

PACIFIC GAS AND ELECTRIC COMPANY
Wildfire Mitigation Plans Discovery 2022
Data Response

PG&E Data Request No.:	OEIS_005-Q01		
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Date Sent:	March 23, 2022	Requesting Party:	Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety
PG&E Witness:		Requester:	Kevin Miller

SUBJECT: EPSS ANALYSIS

QUESTION 01

Provide and describe the “EPSS Reliability Impact analysis” as mentioned on page 494 of PG&E’s 2022 WMP Update.

ANSWER 01

For the safety of our customers, PG&E is re-engineering the safety settings on our powerlines to automatically turn off power in one-tenth of a second if a wildfire threat is detected. In 2022, our Enhanced Powerline Safety Settings (EPSS) program brings these new safety settings to all distribution circuits in High Fire Threat District (HFTD) and High Fire Risk Areas (HFRA) in our service territory, as well as select non-HFTD areas. See 2022 WMP, p. 733. While having the more sensitive settings is helping to prevent wildfires, it can also result in power outages for our customers, which we are taking steps to alleviate.

To understand which customers and areas of our territory could be most impacted by the implementation of EPSS, we conducted the EPSS Reliability Impact analysis (hereafter “Reliability Study”) anchored upon the historical performance of each circuit included in the 2022 EPSS Program scope. For these circuits, we reviewed applicable outages from 2019 – 2021 between May and November and recalculated each outage’s customer impact as if EPSS had been enabled – quantifying by Customers Experiencing Sustained Outages (CESO). The recalculation is necessary as the EPSS settings are intended to detect potential wildfire threats that normally operating devices, or manual protection devices such as fuses, would not otherwise detect. However, this means that outages that previously had resulted in fuse or transformer level outages may now result in zone-level outages when EPSS is enabled.

Please see attached WMP-Discovery2022_DR_OEIS_005-Q01Atch01.xlsx for PG&E’s preliminary Reliability Study as of January 25, 2022 that informed Q1 2022 EPSS Program planning activities. Note we may adapt, update, or augment the results of this study with additional data or insights to further improve and target reliability mitigations to the areas that will have the greatest impact for our customers and communities. Furthermore, we continue to strengthen our customer support by augmenting the resources available to customers to help ease the burden of losing power through the expansion of programs such as:

1. Generator and battery rebates for customers who rely on well water, customers in our Medical Baseline Program and certain small businesses in Tiers 2 and 3 HFTDs, as well as those affected by EPSS. This year, we are changing the support tiers so the program is available to more customers.
2. Portable batteries for customers in our Medical Baseline Program who live in high fire-risk areas. This year, we are dropping income-based qualifications.
3. Backup power transfer meters to make it easier and safer for customers to connect a portable generator. This program is launching this year as a pilot to select customers and will be available to all customers in Tiers 2 and 3 HFTDs and those affected by EPSS this year.
4. Clearer outage notification language with more accurate estimated times of restoration
5. New partnerships with community-based organizations to share resources and information as well as food resource partnerships with Meals on Wheels and local food banks