

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION  
OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**



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Order Instituting Rulemaking to Examine Electric  
Utility De-Energization of Power Lines in Dangerous  
Conditions.

Rulemaking 18-12-005  
(Filed December 13, 2018)

**BEAR VALLEY ELECTRIC SERVICE, INC. (U 913 E) PLAN TO ADDRESS ACCESS  
AND FUNCTIONAL NEEDS DURING DE-ENERGIZATION EVENTS**

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February 3, 2021

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In accordance with Decision (“D.”) 20-05-051, Appendix A, Section (g) – Medical Baseline and Access and Functional Needs Populations, Bear Valley Electric Service, Inc. (“BVES”) submits this plan to address access and functional needs (“AFN”) customers and communities during a de-energization event. D.20-05-051 provides:

The record supports continuing efforts to collaborate with public safety partners, local governments, and representatives of people and communities with access and functional needs, in order to identify any needed assistance in relation to de-energization events. Having appropriate plans in place increases the effectiveness of these efforts. Thus, the electric IOUs shall provide their plans to the Commission by June 1, 2020, and thereafter by January 31 of each following year, regarding the planned efforts to address people/communities with access and functional needs during de-energization events.<sup>1</sup>

BVES’ AFN plan is provided in Appendix A.

DATED: February 3, 2021

Respectfully submitted,

By: \_\_\_\_\_/s/\_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>1</sup> D.20-05-051, p. 63; *see also* Finding of Fact 50, Conclusion of Law 36, and Appendix A, Section (g), p. 8.

## Appendix A

### BVES Access and Functional Needs Plan

## **BVES Access and Functional Needs (“AFN”) Plan**

### **I. AFN Populations**

Bear Valley Electric Service, Inc. (“BVES”) is a small electric utility, located in the mountain resort community of Big Bear Lake, California, that provides service to approximately 24,000 customers in a 31-square mile service area. In total, there are currently 10 AFN customers and 232 customers recorded as medical baseline accounts. Although BVES has never had a PSPS event, the utility continues to plan for the possibility and applies these principles to all emergency situations.

### **II. Process and System Changes**

To improve public safety power shut-off (“PSPS”) notification to AFN populations, BVES made process changes in its customer service system to ensure that AFN customer accounts are noted as such. The additions to the customer service system included adding capability to flag the account as AFN, communicate this record to customer account tables to prepare for a PSPS including the ability to query such information in preparation for a PSPS, as well as creating notification processes to ensure clean handoffs between BVES’ Incident Command Team and Public Safety Partners, should additional support for these customers be required during an activation. BVES has added two-way text communication capability for all customers to send and receive critical messages during a PSPS event as well as an Inter-Active Voice recognition system, social media, and website updates.

Additionally, as a policy, BVES suspends any service disconnection for non-payment during emergencies, including those involving elevated fire risk, such as the activation of a PSPS event.

### **III. Communication, Outreach and Effectiveness**

#### **A. Communication Channels**

During 2020, BVES conducted outreach and education through multiple channels including distribution of brochures to all customers of record<sup>2</sup> in order to encourage medically vulnerable customers to self-identify with the utility and verify their contact information.

#### **B. Master-Meter Accounts**

For customers served by master meters, BVES conducted outreach and recorded customers' medical support needs to ensure sufficient advance notification via their landlord. BVES identified 5 customers that have medical baseline needs and are master metered.

#### **C. Outreach Effectiveness**

In BVES' annual survey<sup>3</sup>, 43 percent of surveyed customers stated they are aware they can update their contact information with BVES, and 24 percent have done so. Among those with medical conditions, 35 percent are aware that BVES provides additional notices prior to a PSPS event. BVES provides additional notice to those with medical conditions prior to a PSPS event. Additional efforts are made to educate customers about additional communication options, how to update their contact preferences and contact information.

The 2021 communications and outreach strategy will prioritize and emphasize this message along with general wildfire safety and preparedness information. As part of its Emergency Action Plan, BVES conducts tabletop exercises as well as "lessons learned" sessions. BVES will continue with its community engagement efforts by advertising on local radio,

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<sup>2</sup> See attached Exhibit A, Access and Functional Needs Flyer, and Exhibit B, WMP/PSPS Flyer.

<sup>3</sup> BVES' detailed independent survey results as filed in R.18-10-007 on December 31, 2020.

newspaper, social media, the BVES website, and through direct-mail campaigns as well as hosting in-person or virtual community information meetings.

#### **IV. Engagement with CBOs and Public Safety Partners**

BVES has engaged several potential community based organizations (“CBOs”) and received little response. BVES is continuing its effort to find willing partners in the community as it closely monitors the current health crisis and plans for the new year. A critical component of the BVES PSPS and Emergency Response Plan is close coordination with stakeholders that depend on BVES’ service and assistance for their response actions and who may, also, be able to assist BVES in its response actions. BVES met with key stakeholders throughout the year and developed detailed emergency plans for the Big Bear Valley. Throughout the remainder of the year, BVES will continue its outreach efforts to engage a CBO and will continue to expand awareness of the importance in establishing a partnership with BVES. The company continues to reach out to their customers to advise the importance of updating all contact information, to ensure outreach during a PSPS event. Should it not be possible to meet in person, BVES will host a virtual or telephonic meeting with stakeholders.

#### **V. Conclusion**

When a PSPS is warranted, BVES will effectively communicate with customers and work with local government officials to minimize the impact to its customers and communities, especially AFN populations, consistent with all the Guidelines identified in R.18-12-005, including those in Appendix A of D.20-05-051.

**Exhibit A**

**Access and Functional Needs Flyer**



We're here to  
help you stay  
informed

Help us keep your family safe and informed during an emergency by updating your contact information with Bear Valley Electric Service, Inc. It's especially important to keep us informed of any Access and Functional Needs (AFN) members of your household, so we can ensure you get timely AFN updates and alerts. Every second matters during an emergency event – please update your information today!



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## AFN POPULATION

Any member of your household who are/have:

- Physical, developmental or intellectual disabilities
- Chronic conditions or injuries
- Limited English proficiency
- Older adults
- Children
- Low income, homeless and/or transportation disadvantaged (i.e., dependent on public transit)
- Pregnant individual

## HOW TO UPDATE YOUR INFORMATION

Visit [www.bvesinc.com/contact-us](http://www.bvesinc.com/contact-us) if you have an individual with AFN in your household. Please provide the following information in the 'comments' box: name, phone number, service address, mailing address, email address and note that this comment is for AFN.

You can also call a Customer Service Representative at 800-808-2837 to update your contact information.



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**Exhibit B**

**WMP/PSPS Flyer**



# 2020 WILDFIRE MITIGATION PLAN

# PLAN DE MITIGACIÓN DE INCENDIOS FORESTALES PARA 2020

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT: [WWW.BVESINC.COM](http://WWW.BVESINC.COM)



Wildfires are now a year-round threat for California communities like Big Bear. As a community in a designated "High-Fire Threat District," Bear Valley Electric Service, Inc. (BVES) has plans in place and is prepared to help protect customers and the community from the risk of wildfires.

In September 2020, BVES submitted an updated Wildfire Mitigation Plan (WMP) to the state of California to adhere to legislation requiring that all electric utilities file a plan outlining current and intended wildfire mitigation efforts. Customers can find the detailed WMP online. The following are among many enhanced safety measures outlined in our 2020 plan:

#### EQUIPMENT UPGRADES

- **Weather Stations:** 19 Weather Stations added to monitor weather patterns and collect real-time data.
- **Tree Attachment Removal:** Removing vulnerable pieces of electrical infrastructure.
- **System Wide Grid Automation and Upgrades:** BVES is automating its grid to expedite the detection and isolation of system faults.

#### VEGETATION MANAGEMENT AND INSPECTIONS

- **Increased Minimum Clearance Zone:** BVES is cutting back trees and limbs to a minimum radial clearance of 72 inches between bare conductors and vegetation.
- **Suspect Tree Removal Program:** BVES will continue to remove trees that are dead or rotting and could potentially fall on power lines.

• Customers can view the full Wildfire Mitigation Plan at <https://www.bvesinc.com/safety/wildfire-mitigation-plan/>  
 • Para ver un resumen del Plan de mitigación de incendios forestales de BVES en español, visite [www.bvesinc.com/safety/wildfire-mitigation-plan/](https://www.bvesinc.com/safety/wildfire-mitigation-plan/)

Actualmente, los incendios forestales son una amenaza durante todo el año para las comunidades de California, como Big Bear. Dado que la comunidad se encuentra en un "distrito de alta amenaza de incendios" designado, Bear Valley Electric Service, Inc. (BVES) ha implementado planes y está preparada para ayudar a proteger a los clientes y la comunidad contra el riesgo de incendios forestales.

En septiembre de 2020, BVES presentó un Plan de mitigación de incendios forestales (Wildfire Mitigation Plan, WMP) actualizado al estado de California para cumplir con las leyes que exigen a todas las empresas de electricidad presentar un plan donde se describan las iniciativas de mitigación de incendios forestales actuales y previstas. Los clientes pueden encontrar el WMP detallado en línea. A continuación, se indican algunas de las tantas medidas de seguridad mejoradas descritas en nuestro plan para 2020:

#### RENOVACIÓN DE EQUIPOS

- **Estaciones meteorológicas:** Se agregaron 19 estaciones meteorológicas para vigilar los patrones climáticos y recopilar datos en tiempo real.
- **Extracción de piezas eléctricas de árboles:** Se quitaron piezas de infraestructura eléctrica peligrosas.
- **Automatización y renovación de redes en todo el sistema:** BVES automatizará sus redes para agilizar la detección y el aislamiento de fallas del sistema.

#### INSPECCIONES Y CONTROL DE VEGETACIÓN

- **Aumento del espacio libre mínimo:** BVES podará árboles y cortará ramas para garantizar un espacio radial libre de un mínimo de 72 pulgadas entre los conductores descubiertos y la vegetación.
- **Programa de extracción de árboles riesgosos:** BVES seguirá quitando árboles muertos o podridos que podrían caer sobre el tendido eléctrico.

# Public Safety Power Shutoff

In an effort to protect Big Bear Valley from risk of a catastrophic fire, BVES may elect to implement a Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) when extreme conditions present a clear and imminent danger to public safety. BVES has permission from the State of California to proactively shut off power in high-risk areas during extreme weather conditions. BVES will conduct customer outreach for the following time periods: 2-3 day notice, 1-2 day notice, De-energization Imminent notice, De-energization notice, Intent to restore and Restoration complete. Several factors are taken into consideration when implementing a PSPS:

- Red Flag Warning issued by the National Weather Service
- Low Humidity Levels
- High Winds and Wind Gusts
- Dry Vegetation
- BVES Real-Time Weather Readings

## Ways that BVES will notify the public of a PSPS event

- Updates will be posted on BVES's website and Facebook page.
- BVES will use two-way emergency text communication and its Interactive Voice Response (IVR) systems, which allows customers with phone numbers on file to receive important messages from the utility.
- Local news outlets will be informed of a wildfire or PSPS event.

### Tips from BVES to make a PSPS or wildfire event less stressful

- Add BVES's 1-800-808-2837 number to your phone as a contact, so when BVES calls or texts it does not come up as spam.
- Update phone numbers linked to your BVES account in order to receive calls and texts from BVES. Sign up for BVES's E-news to

receive emails with up-to-date information and the bi-annual newsletters. The link is located at the bottom of [www.BVESinc.com](http://www.BVESinc.com).

- Have an emergency evacuation plan and a disaster supply kit ready.
- Follow BVES on Facebook @BearValleyElectricServiceInc

### Two-Way Emergency Text Communication

When you receive an emergency text message from BVES, you may communicate back to the utility in the following ways using your phone:

- Text to 1-800-808-2837
- Text "BVES" to opt-in for two-way emergency text communication.
- Text "QUIT" to opt-out of the two-way emergency text communication.
- Text "OUT" to report an outage.
- Text "HELP" for more information.
- Text "STATUS" for outage updates (when one is occurring).

## Corte de energía por seguridad pública

En un esfuerzo por proteger a Big Bear Valley contra el riesgo de un incendio catastrófico, BVES puede proceder a un corte de energía por seguridad pública (Public Safety Power Shutoff, PSPS) cuando haya condiciones extremas que presenten un peligro claro e inminente para la seguridad pública. BVES tiene permiso del estado de California para cortar la energía de manera proactiva en áreas de alto riesgo durante condiciones climáticas extremas. BVES se comunicará con los clientes en los siguientes períodos: aviso con 2 a 3 días de anticipación, aviso con 1 a 2 días de anticipación, aviso de desconexión inminente, aviso de desconexión, aviso de intención de restaurar el servicio y aviso de restauración completa. Se toman en cuenta varios factores cuando se procede a un PSPS:

- Advertencia de bandera roja emitida por el Servicio Meteorológico Nacional
- Niveles bajos de humedad
- Vientos fuertes y ráfagas de viento
- Vegetación seca
- Lecturas meteorológicas en tiempo real de BVES

## Formas en que BVES le notificará al público sobre un PSPS

- Las novedades se publicarán en el sitio web y en la página de Facebook de BVES.
- BVES utilizará sistemas de comunicación bilateral mediante mensajes de texto de emergencia y de respuesta de voz interactiva (Interactive Voice Response, IVR) con los que los clientes cuyos números de teléfono estén registrados recibirán mensajes importantes de la empresa.
- Se informará a los medios de comunicación locales sobre un incendio forestal o un PSPS.

### Consejos de BVES para que un PSPS o un incendio forestal sea menos estresante

- Agregue el número 1-800-808-2837 de BVES como contacto a su teléfono, de modo que cuando BVES llame o envíe mensajes de texto no aparezcan como una comunicación no deseada.
- Actualice los números de teléfono vinculados a su cuenta de BVES para recibir llamadas y mensajes de texto de BVES.
- Inscribese en las noticias electrónicas de BVES para recibir correos

electrónicos con información actualizada y boletines informativos semestrales. El enlace se encuentra en la parte inferior de la página [www.BVESinc.com](http://www.BVESinc.com).

- Tenga preparado un plan de evacuación de emergencia y un kit de suministros para catástrofes.
- Siga a BVES en Facebook: @BearValleyElectricServiceInc

**Comunicación bidireccional mediante mensajes de texto de emergencia**  
Cuando reciba un mensaje de texto de emergencia de BVES, podrá comunicarse con la empresa de las siguientes maneras desde su teléfono:

- Envíe un mensaje de texto al 1-800-808-2837.
- Envíe un mensaje de texto con la palabra "BVES" para habilitar la comunicación bidireccional mediante mensajes de texto de emergencia.
- Envíe un mensaje de texto con la palabra "QUIT" para inhabilitar la comunicación bidireccional mediante mensajes de texto de emergencia.
- Envíe un mensaje de texto con la palabra "OUT" para informar un corte de energía.
- Envíe un mensaje de texto con la palabra "HELP" para obtener más información.
- Envíe un mensaje de texto con la palabra "STATUS" para conocer novedades sobre el corte de energía (cuando haya uno).



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Para ver un resumen del Plan de mitigación de incendios forestales de BVES en español, visite <https://www.bvesinc.com/safety/wildfire-mitigation-plan/>. Visite [www.BVESInc.com/safety/public-safety-power-shutoff/](http://www.BVESInc.com/safety/public-safety-power-shutoff/) para obtener más información sobre nuestro plan.

Pour voir un aperçu du Plan d'atténuation des feux de forêt de BVES en français, veuillez consulter le lien ci-dessous. [www.bvesinc.com/safety/wildfire-mitigation-plan/](http://www.bvesinc.com/safety/wildfire-mitigation-plan/). Rendez-vous sur [www.BVESInc.com/safety/public-safety-power-shutoff/](http://www.BVESInc.com/safety/public-safety-power-shutoff/) pour en savoir plus sur notre plan.

Upang makita ang isang balangkas ng Plano sa Pagpapahina ng Wildfire (Wildfire Mitigation Plan) ng BVES sa Tagalog, pakibisita ang link sa ibaba [www.bvesinc.com/safety/wildfire-mitigation-plan/](http://www.bvesinc.com/safety/wildfire-mitigation-plan/). Bisitahin ang [www.BVESInc.com/safety/public-safety-power-shutoff/](http://www.BVESInc.com/safety/public-safety-power-shutoff/) upang tumingin pa tungkol sa aming plano.

Để xem bản phác thảo về Kế hoạch Giảm thiểu Cháy rừng của BVES bằng tiếng Việt, vui lòng truy cập liên kết bên dưới. [www.bvesinc.com/safety/wildfire-mitigation-plan/](http://www.bvesinc.com/safety/wildfire-mitigation-plan/). Truy cập [www.BVESInc.com/safety/public-safety-power-shutoff/](http://www.BVESInc.com/safety/public-safety-power-shutoff/) để xem thêm về kế hoạch của chúng tôi.

若要查看《BVES 的野火緩解計畫－中文版》，請前往下方連結。 [www.bvesinc.com/safety/wildfire-mitigation-plan/](http://www.bvesinc.com/safety/wildfire-mitigation-plan/)。前往 [www.BVESInc.com/safety/public-safety-power-shutoff/](http://www.BVESInc.com/safety/public-safety-power-shutoff/) 查看更多計畫內容。

Tava na koan kuntaa ini-nto ntxaa ña kii ña sa'a BVES's Wildfire Mitigation Plan ña tu'n nta'vi kivi katei-nto ña tu'un nti'l'yo'o. [www.BVESInc.com/safety/public-safety-power-shutoff/](http://www.BVESInc.com/safety/public-safety-power-shutoff/) tava na kivi kuni-nto ntxaa ña kii ña ntikani ini'nti sa'a-nti.

Par chile yguui laty rgwe dikh nses lo gyets xte BVES xa mod guny buny tyen quietru chasgui caruli qun Dikhsa, ysaguelo quui laty ca rrai guet re. [www.bvesinc.com/safety/wildfire-mitigation-plan/](http://www.bvesinc.com/safety/wildfire-mitigation-plan/). Gugui [www.BVESInc.com/safety/public-safety-power-shutoff/](http://www.BVESInc.com/safety/public-safety-power-shutoff/) tyen chile guinyloru xcyetsen.

Visit [www.BVESInc.com/safety/public-safety-power-shutoff/](http://www.BVESInc.com/safety/public-safety-power-shutoff/) to view more about our plan.

Visite [www.BVESInc.com/safety/public-safety-power-shutoff/](http://www.BVESInc.com/safety/public-safety-power-shutoff/) para obtener más información sobre nuestro plan.