



**California Public Utilities Commission**  
**505 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco**

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**PRESS RELEASE**

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## **CPUC PROPOSES NEW GUIDELINES AND RULES TO DRIVE CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT IN UTILITY EXECUTION OF PUBLIC SAFETY POWER SHUTOFF EVENTS**

SAN FRANCISCO, May 21, 2021 - The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) today issued for public comment a proposal that would enhance and update existing guidelines and rules for utility Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) events in advance of the 2021 wildfire season. As a result, electric investor-owned utilities (utilities) would be required to take a results-based approach to improving notification and mitigating the impacts of PSPS events. The proposal makes clear that in implementing de-energization as a wildfire mitigation strategy of last resort, the utilities must balance the risk of harm from utility-ignited wildfires against the public harms of shutting off power. The proposal will be on the CPUC's June 24, 2021 Voting Meeting agenda.

The proposal, officially termed a Proposed Decision, recommends additional guidelines and rules intended to augment existing directives to better address some of the issues that arose during the utilities' execution of their 2020 PSPS events. Specifically, these additional guidelines and rules are intended to ensure utilities are continually improving planning, preparation, and access to resources during PSPS events and enhancing notification of, and mitigating impacts on, access and functional needs and vulnerable populations.

These guidelines and rules would go into effect immediately if adopted and would require annual reporting to increase transparency into the utilities' planning and execution of PSPS events. Specifically, the utilities would be required to submit an annual Pre-Season Report that details actions taken by the utilities to prepare for and mitigate the impacts of future PSPS events and an annual Post-Season Report that provides data on customer-focused outcomes during prior year PSPS events.



## **Guidelines to Improve Planning, Preparation, and Access to Resources During PSPS Events**

The proposal would require utilities to:

1. Conduct annual **PSPS Exercises** that use the same channels of decision-making, knowledge transfer, implementation, and communication that would be used in an actual PSPS event.
2. Include additional entities under the definition of **Critical Facilities and Infrastructure** to ensure that entities essential to public safety receive advance notification of PSPS events and additional assistance in assessing the need for backup generation to ensure resiliency during de-energization.
3. Provide the following at **Community Resource Centers (CRCs)**: device charging stations that are capable of powering medical devices, cellular network services, water, chairs, PSPS information representatives, and restrooms.

## **Guidelines to Enhance Notification of, and Mitigate Impacts on Access and Functional Needs and Vulnerable Populations**

The proposal would require utilities to:

1. Administer a program to support **resiliency** for customers that rely on electricity to maintain necessary life functions. The program must provide adequate and appropriate support **for the anticipated duration** of a PSPS event.
2. Have utility representatives at the Senior Vice President level meet at least quarterly with representatives of Access and Functional Needs state agencies and community-based organizations to develop, implement, and review each utility's **annual Access and Functional Needs plan**.
3. Conduct **annual surveys** of customers with access and functional needs to assess whether they were aware of PSPS events and resources available to them, were notified of a possible de-energization event, and were able to utilize electric equipment to maintain necessary life functions for the duration of any de-energization events. To the extent possible, the utilities must track and report survey **results according to specific access or functional needs**, for instance persons with a vision impairment as distinct from persons with a developmental disability.



Today's proposal is informed by stakeholder participation in this proceeding and a series of public meetings held by the CPUC in January and March that focused on assessing the utilities' 2020 performance. It also builds upon prior PSPS directives issued by the CPUC. Most recently, a May 2020 CPUC Decision ([D.20-05-051](#)) issued in this proceeding adopted guidelines and rules to ensure utilities better comprehend and address the needs of impacted communities and are minimizing the duration and impact of PSPS events on communities. Previously, a May 2019 CPUC Decision ([D.19-05-042](#)) adopted PSPS communication and notification guidelines and rules for utilities and presented the CPUC's overarching de-energization strategy, along with updates to the requirements established by the CPUC in Resolution ESRB-8 (July 12, 2018). For more information, visit [www.cpuc.ca.gov/psps](http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/psps).

The proposal is available at:

<https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/PublishedDocs/Efile/G000/M384/K990/384990235.PDF>.

Documents related to this proceeding are available at:

[https://apps.cpuc.ca.gov/apex/f?p=401:56:0::NO:RP,57,RIR:P5\\_PROCEEDING\\_SELECT:R181200](https://apps.cpuc.ca.gov/apex/f?p=401:56:0::NO:RP,57,RIR:P5_PROCEEDING_SELECT:R181200)

[5](#). By clicking the "Public Comments" tab, members of the public can submit comments on the proposal.

The CPUC regulates services and utilities, protects consumers, safeguards the environment, and assures Californians' access to safe and reliable utility infrastructure and services. For more information on the CPUC, please visit [www.cpuc.ca.gov](http://www.cpuc.ca.gov).

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