

AEC's Wildfire Mitigation Plan Public Safety Power Shutoff - FAQs

1. Q: What is a Public Safety Power Shutoff Event?

A: A Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) is a practice that all electric utilities may use to preemptively shut off power in high fire risk areas to reduce fire risk during extreme and potentially dangerous weather conditions. Anza Electric Cooperative's (AEC) priority with the implementation of PSPS is the safety of the public, its members and its employees. AEC prides itself on service reliability and turning off the power to its members is not something that the cooperative takes lightly. PSPS events are the option of last resort in a line of operational procedures AEC employs to mitigate the risk of fire when conditions warrant.

2. Q: What is the methodology used by AEC to determine High Risk Fire Areas?

A: AEC considers members located in High Fire Risk Areas as those within the California Public Utilities Commission's (CPUC) Tier 2 (elevated risk) and Tier 3 (extreme risk) Fire Threat Zones. The CPUC Fire-Threat Map was developed with input from the U.S. Forest Service, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) and the states electric utilities, including AEC. To learn more about the CPUC Fire-Threat Map, please visit the CPUC's Fire Threat Map webpage <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/FireThreatMaps/>.

3. Q: What are the benefits of a PSPS in regard to community safety?

A: Debris and tree limbs can be blown into power lines during wind events, which could cause a services interruption (e.g. an electric wire to fail). Depending on the situation, these interruptions may have the potential to generate sparks that could ignite a fire. This is especially concerning when strong winds coupled with abundant fuel, dry conditions, and difficult to access terrain can increase the difficulty in fighting fires.

While AEC has operational practices that seek to limit the effects of debris when it contacts with overhead electrical equipment, we cannot stop every instance.

Preemptively shutting off power is a last resort in our prevention and mitigation strategy. Although disruptive for our members, preemptively shutting off power to our lines may be necessary to ensure the safety of our community and employees when extreme weather conditions present clear and immediate danger.

AEC's Wildfire Mitigation Plan Public Safety Power Shutoff - FAQs

4. Q: What are the factors and criteria for PSPS?

A: In considering whether to shut off power to lines in affected areas, AEC considers a wide variety of factors which may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The National Weather Service has issued Red Flag Warnings for areas that fall within the High Risk Areas of our service territory
- Ongoing assessments from AEC's weather monitoring stations, specifically conditions related to wind speed, humidity, and temperature
- Real-time situational awareness information from highly trained personnel positioned in High Fire Risk Areas identified as at risk for extreme weather conditions
- Continuously monitoring fuel conditions in the High Fire Risk Areas
- Specific concerns from local and state fire authorities regarding the potential consequences of wildfires in select locations
- Awareness of mandatory or voluntary evacuation orders in place
- Expected impact of de-energizing circuits on essential services such as public safety agencies, water pumps, wells, etc.
- Other operational considerations to minimize potential wildfire ignitions

5. Q: How will AEC communicate to members before and after a PSPS event?

A: AEC plans to begin notifying members approximately 48 hours in advance of a potential PSPS event and will attempt to notify members approximately 24 hours before power is shut off. Additional notifications will be made throughout the outage, when power has been shut off and when it has been restored. There may be situations which prevent AEC from providing advance notice. The actual onset of extreme weather conditions and other circumstances beyond our control may impact coordination and notification efforts.

Notification may occur via a combination of phone calls, member messaging, anzaelectric.org, and social media.

AEC's Wildfire Mitigation Plan Public Safety Power Shutoff - FAQs

6. Q: How will AEC coordinate with local governments, emergency operations of the local governments and first responders before and during a PSPS event?

A: In advance of PSPS events, AEC will contact all local government agencies, including all elected representative offices and the Riverside County Emergency Management Department, to inform them about the PSPS protocol, including the location of the circuits which may be shut off during a PSPS event.

When a PSPS event is a possibility, AEC management team will manage both the operational and communication tasks associated with an event, which includes interfacing with local governments' emergency operations first responders such as police and fire agencies, other government agencies, and essential members, such as schools, telecommunications companies, the local prison labor camp and all Indian tribes.

When feasible, notifications to local government and other agencies (as noted above) will:

- Be made approximately 2 hours before members are notified so that they have visibility to impacted circuits
- Include key AEC contact information for the agency to use around the clock during the PSPS event
- Include when the circuits will be shut off and when they are restored
- Advise that AEC personnel will be available 24 hours a day during the PSPS event to interface with local governments

Notifications to essential members will be made in advance, when feasible, as well.

7. Q: What is AEC doing to ensure accurate member contact information?

A: AEC leverages various communications channels, including social media, to encourage members to update their contact information.

- AEC routinely contacts members who have been identified as having critical needs, to ensure that there have been no changes in status and to verify all contact information is current.

AEC's Wildfire Mitigation Plan Public Safety Power Shutoff - FAQs

- During public/member meetings, AEC provides documents that members may complete to update contact and life support information.

8. Q: How long can a PSPS event last?

A: A PSPS event will last as long as the extreme and potentially dangerous weather conditions exist, along with additional time to inspect/repair our equipment in the affected area(s) to ensure safe and reliable power restoration.

9. Q: How is it determined if it is safe to restore power?

A: First, extreme weather conditions that triggered the shutoff must subside to safe levels before restoration is considered. Second, ground patrols will be conducted to ensure that power can be safely restored to our members.

10. Q: Will AEC provide generators to members during a PSPS?

A: AEC does not provide generators to members, except in limited cases where the need is coordinated in advance between ACE and local agencies for critical life safety reasons, or first responders. For members with personal medical equipment and other critical personal devices, AEC urges members to explore safe, alternative power sources, such as Uninterruptible Power Supplies (UPS), that can be used safely indoors to power medical equipment during a potential extended power shutoff. For more information about UPS systems, please visit EnergyStar's UPS webpage at <https://www.energystar.gov/productfinder/product/certified-uninterruptible-power-supplies/results>.

11. Q: What other steps is AEC doing to reduce fire risk?

A: AEC has engaged in aggressive tree trimming and other vegetation management activities, installed five real-time weather stations throughout our service territory to improve situational awareness, various operational activities – e.g. putting the system on non-reclose as a mitigation effort to reduce the likelihood of starting a fire if something falls into our lines, not automatically re-energizing power lines in high fire risk areas after a circuit interruption, collaborative partnerships with SCE and Riverside County EMD to maintain public safety. Additionally, the cooperative is evaluating a variety of tools and technologies to advance fire safety throughout our system, including system hardening (i.e. wood to steel poles, fire proof pole wrapping technology, etc.).

AEC's Wildfire Mitigation Plan Public Safety Power Shutoff - FAQs

12. Q: Will this be the new normal during high fire/wind events?

A: Yes. Although PSPS events are the last resort in a line of operational procedures AEC employs to mitigate fire risk, it must be part of our strategy as climate change increases the severity and duration of heat waves and other extreme weather events.

13. Q: How often will PSPS events occur?

A: A PSPS event is the last resort when we are faced with extreme weather conditions, and it is impossible to anticipate their frequency. Actual frequency of events will depend on various weather and environmental factors, and the decision will be made with the most accurate assessment of real-time information and situational awareness data available at the time.

14. Q: Does AEC have the legal authority to shut off my power when deemed necessary?

A: California Public Utilities Code § 8387 gives electric cooperatives the authority, as part of its Wildfire Mitigation Plan, to establish protocols for disabling reclosers and deenergizing portions of the electrical distribution system that consider the associated impacts on public safety, as well as protocols related to mitigating the public safety impacts of those protocols, including impacts on critical first responders and on health and communication infrastructure.

15. Q: Will members with solar panels installed be shut off?

A: Yes. When utility power is shut off, your solar energy system is designed to immediately shut down for safety reasons (to avoid back feeding the grid: refer to rule 21). A grid tied solar electric system does not provide power during outages unless it includes a battery storage system and transfer switch. Your power will typically be reinstated moments after grid power is restored. However, you may need to manually reset your solar system's inverter back to service after your power is reinstated (most systems automatically rest after power is restored).

AEC's Wildfire Mitigation Plan Public Safety Power Shutoff - FAQs

16. Q: What are some preparedness tips for our community before, during, and after a PSPS event?

A: Ensuring you are prepared for wildfires will enable you to be better prepared for a PSPS event. The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), has a website focused on wildfire preparedness, <http://www.readyforwildfire.org/>. To prepare specifically for a power outage, please visit <https://www.ready.gov/power-outages> which contains great information for dealing with various issues before, during and after an extended power outage.

17. Q: Do other utilities have similar PSPS protocols?

A: Yes. All Investor Owned Utilities (IOUs) are required to have PSPS protocols. SDG&E has had similar protocols in place for a number of years.