

SME COACHING WORKSHOP

Are Your SMEs Ready for a NERC CIP Compliance Audit?

The “soft skills” that Subject Matter Experts (“SMEs”) must properly use during an audit are often overlooked as Utility Entities prepare for an audit where they must demonstrate compliance. Just the atmosphere of an audit, along with multiple audit team members and other observers, can make the most technically confident person feel stressed and become defensive as they are being questioned. Being oversensitive can cause the SME to provide incomplete, inappropriate, and inaccurate responses. Auditors often pause during the interview session, and the SME may unfortunately try to fill the silence with nervous chatter. Not knowing what to expect from the audit team can produce a lot of unnecessary anxiety and unease for the SME. Properly preparing SMEs with the behaviors they will need during the audit will help relieve the stress, tension, and worry often associated with a NERC CIP compliance audit.

Network & Security Technologies, Inc. (“N&ST”) consultants have experience as auditors in multiple industries and as Regional Entity audit team members, incorporating this wealth of information into this offering. Our workshop behaviors needed during a NERC CIP compliance audit.

Our Winning Methodology

The SME Coaching Workshop will prepare SMEs with the “soft skills” needed for a NERC CIP audit by practicing the preferred behaviors in a roll-play environment. N&ST begins with a “break the ice” session to get the audience prepared to interact with the proctors. A short discussion follows about the utility industry regulatory players and the need for security standards. Five key behaviors will be introduced and discussed throughout the day, with the proctors demonstrating the dos and don’ts of the behavior through short vignettes. The proctors will divide the audience into small groups for the role-play exercise so that every individual gains the perspective of the auditor and the practice as the SME. Several scripts are utilized to demonstrate style and tone of auditor questions, suggested SME responses, and opportunities for ad lib. The proctors will work with each group to help the SME with the best response and will relate pertinent auditor-related experience to clarify goals and objectives. The proctors will end each exercise by engaging each group to share their observations and suggestions from the role-play exercises. The proctors will conclude each session with “pearls of wisdom” from N&ST’s wealth of experiences as auditors.

After completing the SME Coaching Workshop, you can be comfortable that your SMEs will know how to:

- Maintain composure and professionalism throughout the interview,
- Be organized for the audit,
- Use appropriate vocabulary,
- Respond with only the required information,
And,
- What audit team behaviors to expect,
- Know what “culture of compliance” means to the audit team.

Standard Engagement

A standard N&ST SME Coaching Workshop engagement is a full-day session (approximately 9 AM to 3:30 PM). This workshop can be performed at multiple client site location(s) to accommodate all SMEs. Typically, it takes two N&ST Senior Security Consultants for a group up to 30 individuals. Additional consultants will be added based on the number of individuals for the workshop and additional travel time to accommodate locations as necessary.

The SME Coaching Workshop engagement features:

- **Why CIP Security Standards Now** – Proctors will discuss the utility industry regulatory players and the need for security standards today.
- **Key Behavior Dos and Don'ts** – Proctors will discuss five "soft skills," emphasizing the dos and don'ts for these behaviors.
- **Vignettes** – Proctors will perform short vignettes using NERC CIP audit scenarios to demonstrate how to respond and how not to respond to auditor questions.
- **Role-play Sessions** – Proctor's will facilitate scripted role-play sessions and engage every member of the audience.
- **SME Coaching** – Proctors will assist the SME with better ways to answer questions using appropriate vocabulary.
- **Feedback** - At the end of each roll-play session, proctors will summarize all observations and suggestions and provide these "pearls of wisdom" to the audience.

Our Experience Builds Confidence Your SMEs Need

N&ST can train your SMEs to respond appropriately to the audit team's requests for information. Our team has developed a repeatable methodology based upon our experience from both sides of the audit table, and as auditors in multiple industries, that will prepare your SMEs for the compliance audit atmosphere. Our interactive approach of using roll-plays, scripted with materials your SMEs already know, helps relieve the stress, tension, and worry of the SME. By the end of the day, your SME will understand how the audit team will ask questions and the styles of behavior they can expect. Most importantly, you can be comfortable that your SMES are ready and prepared for the NERC CIP compliance audit.

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