

North American Transmission Forum External Newsletter

July 2020

Resource Developed to Help Organizations Update Pandemic Response Plans

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, North American Electric Reliability Corporation, U.S. Department of Energy, and Federal Energy Regulatory Commission jointly developed a resource to help utilities create, update, or formalize their plans.

The [Epidemic/Pandemic Response Plan Resource](#)—which focuses on planning/preparedness, response, and recovery activities for a severe epidemic/pandemic—was issued in May and recently updated with additional information on testing and an overview of contact tracing. Due to current circumstances, the document contains COVID-19-specific information; however, the intent is to evolve and maintain the document over time so it can be used as an effective resource for any epidemic or pandemic.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.natf.net/industry-initiatives/covid-19>.

NATF Continues Monitoring COVID-19 and Implementing Virtual Activities

The NATF's primary focus during this pandemic has been the health and safety of our staff and members. From the start, we have been working closely with our members and tracking updates from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and state and local authorities to help inform our decisions.

The NATF's physical office remains closed, as staff works from home, with travel cancelled until further notice. We have postponed near-term in-person events and are working with members and our industry partners to reschedule as appropriate. The NATF has also been working with industry partners to coordinate on response activities and reduce duplication of effort wherever possible.



Member Support and Engagement

We have continued existing and implemented new information-exchange mechanisms for ongoing and pandemic-specific activities to assist our members. As always, our members have actively engaged to help one another by sharing insights, approaches, and experiences. Our system operations webinars for COVID-19 have been a particularly successful endeavor, with member-wide attendance and support.

To ensure we continue to deliver our full range of services, we have recently been working with members to plan web-based peer reviews and to conduct more assistance activities virtually. While we have been unable to hold face-to-face workshop events as planned, we are drawing on workshop topics to conduct timely special webinars.

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Energy Sector Supply Chain Risk Questionnaire

The NATF posted the "Energy Sector Supply Chain Risk Questionnaire" for industry use.

This questionnaire, developed by a group of more than 20 U.S. energy companies, is designed to provide utilities with a set of supplier- and equipment-focused questions to obtain better information on a supplier's security posture. The questionnaire works in conjunction with the NATF Criteria, and together these complementary tools can help the industry drive convergence on information that is needed from suppliers.

The questionnaire gathers information to determine a supplier's level of adherence to the NATF Criteria and additional insight into a supplier's cyber security actions. Further, these tools had identified the need to understand a supplier's dependencies and sourcing from other countries and include questions to gather information that is pertinent to and will support the May 1 executive order. Specific information is obtained regarding a supplier's sourcing, activities, and staffing in other countries.

Consistent use of the tools will support the growing acceptance from suppliers. Currently, suppliers are recognizing the tools and beginning to have responses for the questionnaire and NATF Criteria prepared so the information can be readily available upon entities' requests.

The questionnaire and NATF Criteria are living documents that will be revised as industry continues to converge on what information is needed from suppliers. An Industry Organizations Team is developing a revision process, and you can submit your thoughts and comments on the questionnaire and NATF Criteria to supplychain@natf.net.

Learn more at <https://www.natf.net/industry-initiatives/supply-chain-industry-coordination>.

Transmission Resilience Maturity Model (TRMM)

The NATF has been working with the Electric Power Research Institute, the Department of Energy, and Pacific Northwest National Lab to develop a transmission resilience maturity model as a tool that a transmission organization can use to objectively evaluate and benchmark its currently established transmission resilience policies, programs, and investments, in order to target and prioritize enhancements where needed. A draft of the model has been created and was piloted by NATF member companies in early 2020.

Improvements to the model based upon lessons learned from the pilots are being incorporated into a TRMM version 1.0, along with a suite of supporting documentation, planned for public release in the third quarter.

The NATF envisions incorporating the TRMM as an additional service offering for its members, including facilitated self-assessments, metrics, and targeted assistance (in areas where members seek improvements).

Redacted Operating Experience Reports

Since our last newsletter, we have posted four reports to our [public site](#) for members and other utilities to use internally and share with their contractors to help improve safety, reliability, and resiliency.

For more information about the NATF, please visit www.natf.net.