



California Public Utilities Commission
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PRESS RELEASE

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CPUC ISSUES CITATIONS TO PG&E FOR SAFETY CODE VIOLATIONS

SAN FRANCISCO, November 22, 2021 - The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) today issued two staff Citations totaling \$7.5 million to Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) for safety failures.

A \$5 million Citation was issued for PG&E's failure to thoroughly inspect the Ignacio-Alto-Sausalito transmission lines from 2009 through 2018 and complete 22 high-priority repairs within the time allowed under CPUC regulations (General Order 95). A second \$2.5 million Citation was issued to PG&E for incomplete distribution pole inspections in 2019 that violated the requirements of CPUC regulations (General Order 165). Third, the CPUC issued a directive to PG&E with corrective actions the utility must take regarding an incident with a Cellon-treated pole that occurred in Danville, Calif. in 2020.

The \$5 million Citation relates to a safety notification PG&E reported to the CPUC in 2019. As part of its Wildfire Safety Inspection Program, PG&E began to inspect the Ignacio-Alto-Sausalito transmission lines in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. These inspections revealed a series of high-priority deficiencies that needed immediate correcting on 21 transmission towers, including rusted and damaged tower parts, joints, and worn C-hooks. Rule 18 of the CPUC's General Order 95 requires such high-priority deficiencies to be resolved immediately as they pose an "immediate risk of high potential impact to safety or reliability." Although PG&E initiated the Sausalito Emergency Project to replace and repair the towers, it failed to resolve these deficiencies in a timely manner and in accordance with Rule 18 requirements. PG&E finalized its completion of all corrections on April 14, 2020.

The \$2.5 million Citation relates to a separate safety issue notification. In May 2021, PG&E notified the CPUC that its own internal records identified 54,755 distribution poles that had not undergone



routine detailed inspections in 2019 that are required per General Order 165. The poles had been inspected in 2019 under a separate program, the Wildfire Safety Inspection Program, but the program inspection criteria did not meet all the detailed inspection requirements of the General Order. Since notifying the CPUC of this oversight, PG&E was directed to work on an accelerated schedule to complete all of the missed inspections and update its records. However, because these inspections were incomplete, CPUC staff found PG&E in violation of General Order 165.

The directive issued to PG&E today relates to an incident in which a distribution pole failed in a customer's backyard in Danville, Calif. in 2020. PG&E issued a safety notification to the CPUC following the incident, stating that its inspection procedures for Cellon-treated wood poles failed to accurately assess pole integrity and identify potential internal dry rot. The directive sent to PG&E sets forth reporting and notification requirements, follow-up action items, and corrective actions for PG&E to take in order to resolve the issue and ensure appropriate safety mitigation efforts are in place to prevent future incidents from occurring.

Information about the Citations is available at: <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/regulatory-services/enforcement-and-citations/electric-safety-citations>. PG&E has 30 calendar days from today to pay or file an appeal.

The CPUC's Safety and Enforcement Division (SED) has staff-level authority to issue Citations to regulated electric companies for violation of CPUC codes and regulations.

Safety violations are identified through SED's ongoing audits, inspections, and investigations; by the utilities themselves through mandatory disclosure requirements; or through the CPUC's whistleblower program for anonymous and protected reporting of violations. Whistleblowers can call 1-800-649-7570 or email safetyhotline@cpuc.ca.gov. The CPUC also has an online whistleblower reporting form at <https://ia.cpuc.ca.gov/whblow/> where complaints can be submitted anonymously.

The many actions the CPUC is taking to hold PG&E accountable for safely serving its customers include:



- Established specific [metrics](#) to systemically evaluate PG&E’s operational safety performance and to further implement the [Enhanced Oversight and Enforcement Process](#) imposed upon PG&E by the CPUC as a condition of approving PG&E’s plan for exiting bankruptcy in May 2020.
- Directed PG&E to take immediate action to reduce and mitigate customer impacts from the sudden loss of power due to PG&E’s execution of its [Fast Trip](#) program.
- Placed PG&E into the first step of an [Enhanced Oversight and Enforcement](#) process based on the company’s failure to sufficiently prioritize clearing vegetation on its highest-risk power lines as part of its wildfire mitigation work in 2020, and conducting [fact-finding](#) to determine whether to recommend advancing PG&E further within the Enhanced Oversight and Enforcement process.
- Directed PG&E to address its preparedness for Public Safety Power Shutoffs at a [public briefing](#).
- Ordered PG&E to make enhancements to its [Public Safety Power Shutoff](#) process.
- Ordered PG&E to create a mobile app for customers to report electric infrastructure safety concerns.
- Established standards, scope, and expectations for the Independent Safety Monitor that will provide safety monitoring information to the CPUC beginning in February 2022, also a condition of approving PG&E’s plan for existing bankruptcy in May 2020.
- Continual monitoring of PG&E’s safety enhancement actions ordered in a CPUC 2018-2020 natural gas system locate and mark investigation.
- Continual monitoring of PG&E’s safety enhancement actions ordered in a CPUC 2017-2018 wildfires investigation.
- Ongoing monitoring and reporting of PG&E’s safety culture ordered in a 2015 investigation following PG&E’s 2010 natural gas transmission pipeline explosion in San Bruno.

The CPUC regulates services and utilities, 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.

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