



Media Release

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OREGON ADOPTS PUBLIC SAFETY POWER SHUTOFF RULES FOR UTILITIES AS WILDFIRE SEASON APPROACHES

PUC reminds Oregonians to be ready for 2022 wildfire season

SALEM, Ore. – The Oregon Public Utility Commission (PUC) recently approved permanent rules for investor-owned electric utilities, including Portland General Electric, PacifiCorp, and Idaho Power, regarding public safety power shutoffs (PSPSs). Temporary rules were implemented for the 2021 wildfire season while the PUC, utilities, public safety partners, and communities worked to finalize permanent rules. This is a timely decision as May is National Wildfire Awareness Month and wildfire season quickly approaches.

A PSPS is an important safety measure designed to help protect people and communities in high fire-risk areas by proactively shutting off electricity during extreme and dangerous weather conditions. De-energizing power lines through a PSPS is a wildfire risk mitigation strategy of last resort because of the significant impacts the loss of power can have on communities and the extensive planning and communication that are needed to effectively implement them. These new rules lay out specific communication requirements for the utilities to inform public safety partners, state agencies, local jurisdictions, and the public of the need to implement a PSPS to mitigate wildfire risk, as well as updates at least every 24 hours until service is restored.

“Extreme fire weather can clearly happen throughout Oregon,” said Letha Tawney, PUC Commissioner.

“Implementing a PSPS is a complex decision that impacts communities including use of home medical devices, access to 911 services, and the ability to pump water. However, it’s a tool in the utility’s tool kit to help reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires, if they determine necessary.”

View the order detailing the PSPS rules at <https://apps.puc.state.or.us/orders/2022ords/22-159.pdf>.

The PUC is reminding Oregonians to get ready for the 2022 wildfire season and potential power outages. While the utilities have identified high risk zones, under extreme conditions PSPS could be utilized more widely.

How to Prepare for Wildfires Before They Happen

- Register to receive alerts from official sources. Download the FEMA app and receive real-time alerts from the National Weather Service for up to five locations nationwide. Also, sign up for emergency notifications with your local city and/or county, as well as outage alerts from your electric utility service provider.
- Develop an emergency plan and make sure everyone in your household knows and understands what to do in the event of an evacuation.
- Create a circle of safety around your home, which is a fuel-free defensible space that can help reduce fire danger. Visit [Keep Oregon Green](#) for more information.

How to Prepare for a Potential Power Outage

- Be two weeks ready – Gather food, medical supplies, batteries, pet supplies, among other things, needed by family members during an outage or evacuation for up to two weeks. [Learn more about what supplies to consider.](#)
- For individuals with a medical condition that requires power, please contact your service provider in advance of an outage to register a Medical Certificate. This certification provides added benefits and helps the utility ensure they meet your needs in the event of an outage. Also, consider a backup generator or alternative location for power needs.
- Keep cell phones fully charged in anticipation of an outage. Consider a car-charger for cell phones and other electronic devices.
- Make sure your utility service provider has current contact information for notifications by updating your account online.
- Access outage and PSPS information online for [Portland General Electric](#), [Pacific Power](#), and [Idaho Power](#)

What to do During a Power Outage

- Contact your electric utility service provider to inform them of an outage. Below is the contact information for the investor-owned utilities regulated by the PUC. If uncertain which utility serves your area, visit <https://www.oregon.gov/energy/energy-oregon/pages/find-your-utility.aspx>.
 - Portland General Electric – 800-544-1795
 - Pacific Power – 877-508-5088
 - Idaho Power – 800-488-6151
- Avoid downed power lines at all costs.
- Stay clear of utility crews working to restore service in your community.
- Use flashlights or battery operated lanterns for emergency lighting. Do not use candles or other potential fire hazards.
- Turn off lights and unplug electric appliances except for the refrigerator and freezer to help avoid a surge to the system when service is restored. After turning off all the lights, turn one light on to know when power has been restored.
- Use generators safely – Do not run the generator inside the home or garage or anywhere near a window or vent, as these spaces can capture deadly levels of carbon monoxide. [Learn more about proper use of a generator](#) to avoid hazardous conditions.
- Check on elderly neighbors or community members with special needs who might need additional assistance.

Natural Gas Tips

- If required to evacuate, no need to shut off natural gas.
- If natural gas appliances do not operate properly once electricity is restored, call your natural gas service provider.
- If natural gas service is shut off, do not turn on yourself. Call your natural gas service provider to restore service.
- If you smell natural gas, evacuate immediately and call 911.

For additional information on fire prevention and preparedness, visit www.oregon.gov/puc/safety/Pages/Power-Outage-Prep.aspx.

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