's Operational Planning Analyses, Real-time monitoring, and Real-time Assessments.

M3. Each Transmission Operator shall make available evidence that it has distributed its data specification(s) to entities that have data and information required by the Transmission Operator's Operational Planning Analyses, Real-time monitoring, and Real-time Assessments.

Such evidence could include but is not limited to web postings with an electronic notice of the posting, dated operator logs, voice recordings, postal receipts showing the recipient, date and contents, or e-mail records.

R4. Each Balancing Authority shall distribute its data and information specification(s) to entities that have data and information required by the Balancing Authority's analysis functions, Real-time monitoring, and Near-Term Energy Reliability Assessments.

M4. Each Balancing Authority shall make available evidence that it has distributed its data

specification(s) to entities that have data and information required by the Balancing Authority's analysis functions, Real-time monitoring, and Near-Term Energy Reliability Assessments. Such evidence could include, but is not limited to, web postings with an electronic notice of the posting, dated operator logs, voice recordings, postal receipts showing the recipient, or e-mail records.

R5. Each Transmission Operator, Balancing Authority, Generator Owner, Generator Operator, Transmission Owner, and Distribution Provider receiving a data and information specification(s) in Requirement R3 or R4 shall satisfy the obligations of the documented specifications.

M5. Each Transmission Operator, Balancing Authority, Generator Owner, Generator Operator, Transmission Owner, and Distribution Provider receiving a specification(s) in Requirement R3 or R4 shall make available evidence that it has satisfied the obligations of the documented specification. Such evidence could include, but is not limited to, electronic or hard copies of data transmittals or attestations of receiving entities.

Evidence Retention: The following evidence retention period(s) identify the

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period of time an entity is required to retain specific evidence to demonstrate compliance. For instances where the evidence retention period specified below is shorter than the time since the last audit, the Compliance Enforcement Authority (CEA) may ask an entity to provide other evidence to show that it was compliant for the full time period since the last audit.

Each responsible entity shall keep data or evidence to show compliance as identified below unless directed by its CEA to retain specific evidence for a longer period of time as part of an investigation.

- Each Transmission Operator shall retain its dated, current, in force, documented specification for the data and information necessary for it to perform its Operational Planning Analyses, Real-time monitoring, and Real-time Assessments in accordance with Requirement R1 and Measurement M1 as well as any documents in force since the last compliance audit.
- Each Balancing Authority shall retain its dated, current, in force, documented specification(s) for the data and information necessary for it to perform its analysis functions, Real-time monitoring, and Near-Term Energy Reliability Assessments in accordance with Requirement R2 and Measurement M2, as well as any documents in force since the last compliance audit.
- Each Transmission Operator shall retain evidence for three calendar years that it has distributed its specification(s) to entities that have data required by the Transmission Operator's Operational Planning Analyses, Real-time monitoring, and Real-time Assessments in accordance with Requirement R3 and Measurement M3.
- Each Balancing Authority shall retain evidence for three calendar years that it has distributed its specification(s) to entities that have data required by the Balancing Authority's analysis functions, Real-time monitoring, and Near-Term Energy Reliability Assessments in accordance with Requirement R4 and Measurement M4.
- Each Balancing Authority, Generator Owner, Generator Operator, Transmission Operator, Transmission Owner, and Distribution Provider receiving a specification(s) in Requirement R3 or R4 shall retain evidence for the most recent 90-calendar days that it has satisfied the obligations of the documented specifications in accordance with Requirement R5 and Measurement M5.

3. DESCRIBE ANY CONSIDERATION OF THE USE OF IMPROVED INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY TO REDUCE THE BURDEN AND TECHNICAL OR LEGAL OBSTACLES TO REDUCING BURDEN

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The use of current or improved technology is not covered in Reliability Standards and is therefore left to the discretion of each reporting entity. We think that nearly all of the respondents are likely to make and keep related records in an electronic format. Each of the six Regional Entities has a well-established compliance portal for registered entities to electronically submit compliance information and reports. The compliance portals allow documents developed by the registered entities to be attached and uploaded to the Regional Entity's portal. Compliance data can also be submitted by filling out data forms on the portals. These portals are accessible through an internet browser password protected user interface.

4. DESCRIBE EFFORTS TO IDENTIFY DUPLICATION AND SHOW SPECIFICALLY WHY ANY SIMILAR INFORMATION ALREADY AVAILABLE CANNOT BE USED OR MODIFIED FOR USE FOR THE PURPOSE(S) DESCRIBED IN INSTRUCTION NO. 2

The Commission periodically reviews filing requirements concurrent with OMB review or as the Commission deems necessary to eliminate duplicative filing and to minimize the filing burden. Reliability Standards are developed by a collaborative process which requires industry participation. The Commission is unaware of any other source of information similar to the requirements in the Reliability Standards. In the case of this information collection request, there is no similar relevant information collection.

5. METHODS USED TO MINIMIZE THE BURDEN IN COLLECTION OF INFORMATION INVOLVING SMALL ENTITIES

In general, small entities may reduce their burden by taking part in a joint registration organization or a coordinated functional registration. These options allow an entity to share its compliance burden with other entities.

Detailed information regarding these options is available in NERC's Rules of Procedure at sections 507 and 508.³

6. CONSEQUENCE TO FEDERAL PROGRAM IF COLLECTION WERE CONDUCTED LESS FREQUENTLY

In general, information collection requirements in Reliability Standards and requirements help maintain Bulk-Power System reliability. If triggering cold weather events were

³ Details of the current ERO Reliability Standard processes are available on the NERC website at https://www.nerc.com/AboutNERC/RulesOfProcedure/NERC_ROP_effective_20220825_no_appendicies.pdf.

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reported less frequently, it would undermine NERC's (and others') ability to mitigate the extreme cold weather events and preparing for future such events.

7. EXPLAIN ANY SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES RELATING TO THE INFORMATION COLLECTION

There are no special circumstances as described in 5 CFR 1320.5(d)(2) related to the revisions of Reliability Standard TOP-003-7.

8. DESCRIBE EFFORTS TO CONSULT OUTSIDE THE AGENCY: SUMMARIZE PUBLIC COMMENTS AND THE AGENCY'S RESPONSE

The Commission issued an order approving, among other things, the retirement of Reliability Standard TOP-003-6.1 (Docket No. RD25-5-000) and approval of new TOP-003-7, which included a 60-day public notice (90 FR 15460). The Commission received no sets of comments or protests in connection with this docket.

Further, the Commission published a 30-day notice and invited public comment on July 23, 2025 (90 FR 34654).

9. EXPLAIN ANY PAYMENT OR GIFTS TO RESPONDENTS

The Commission does not make payments or provide gifts for respondents related to the information collections associated with Reliability Standard TOP-003-7.

10. DESCRIBE ANY ASSURANCE OF CONFIDENTIALITY PROVIDED TO RESPONDENTS

There are no specific assurances of confidentiality mentioned to respondents.

11. PROVIDE ADDITIONAL JUSTIFICATION FOR ANY QUESTIONS OF A SENSITIVE NATURE

This collection does not include any questions of a sensitive nature.

12. ESTIMATED BURDEN OF COLLECTION OF INFORMATION

Proposed Burden TOP-003-7 Docket No. RD25-5					
Reliability Standard	Type and Number of Entity ⁴ (1)	Number of Annual Responses	Total Number of Responses	Average Number of Burden Hours	Total Burden Hours

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		Per Entity (2)	(1)*(2)=(3)	per Response⁵ (4)	(3)*(4)=(5)
Annual Collection TOP-003-7 FERC-725A					
Annual review and record retention	97 (BA)	1	97	4 hrs. \$ 70.67/hr	388 hrs. \$ 27,419.96
Total for TOP-003-7			97		388 hrs. \$ 27,419.96

The annual responses and burden hours for proposed Reliability Standard TOP-003-7 is 97 responses; 388 hours. The annual cost burden is \$ 27,419.96 for proposed Reliability Standard TOP-003-7.

⁴ Number of entity data taken from the NERC compliance registry, dated November 20, 2024.

⁵ The estimated hourly cost (salary plus benefits) is a combination based on the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), as of 2024, for 75% of the average of an Electrical Engineer (17-2071) \$79.31/hr., $79.31 \times .75 = 59.4825$ (\$59.48-rounded) (\$59.48/hour) and 25% of an Information and Record Clerk (43-4199) \$44.74/hr., $44.74 \times .25 = 11.185$ (\$11.19 rounded) (\$11.19/hour), for a total (\$59.48+\$11.19 = \$70.67/hour).

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13. ESTIMATE OF THE TOTAL ANNUAL COST BURDEN TO RESPONDENTS

There is no start-up or other non-labor hour cost associated with the revisions of Reliability Standard TOP-003-7.

14. ESTIMATED ANNUALIZED COST TO FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The estimate of the cost for ‘analysis and processing of filings’ is based on salaries and benefits for professional and clerical support. This estimated cost represents staff analysis, decision-making, and review of any actual filings submitted in response to the information collection.

The Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) Administrative Cost is the average annual FERC cost associated with preparing, issuing, and submitting materials necessary to comply with the PRA for rulemakings, orders, or any other vehicle used to create, modify, extend, or discontinue an information collection. It also includes the cost of publishing the necessary notices in the Federal Register.

	Number of Employees (FTEs)	Estimated Annual Federal Cost
Analysis and Processing of filings	0	\$0
PRA Administrative Cost		\$7,978
FERC Total		\$7,978

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15. REASONS FOR CHANGES IN BURDEN INCLUDING THE NEED FOR ANY INCREASE

There is a change in the burden estimate in this revision due to updates in the approval of the updated TOP-003-7 standard.

Reliability Standard TOP-003-7 applies to transmission operators and balancing authorities, for this estimate new Requirement R8 applies to the balancing authorities. After that time frame balancing authorities would have a smaller continuing burden to incrementation changes to the Operating Process. With balancing authorities creating these Operating Plans, the electric grid will be better positioned to handle future extreme cold weather events.

Changes in Burden Due to RD25-5-000

	Requested	Program Changes due to Agency Discretion	Previously Approved
Annual # of Responses	7,387	+97	7,290
Annual Time Burden	1,407,626 hours	+388 hours	1,407,238 hours
Annual Cost Burden (\$)	\$156,953	\$0	\$156,953

16. TIME SCHEDULE FOR PUBLICATION OF DATA

There are no data publications as part of the retirement of Reliability Standard TOP-003-7.

17. DISPLAY OF EXPIRATION DATE

The expiration date for FERC-725A will not change as a result of the revision. That expiration date is displayed at [Information Collections | Federal Energy Regulatory Commission \(ferc.gov\)](#).

18. EXCEPTIONS TO THE CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

There are no exceptions.