


LUCIA MAR UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF EDUCATION

Date: September 3, 2019  
To: Board of Education  
From:  Andy Stenson, Superintendent  
Subject: Report, Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) – PG&E and possible events

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Background:

**Important Update Regarding Potential Power Outages:**

As a result of recent deadly wildfires in California, Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E) has enacted a new policy that will likely impact Lucia Mar USD in the future. PG&E plans to take down power to distribution and/or transmission lines feeding pre-determined meters when the following conditions exist in/around the area:

- dry vegetation/high fire fuel loads
- warm conditions with high winds
- low humidity rates

As a precaution under these extreme conditions, PG&E reserves the right to take the power down with little/no advance warning to customers. Additionally, they state they will keep power off during the entire duration of wind event, *and for 1-2 days after the event ends* so they can visually inspect the lines to make sure all lines are still up and safe.

There are two possible scenarios at this time. The first scenario is the most likely to occur, the second scenario is less likely:

***Scenario #1: Distribution Lines (most likely scenario)***

Due to hazardous fire conditions in the eastern areas of Lucia Mar boundaries, lines feeding power to the following schools would be de-energized:

Arroyo Grande High School  
Nipomo High School  
Central Coast New Tech High School  
Lopez High School/Independent Study/Adults in Transition Program  
Judkins Middle  
Mesa Middle  
Paulding Middle  
Branch Elementary  
Fairgrove Elementary  
Grover Heights Elementary  
Nipomo Elementary  
Oceano Elementary  
Shell Beach Elementary

District Office  
Transportation  
Facilities/Maintenance  
Oceano Community Center

*(We are advised that Grover Beach Elementary, Harloe Elementary, Lange Elementary, Ocean View Elementary, Dana Elementary, and Student Services Support Center are expected to remain powered)*

**Scenario #2: Transmission Lines (least likely scenario)**

This scenario would lead to massive, complete power outages to all Lucia Mar schools. Transmission lines feeding San Luis Obispo County and Santa Barbara Counties merge in Coalinga, California. If conditions in/around Coalinga (117 miles from Arroyo Grande) meet the criteria of high temperatures + high winds + low humidity, these transmissions would be de-energized.

Factors Contributing to Unsafe Situations for Prolonged, Known Power Outages:

- a. Water/sewer systems lose reliability after several days
- b. Fire Alarm systems cease to function after approximately 24 hours
- c. Phone System has limited life span without power
- d. Traffic Signals work on back-up power for +/- 8 hours
- e. Some traffic intersections have no battery back up at all
- f. Due to other pressures, Emergency Services personnel are likely to be strained
- g. Emergency Services/Transportation Services - fuel scarcity concerns

**Under Review - Suggested Lucia Mar USD Response to Public Safety Power Shutdown (PSPS)**

District administration is reviewing plans for training, communication and support to ensure safe and effective response for our students, staff and families in the event of a PSPS. In general, the following guidelines are initially planned:

-If power goes out during the school day, all schools will remain in session for the remainder of the day (no different than our current practice) Standard dismissal protocol in place.

-If power is known to be off for all/part of the next school day, all schools will be canceled. All available and effective means of communication to be deployed (Blackboard, text, media)

-Parent updates and notification will continue each day through available means.

Additional Factors Under Consideration: Single Day vs. Multi-Day Outages

1. Safety and Sanitation
2. Perishable food and potable water needs
3. Transportation and routes to/from school
4. Communications (internal and external)
5. Employee status on school closure days
6. Make-up of loss in state-funded revenues
7. Long term: build in 'Fire Danger Days' similar to 'Snow Days' in other regions?

This is an initial presentation for the board and public. Additional information and plans will be shared as plans are developed.

Recommendation:

Report only

Board Goals:

Student and Staff Success, Organizational Excellence

Contact Person:

Andy Stenson  
Superintendent



## Community Wildfire Safety Program Public Safety Power Shutoff

### Working Together To Protect Our Communities From Wildfires

Given the continued and growing threat of extreme weather and wildfires, and as an additional precautionary measure following the 2017 and 2018 wildfires, we are expanding and enhancing our Community Wildfire Safety Program to further reduce wildfire risks and help keep our customers and the communities we serve safe. This includes expanding our Public Safety Power Shutoff program beginning with the 2019 wildfire season to include all electric lines that pass through high fire-threat areas – both distribution and transmission.

We know how much our customers rely on electric service and that there are safety risks on both sides. We will only proactively turn off lines in the interest of safety to help reduce the likelihood of an ignition when extreme fire danger conditions are forecasted. While customers in high fire-threat areas are more likely to be affected, any of PG&E's more than 5 million electric customers could have their power shut off if their community relies upon a line that passes through a high fire-threat area.

### Public Safety Power Shutoff Criteria

Our Wildfire Safety Operations Center (WSOC) monitors fire danger conditions across our service area and evaluates whether to turn off electric power lines in the interest of safety.

While no single factor will drive a Public Safety Power Shutoff, some factors include:



**A RED FLAG WARNING**  
declared by the National Weather Service



**LOW HUMIDITY LEVELS**  
generally 20% and below



**FORECASTED SUSTAINED WINDS GENERALLY ABOVE 25 MPH AND WIND GUSTS IN EXCESS OF APPROXIMATELY 45 MPH**, depending on location and site-specific conditions such as temperature, terrain and local climate



**CONDITION OF DRY FUEL**  
on the ground and live vegetation (moisture content)

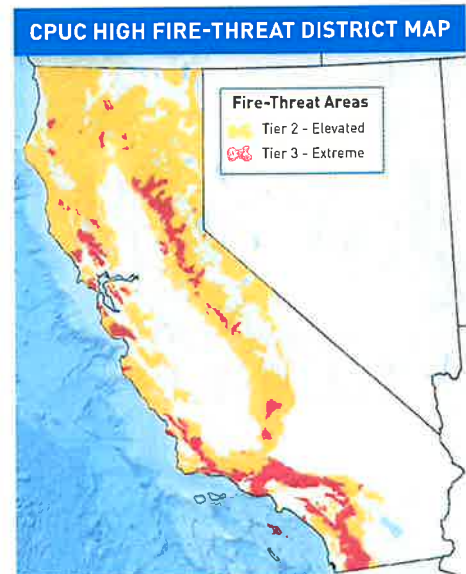


**ON-THE-GROUND, REAL-TIME OBSERVATIONS**  
from PG&E's WSOC and field observations from PG&E crews

May 2019

## Potentially Impacted Areas

- The most likely electric lines to be considered for shutting off for safety will be those that pass through areas that have been designated by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) as at elevated (Tier 2) or extreme (Tier 3) risk for wildfire. This includes both distribution and transmission lines.
- The specific area and number of affected customers will depend on forecasted weather conditions and which circuits PG&E needs to turn off for public safety.
- Although a customer may not live or work in a high fire-threat area, their power may also be shut off if their community relies upon a line that passes through an area experiencing extreme fire danger conditions.
- This means that any customer who receives electric service from PG&E should be prepared for a possible public safety power outage.



Source: California Public Utilities Commission  
[cpuc.ca.gov/FireThreatMaps](http://cpuc.ca.gov/FireThreatMaps)

## PSPS Event Notifications

Extreme weather threats can change quickly. When possible, we will provide customers with advance notice prior to turning off the power. We will also provide updates until power is restored.

### TIMING OF NOTIFICATIONS (when possible)

- **~48 HOURS** before power is turned off
- **~24 HOURS** before power is turned off
- **JUST BEFORE** power is turned off
- **DURING THE PUBLIC SAFETY OUTAGE**
- **ONCE POWER HAS BEEN RESTORED**



### HOW WE'LL NOTIFY CUSTOMERS

We will attempt to reach customers through **calls, texts and emails** using the contact information we have on file. We will also use **pge.com** and **social media** channels, and we will keep **local news** and **radio outlets** informed and updated.

## Working With Our Customers To Prepare

We are continuing to reach out to our customers and communities about wildfire safety and steps they can take to prepare their homes, families and businesses.

- **Update your contact info** by visiting [pge.com/mywildfirealerts](http://pge.com/mywildfirealerts) today to make sure we have your current contact information.
- **Identify backup charging methods** for phones and keep hard copies of emergency numbers.
- **Plan for any medical needs** like medications that need to be refrigerated or devices that require power.
- **Build or restock your emergency kit** with flashlights, fresh batteries, first aid supplies and cash.

## Learn More

about PG&E's Community Wildfire Safety Program.



Call us at  
**1-866-743-6589**



Email [wildfiresafety@pge.com](mailto:wildfiresafety@pge.com)



Visit [pge.com/wildfiresafety](http://pge.com/wildfiresafety)