

A. Introduction

1. **Title:** **Transmission Vegetation Management Program**
2. **Number:** FAC-003-1
3. **Purpose:** To improve the reliability of the electric transmission systems by preventing outages from vegetation located on transmission rights-of-way (ROW) and minimizing outages from vegetation located adjacent to ROW, maintaining clearances between transmission lines and vegetation on and along transmission ROW, and reporting vegetation-related outages of the transmission systems to the respective Regional Reliability Organizations (RRO) and the North American Electric Reliability Council (NERC).
4. **Applicability:**
 - 4.1. Transmission Owner.
 - 4.2. Regional Reliability Organization.
 - 4.3. This standard shall apply to all transmission lines operated at 200 kV and above and to any lower voltage lines designated by the RRO as critical to the reliability of the electric system in the region.
5. **Effective Dates:**
 - 5.1. One calendar year from the date of adoption by the NERC Board of Trustees for Requirements 1 and 2.
 - 5.2. Sixty calendar days from the date of adoption by the NERC Board of Trustees for Requirements 3 and 4.

B. Requirements

- R1.** The Transmission Owner shall prepare, and keep current, a formal transmission vegetation management program (TVMP). The TVMP shall include the Transmission Owner's objectives, practices, approved procedures, and work specifications¹.
 - R1.1.** The TVMP shall define a schedule for and the type (aerial, ground) of ROW vegetation inspections. This schedule should be flexible enough to adjust for changing conditions. The inspection schedule shall be based on the anticipated growth of vegetation and any other environmental or operational factors that could impact the relationship of vegetation to the Transmission Owner's transmission lines.
 - R1.2.** The Transmission Owner, in the TVMP, shall identify and document clearances between vegetation and any overhead, ungrounded supply conductors, taking into consideration transmission line voltage, the effects of ambient temperature on conductor sag under maximum design loading, and the effects of wind velocities on conductor sway. Specifically, the Transmission Owner shall establish clearances to be achieved at the time of vegetation management work identified herein as Clearance 1, and shall also establish and maintain a set of clearances identified herein as Clearance 2 to prevent flashover between vegetation and overhead ungrounded supply conductors.
 - R1.2.1.** Clearance 1 — The Transmission Owner shall determine and document appropriate clearance distances to be achieved at the time of transmission vegetation management work based upon local conditions and the expected time frame in which the Transmission Owner plans to return for future

¹ ANSI A300, Tree Care Operations – Tree, Shrub, and Other Woody Plant Maintenance – Standard Practices, while not a requirement of this standard, is considered to be an industry best practice.

vegetation management work. Local conditions may include, but are not limited to: operating voltage, appropriate vegetation management techniques, fire risk, reasonably anticipated tree and conductor movement, species types and growth rates, species failure characteristics, local climate and rainfall patterns, line terrain and elevation, location of the vegetation within the span, and worker approach distance requirements. Clearance 1 distances shall be greater than those defined by Clearance 2 below.

R1.2.2. Clearance 2 — The Transmission Owner shall determine and document specific radial clearances to be maintained between vegetation and conductors under all rated electrical operating conditions. These minimum clearance distances are necessary to prevent flashover between vegetation and conductors and will vary due to such factors as altitude and operating voltage. These Transmission Owner-specific minimum clearance distances shall be no less than those set forth in the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) Standard 516-2003 (*Guide for Maintenance Methods on Energized Power Lines*) and as specified in its Section 4.2.2.3, Minimum Air Insulation Distances without Tools in the Air Gap.

R1.2.2.1 Where transmission system transient overvoltage factors are not known, clearances shall be derived from Table 5, IEEE 516-2003, phase-to-ground distances, with appropriate altitude correction factors applied.

R1.2.2.2 Where transmission system transient overvoltage factors are known, clearances shall be derived from Table 7, IEEE 516-2003, phase-to-phase voltages, with appropriate altitude correction factors applied.

R1.3. All personnel directly involved in the design and implementation of the TVMP shall hold appropriate qualifications and training, as defined by the Transmission Owner, to perform their duties.

R1.4. Each Transmission Owner shall develop mitigation measures to achieve sufficient clearances for the protection of the transmission facilities when it identifies locations on the ROW where the Transmission Owner is restricted from attaining the clearances specified in Requirement 1.2.1.

R1.5. Each Transmission Owner shall establish and document a process for the immediate communication of vegetation conditions that present an imminent threat of a transmission line outage. This is so that action (temporary reduction in line rating, switching line out of service, etc.) may be taken until the threat is relieved.

R2. The Transmission Owner shall create and implement an annual plan for vegetation management work to ensure the reliability of the system. The plan shall describe the methods used, such as manual clearing, mechanical clearing, herbicide treatment, or other actions. The plan should be flexible enough to adjust to changing conditions, taking into consideration anticipated growth of vegetation and all other environmental factors that may have an impact on the reliability of the transmission systems. Adjustments to the plan shall be documented as they occur. The plan should take into consideration the time required to obtain permissions or permits from landowners or regulatory authorities. Each Transmission Owner shall have systems and procedures for documenting and tracking the planned vegetation management work and ensuring that the vegetation management work was completed according to work specifications.

- R3.** The Transmission Owner shall report quarterly to its RRO, or the RRO's designee, sustained transmission line outages determined by the Transmission Owner to have been caused by vegetation.
- R3.1.** Multiple sustained outages on an individual line, if caused by the same vegetation, shall be reported as one outage regardless of the actual number of outages within a 24-hour period.
- R3.2.** The Transmission Owner is not required to report to the RRO, or the RRO's designee, certain sustained transmission line outages caused by vegetation: (1) Vegetation-related outages that result from vegetation falling into lines from outside the ROW that result from natural disasters shall not be considered reportable (examples of disasters that could create non-reportable outages include, but are not limited to, earthquakes, fires, tornados, hurricanes, landslides, wind shear, major storms as defined either by the Transmission Owner or an applicable regulatory body, ice storms, and floods), and (2) Vegetation-related outages due to human or animal activity shall not be considered reportable (examples of human or animal activity that could cause a non-reportable outage include, but are not limited to, logging, animal severing tree, vehicle contact with tree, arboricultural activities or horticultural or agricultural activities, or removal or digging of vegetation).
- R3.3.** The outage information provided by the Transmission Owner to the RRO, or the RRO's designee, shall include at a minimum: the name of the circuit(s) outaged, the date, time and duration of the outage; a description of the cause of the outage; other pertinent comments; and any countermeasures taken by the Transmission Owner.
- R3.4.** An outage shall be categorized as one of the following:
- R3.4.1.** Category 1 — Grow-ins: Outages caused by vegetation growing into lines from vegetation inside and/or outside of the ROW;
- R3.4.2.** Category 2 — Fall-ins: Outages caused by vegetation falling into lines from inside the ROW;
- R3.4.3.** Category 3 — Fall-ins: Outages caused by vegetation falling into lines from outside the ROW.
- R4.** The RRO shall report the outage information provided to it by Transmission Owner's, as required by Requirement 3, quarterly to NERC, as well as any actions taken by the RRO as a result of any of the reported outages.

C. Measures

- M1.** The Transmission Owner has a documented TVMP, as identified in Requirement 1.
- M1.1.** The Transmission Owner has documentation that the Transmission Owner performed the vegetation inspections as identified in Requirement 1.1.
- M1.2.** The Transmission Owner has documentation that describes the clearances identified in Requirement 1.2.
- M1.3.** The Transmission Owner has documentation that the personnel directly involved in the design and implementation of the Transmission Owner's TVMP hold the qualifications identified by the Transmission Owner as required in Requirement 1.3.
- M1.4.** The Transmission Owner has documentation that it has identified any areas not meeting the Transmission Owner's standard for vegetation management and any mitigating measures the Transmission Owner has taken to address these deficiencies as identified in Requirement 1.4.

- M1.5.** The Transmission Owner has a documented process for the immediate communication of imminent threats by vegetation as identified in Requirement 1.5.
- M2.** The Transmission Owner has documentation that the Transmission Owner implemented the work plan identified in Requirement 2.
- M3.** The Transmission Owner has documentation that it has supplied quarterly outage reports to the RRO, or the RRO's designee, as identified in Requirement 3.
- M4.** The RRO has documentation that it provided quarterly outage reports to NERC as identified in Requirement 4.

D. Compliance

1. Compliance Monitoring Process

1.1. Compliance Monitoring Responsibility

RRO

NERC

1.2. Compliance Monitoring Period and Reset

One calendar Year

1.3. Data Retention

Five Years

1.4. Additional Compliance Information

The Transmission Owner shall demonstrate compliance through self-certification submitted to the compliance monitor (RRO) annually that it meets the requirements of NERC Reliability Standard FAC-003-1. The compliance monitor shall conduct an on-site audit every five years or more frequently as deemed appropriate by the compliance monitor to review documentation related to Reliability Standard FAC-003-1. Field audits of ROW vegetation conditions may be conducted if determined to be necessary by the compliance monitor.

2. Levels of Non-Compliance

2.1. Level 1:

- 2.1.1.** The TVMP was incomplete in one of the requirements specified in any subpart of Requirement 1, or;
- 2.1.2.** Documentation of the annual work plan, as specified in Requirement 2, was incomplete when presented to the Compliance Monitor during an on-site audit, or;
- 2.1.3.** The RRO provided an outage report to NERC that was incomplete and did not contain the information required in Requirement 4.

2.2. Level 2:

- 2.2.1.** The TVMP was incomplete in two of the requirements specified in any subpart of Requirement 1, or;
- 2.2.2.** The Transmission Owner was unable to certify during its annual self-certification that it fully implemented its annual work plan, or documented deviations from, as specified in Requirement 2.
- 2.2.3.** The Transmission Owner reported one Category 2 transmission vegetation-related outage in a calendar year.

2.3. Level 3:

- 2.3.1. The Transmission Owner reported one Category 1 or multiple Category 2 transmission vegetation-related outages in a calendar year, or;
- 2.3.2. The Transmission Owner did not maintain a set of clearances (Clearance 2), as defined in Requirement 1.2.2, to prevent flashover between vegetation and overhead ungrounded supply conductors, or;
- 2.3.3. The TVMP was incomplete in three of the requirements specified in any subpart of Requirement 1.

2.4. Level 4:

- 2.4.1. The Transmission Owner reported more than one Category 1 transmission vegetation-related outage in a calendar year, or;
- 2.4.2. The TVMP was incomplete in four or more of the requirements specified in any subpart of Requirement 1.

E. Regional Differences

None Identified.

Version History

Version	Date	Action	Change Tracking
Version 1	TBA	1. Added “Standard Development Roadmap.” 2. Changed “60” to “Sixty” in section A, 5.2. 3. Added “Proposed Effective Date: April 7, 2006” to footer. 4. Added “Draft 3: November 17, 2005” to footer.	01/20/06