



Final Minutes of the Security Advisory Council Meeting

MRO Offices, St. Paul, MN / Webex

May 24, 2023 from 9:03 a.m. to 3:25 p.m. Central

Notice for this meeting was electronically posted to the MRO website [here](#) on April 24, 2023.

A final agenda, including advanced reading materials, was also posted on May 23, 2023.

1. Call to Order and Determination of Quorum

MRO Security Advisory Council (SAC) Chair Ian Anderson called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. Chair Anderson determined that a quorum was present by conducting a roll call. A complete list of attendees is included as [Exhibit A](#).

2. Standards of Conduct and Antitrust Guidelines

Pursuant to Policy and Procedure 4, MRO Director of Security, Steen Fjalstad, highlighted MRO's Standards of Conduct, Conflict of Interest, and Antitrust Guidelines.

3. MRO Regional Risk Assessment (RRA)

MRO Principal Technical Advisor, Mark Tiemeier, provided an update regarding the annual Regional Risk Assessment (RRA) survey. Tiemeier noted that this is the first time MRO has surveyed the councils regarding the RRA and reviewed the risk assessment process. A SAC member asked whether other regions produce something similar to the RRA. Tiemeier noted that some other regions produce risk assessments, though the process is not completely aligned with MRO's process. Tiemeier noted that he is in contact with other regions and discussing the process with them. Tiemeier also noted MRO is seeking to produce documentation regarding how and why the assessment is done, citing the example that it serves as an excellent talking point for conversations with state utility commissions. Tiemeier reviewed the survey results, indicating that all councils were represented and noting the value of the feedback. Items noted from the feedback included:

- Risks overlap or have common root causes, such as the changing resource mix.
- Frequency does not equate to level of risk, and that low frequency/high impact events should not be downplayed.
- A review of the factors that go into assessing risks, such as standards.
- A review of the risks associated with knowledgeable insider access, and an observation that perhaps this could be better articulated to increase understanding. The distinction between accidental and knowledgeable insider threats was noted.
- Staff noted that "typical events" are challenging to define, particularly from a security perspective, the importance of more data, and the need to improve risk descriptions.

Further discussion of results and risks and the need for process improvements ensued.

4. Regional Security Risk Assessment (RSRA) Survey Update

MRO Principal Security Engineer, Lee Felter, provided a report regarding the Regional Security Risk Assessment Survey. Felter noted the virtual round table working session planned for July 12, 2023.



Felter reviewed the survey results and noted the importance of having comparable metrics for a period of years. Felter noted that he will be leading a project on this and solicited input from council members. Discussion ensued.

5. MRO SACTF Update

Chair Anderson provided an update, as SACTF Chair Brett Lawler was absent.

MRO SACTF Threat Call and Annual Statistics

Chair Anderson reviewed threat call statistics. Anderson noted increasing registration and awareness of the call. Discussion on how to proceed for the future of the call ensued.

MRO SACTF Threat Call Feedback

Chair Anderson reviewed the feedback provided via the weekly survey questions posted during each week's call. Discussion ensued.

MRO SACTF Open Source Information Sharing Document

A SAC member noted that some topics seem to persist, and suggested a potential trial run of targeted topic meetings. Fjalstad noted that the role of SACTF liaison for the threat call will be transitioned to Felter, who will work with members on how to move forward. A SAC member noted the distinction between immediate issues and longer term issues. Discussion ensued.

6. SAC Member Discussions: Common Themes

Fjalstad discussed meetings with individual SAC members held during Q1 2023 to introduce new staff in the security department and solicit input from SAC members. Fjalstad thanked the SAC members for their time and commitment. Fjalstad noted the common theme that members enjoyed meeting in person. Fjalstad also noted a suggestion of developing a method to anonymize information to allow individuals to share information freely, without concerns about risks. He further noted that MRO staff can serve as conduits as needed or desired.

Fjalstad noted that members expressed that there was an overload of information about outside webinars and information, and raised the question of how the SAC and SACTF can differentiate themselves. Discussion ensued.

7. Charter Updates

SAC Charter

SAC Member Meason proposed revising the charter to define leadership succession, and include deliberate succession planning.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the SAC approved the formation of a small group to explore revising the charter as described by SAC Member Meason.

Action Item: The SAC will form a small group to discuss potential amendments to the SAC charter to present to the OGOC in Q3 2023. Fjalstad noted the need to maintain consistency of the charter with the other councils. Fjalstad will bring discussions forward to other council liaisons.

SACTF Charter



Chair Anderson raised the question of whether the SACTF charter should be similarly revised. A SAC member noted that the SACTF has been empowered to run the forum independently, and suggested input from SACTF Chair Brett Lawler (not present). A member suggested that the SACTF chair and vice chair be included in the discussion.

Fjalstad noted the requirement that at least one SACTF member be a member of the SAC. Anderson raised the question of whether some SAC/SACTF workplan items are duplicative or competing; Fjalstad stated that they are complimentary, as the SAC has a broader focus.

Action Item: SAC Member Meason will reach out to SACTF leadership to coordinate the discussion and efforts to update the charter.

8. 2023 Security Conference Planning Update

MRO Manager of Outreach and Stakeholder Engagement, Cris Zimmerman, provided an update on the 2023 Security Conference. Zimmerman notified the SAC that two to three speaker slots still need to be filled. A save the date announcement has been sent for conference; he is working to finalize the agenda by June 30, so an announcement can be sent the week of July 10, 2023.

9. MRO Representatives on NERC Subgroups Written Reports

MRO-sponsored representatives to the NERC organizational groups provided reports to the council.

NERC Supply Chain Working Group (SCWG)

Tony Eddleman, NERC SCWG Representative, provided a written report and reported orally to the council. The next meeting of the SCWG will be held on June 26, 2023. At the March 2023 meeting, Christopher Strain of Florida Power & Light Co. was approved as the chair, and Dr. Thomas Duffey of ITegrity was approved as the vice chair.

Eddleman reviewed SCWG areas of focus, accomplishments, and challenges. He also provided updates on two recently approved guidelines, and four security guidelines being prepared for posting and public comment.

NERC Security Integration and Technology Enablement Subcommittee (SITES)

NERC SITES Representative, Alan Kloster, provided a presentation and reported orally to the council. Kloster reviewed several white papers, and noted that one subteam is in need of additional help. Kloster reviewed the SITES accomplishments to date and the work plan for the remainder of 2023.

NERC Reliability and Security Technical Committee (RSTC)

Marc Child, Great River Energy, provided a presentation and reported orally to the council. Child reported on the RSTC security summit, action and informational items, and the 2023 schedule.

10. Work Plan Updates

The SAC discussed updates for both the SAC and SACTF work plans. A SAC member raised a question about expectations of SACTF members. Fjalstad clarified expectations are flexible and being further developed.



Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the SAC tabled further discussion of the work plans to Q3 2023. The motion passed.

11. Action Item Review

Action Item: Staff to seek volunteers (2 from each council) to participate in risk ranking workshops; these will be virtual meetings.

Action Item: SAC will form small group to develop leadership succession plan in charter.

Action Item: SAC Member Meason will reach out to SACTF leadership to coordinate the discussion and efforts to update the charter. Meason has requested assistance with this effort from SAC Members Clayton Whitacre, Brett Lawler, Justin Haar, Jason Nations, and MRO Staff Lee Felter.

Action Item: Chair Anderson will validate topics, timing, and assignments of newsletter articles listed on work plan.

Action Item: SACTF will update their work plan and report back to the SAC in Q3.

Action Item: Fjalstad will initiate planning one or more threat call tests to be held during GridEx. Fjalstad will work with SACTF members to coordinate. SAC/SACTF Member Graham will work with Fjalstad.

Action Item: Chair Anderson will reach out to SAC Member Meason for further discussion on the suggestion of tracking recurring issues and perhaps holding meetings or calls regarding specific issues. Fjalstad will research coordination and branding. Chair Anderson will also discuss with SACTF Chair Lawler.

12. Other Business and Adjourn

SAC members were asked to share any other business.

- A SAC member noted that the IT/OT Convergence webinar is scheduled for August 2023 and is being developed.
- Alan Kloster noted that Larry Collier from NERC sent an updated outline for the white paper on new technology enablement and field testing. Reach out to Collier via larry.collier@nerc.net to get involved. Contact Kloster at alan.kloster@evergy.com for a copy of the draft.
- Fjalstad raised the question of whether to involve the SACTF in pre-planning a call during GridEx to test whether a call can be initiated quickly. Fjalstad noted that this will require significant MRO staff time; he would like approval to do this as a contribution to GridEx. A SAC member suggested doing one test call per day of GridEx, checking with utility planners, and emphasized importance of emphasizing that this is a drill. Suggestions were requested.
- Chair Anderson raised the need for more discussion of the issue of recurring issues such as insider threats and how we might proceed regarding this issue. A SAC member suggested tracking issues raised on the threat call at a high level for reports to the SAC and SACTF. Further discussion needed; Chair Anderson will reach out to SAC Member Meason.
- A SAC member raised a question about the 2024 Security conference. Zimmerman noted no decisions have been made, and noted that MRO is co-hosting GridSecCon near regular security



conference portion of the year; various ideas are still under discussion. Chair Anderson expressed preference for security conference to continue, possibly earlier in the year. E-ISAC will be looking to MRO for many resources. Zimmerman noted 2024 calendar is being planned, will need to reach decision soon. Zimmerman noted he is looking for decision from the SAC; if moving to virtual and earlier in year, will need to discuss with other councils. Chair Anderson noted he would prefer in person, to continue as normal, and suggested September as a potential time. SAC members noted they send more people to MRO Security Conference than to GridSecCon, and suggested the possibility of GridSecCon joining with MRO Security Conference.

Having no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 3:25 p.m.

Prepared by: Margaret Eastman, Security Administrator

Reviewed and Submitted by: Steen Fjalstad, Director of Security



Exhibit A – Meeting Attendees

SAC Members Present	
Name	Company
Chad Wasinger	Sunflower Electric Power Corporation
Clayton Whitacre	Great River Energy
Daniel Graham	Basin Electric Power Cooperative
Douglas Peterchuck	Omaha Public Power District
Ian Anderson, Chair	OGE Energy Corp.
Jason Nations	OGE Energy Corp.
Justin Haar	Minnkota Power Cooperative
Matthew Szyda	Manitoba Hydro
Michael Meason	Western Farmers Electric Cooperative
Norma Browne	Ameren
Patrick Glunz	Nebraska Public Power District
Peter Grandgeorge	MidAmerican Energy Company
Rocky Tolentino	Southwest Power Pool
Tim Anderson	Dairyland Power Cooperative
MRO Staff Present	
Name	Title
Steen Fjalstad	Director of Security
Lee Felter	Principal Security Engineer
Margaret Eastman	Security Administrator
Mark Tiemeier	Principal Technical Advisor
Cris Zimmerman	Manager of Outreach and Stakeholder Engagement
Rebecca Schneider	Reliability Analysis Administrator



Lisa Stellmaker	Executive Administrator
Max Vang	IT Support Analyst
Daniel Son	Systems Administrator
Alexis Larson	IT Support Analyst
Jess Syring	Compliance Monitoring Manager, CIP
Other Attendees	
Name	Company
Alan Kloster	Evergy
Andrew Coffelt	Kansas City Board of Public Utilities
Ashley Calderon	Kansas City Board of Public Utilities
Christopher Watkins	State of Minnesota
Daniel Moore	Western Farmers Electric Cooperative
David Trojan	ITC Holdings Corp.
Derek Cherneski	SaskPower
Gail Elliott	ITC Holdings Corp.
James Hauck	Sunflower Electric Power Corporation
Jeff Fuller	MISO
Kelly Crist	Engie
Marc Child	Great River Energy
Mary Agnes Nimis	FERC
Michael Watt	Oklahoma Municipal Power Authority
Mike Johnson	Pacific Gas and Electric
Molly Wooster	Evergy
Nation VanMeter	Sunflower Electric Power Corporation
Omar Elabbady	Xcel Energy
Sam Chanoski	Idaho National Labs



Steve Kerrin	EDF Renewables
Steve McGie	Brainerd Public Utilities
Steve Spieler	Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative
Tara Lightner	Sunflower Electric Power Corporation
Tony Eddleman	Nebraska Public Power District