



On the Alert!

Date: August 9, 2023
Attention: ASCIP Members
Affected: Administrators, Risk Management, Faculty & Staff
Applicability: Community Colleges, K-12, & Charter Schools

PUBLIC SAFETY POWER SHUTOFFS

A **Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS)** or De-Energization is a measure designed to help keep communities in high-risk wildfire areas safe by proactively shutting off power during extreme and dangerous weather conditions that can result in catastrophic wildfires. This measure is only taken as a last resort to help ensure community safety. During a PSPS, all electrical utility customers, including public schools serviced by affected power lines, will have their power shut off. To help reduce the likelihood of an ignition, a PSPS will occur when the most extreme fire danger conditions are forecasted. Several criteria are considered to determine if power should be turned off, including:

1. **Red Flag Warnings** declared by the National Weather Service, indicate high fire risk due to a combination of high winds, low humidity, and dry conditions.
2. **Low humidity levels**, usually around 20% or lower, can dry out vegetation and increase fire susceptibility.
3. **Forecasted sustained winds** above 25 mph and wind gusts more than 45 mph, as strong winds can rapidly spread fires.
4. The condition of **dry fuel on the ground** and live vegetation, as drier fuels are more prone to ignition.
5. **On-the-ground, real-time information, and observations** to assess the current fire threat accurately.

It is impossible to predict which school locations may be affected. A PSPS could occur several times per year in any given area. In anticipation of potential PSPS occurrences, districts should plan as follows:

- ❖ Review your local electrical utility's Public Safety Power Shutoff or De-Energization plans.
- ❖ Include a PSPS Emergency Response in your district's Comprehensive School Safety Plan (CSSP).
- ❖ Update your Emergency Response plan to include the possible need for the release of students and communicating with your community (staff, students, parents, etc.) for possible school closure if a power outage is too disruptive or deemed a safety concern.
- ❖ Consider the use of generators for power during outages (and in other emergency responses) and if necessary, consolidate classes into libraries or cafeterias where a generator can supply power.
- ❖ Have flashlights and emergency lighting available, along with extra batteries.
- ❖ Create a list of critical equipment that must be turned off during an outage to prevent damage.
- ❖ For short-term power outages, educators should have emergency lesson plans, books, games, and activities prepared that do not require electricity.

PSPS Resources:

[The Power of Being Prepared](#)

[CAL FIRE - Ready for Wildfire](#)

[Cal OES - Governor's Office of Emergency Services](#)

Please contact your ASCIP Risk Services Consultant or our Risk Services team at RM_Info@ascip.org for questions or to discuss further.