

Control Room and Data Center Tour Policy

Purpose

As the Independent System Operator (ISO) for the ERCOT Region, Electric Reliability Council of Texas, Inc. (ERCOT) serves the public by ensuring a reliable grid, efficient electricity markets, open access and retail choice (the “Mission”). ERCOT believes in transparency and therefore the ability for the public to view how our Mission comes to life in the daily operations of maintaining grid reliability for Texas customers. However, ERCOT must balance public access with protecting the assets of the company from any cyber or physical threat that would hinder or take away our ability to perform this critical Mission while also protecting confidential information that may be on display in the ERCOT control room(s). As such, this Policy provides an appropriate balance for the public to take tours involving the ERCOT control room(s) and, in limited circumstances, data center(s) while still allowing ERCOT to continue its Mission.

Guidelines

- Employees of a Transmission and/or Distribution Service Provider (TDSP) are allowed tour access into the ERCOT control room if (1) the TDSP has a code of conduct under P.U.C. Subst. R. 25.272, Code of Conduct for Electric Utilities and Their Affiliates, and (2) the TDSP has a valid confidentiality agreement on file with ERCOT in compliance with Section 1.3.6(g) of the ERCOT Protocols.
- In addition to employees of TDSPs, governmental officials and employees of federal and state agencies or regulatory bodies (e.g., NERC and Texas RE) are allowed tour access into the ERCOT control room.¹ In rare cases in which the governmental agency or regulatory body has oversight over relevant topics, data center access also may be granted on a case-by-case basis.
- Members of the news media may be allowed to enter into the ERCOT control room, subject to case-by-case approval by Corporate Communications and Operations and agreement to conditions established to protect confidential information.² Such conditions include:
 - Supervision by designated ERCOT staff of any recording/photography to ensure confidential information is not included.
 - Review of recorded material by Corporate Communications staff and, if needed, deletion of any inadvertently recorded information by members of the news media.
- ERCOT does not allow access to the ERCOT control room floor for tours by foreign nationals.
- All tours involving ERCOT control room access will be no longer than 15 minutes in order to avoid disruption to normal ERCOT control room operations.

¹ ERCOT recognizes that confidential information will be disclosed during government official, agency and/or regulatory group tours but has determined that the disclosure of such information is outweighed by the benefit of allowing such groups who may have oversight responsibility over ERCOT closer access to ERCOT control room operations.

² ERCOT recognizes that confidential information will be disclosed during news media tours but has determined that the disclosure of such information is outweighed by the benefit of allowing such groups to report energy news under the most optimum conditions by viewing the ERCOT control room in close proximity. ERCOT has taken appropriate steps to eliminate the recorded disclosure of confidential information with the conditions noted in this Policy.

- Individuals and groups that receive authorization to access the ERCOT control room floor or data center are subject to a background check and must provide the information necessary to perform this screening at least seven (7) days prior to the scheduled tour. Exceptions to this notice period are subject to approval by ERCOT Physical Security.
- No packages (e.g., backpacks, suitcases, large purses) will be allowed into the ERCOT control room or data center. Exceptions may be made for news media equipment upon prior authorization by ERCOT Corporate Communications and ERCOT Physical Security. All packages are subject to search by ERCOT Physical Security staff upon request.
- No other group tours are allowed into the ERCOT control room due to the potential for (1) noise/disruption to ERCOT control room operations and (2) the risk of disclosure of confidential information under the ERCOT Protocols.
- In general, other authorized group tours will be allowed to view the ERCOT control room from the overlook windows on the second floor of Taylor Control Center 1 (TCC1).
- For tours utilizing the overlook windows on the second floor of TCC1, any information (to the extent necessary) that is confidential under the ERCOT Protocols and would be visible from the overlook windows shall be removed from visibility before allowing any group viewing access unless all members of the tour group are covered under the first three bullet points above.
- All group tours are subject to the following conditions/limitations:³
 - Control room management (Director or Manager of System Operations or Shift Supervisor on duty) will have final decision on whether to allow any group tour (regardless of group size or composition), based on expected system conditions at that time.
 - Tours will be authorized only if there is no or a very low expectation of a reliability event.
 - To avoid any risk of impropriety, the tour guide generally will instruct all tour participants to refrain from using any electronic device(s) when viewing the ERCOT control room, except in cases where prior conditions have been agreed upon and appropriate steps are taken to prevent disclosure of confidential information. Exceptions for approved representatives of the news media will be made on a case-by-case basis in coordination with the Director or Manager of System Operations.
- If, during any group tour, an event occurs on the ERCOT System that would result in an increased expectation of a reliability event or an increased risk of unauthorized disclosure of confidential information to the tour group, the Shift Supervisor shall notify the tour guide and the group tour shall be exited expeditiously and any open overlook windows shall be closed.
- If ERCOT control room personnel or the tour guide become aware of any unauthorized disclosure of confidential information during a group tour, they shall report the disclosure to the Director or Manager of System Operations, who will then inform ERCOT Legal.
- ERCOT has discretion to make exceptions to the guidelines within this Policy as long as such exceptions do not compromise its obligations under the ERCOT Protocols and/or increase the cyber or physical threat against any assets of the company.

³ The risk of disclosure of confidential information is not applicable to employees of TDSPs that meet the conditions in the first bullet point.