

# MITIGATING WILDFIRES IN THE TAHOE BASIN



Catastrophic wildfires have become all too common in California. To mitigate the risk of wildfires in the communities we serve, Liberty Utilities (Liberty) is taking aggressive steps to keep you and your family safe.

Here are a few safety measures Liberty is taking to protect our community:

## VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

### *Inspection*

Liberty crews are deployed year-round throughout the region to inspect trees and vegetation in the vicinity of power lines. In order to comply with state law and safety best practices, any tree or branches that have grown too close to power lines will be trimmed or removed to mitigate any wildfire risk.

### *Removal & Notification*

When trees are identified for trimming, crews are instructed to prune branches and vegetation back a minimum of 12 feet from high voltage lines to ensure adequate clearance is maintained over the maintenance cycle period. Crews will also remove any trees that are dead, diseased or structurally unsound if they have the potential to fall on power lines.

If you spot a tree or branch you feel may be a hazard, submit a tree trimming request at [www.LibertyUtilities.com](http://www.LibertyUtilities.com).

## INFRASTRUCTURE HARDENING

Infrastructure hardening is an ongoing system infrastructure improvement and replacement process aimed at lowering the potential of fires sparked by electric infrastructure. These improvements include some of the following projects:

### *Replacing bare conductors (wires) with covered conductors.*

Covered conductors are wires that are encased in layers of insulation to protect them when energized. Although bare wires have traditionally been used in California as a reliable cost-effective solution, it is prudent to replace bare conductors with covered conductors in high fire risk areas. Installation of covered conductors is taking place on the West Shore and the Coleville/Walker area.

### *Pole load testing and replacement, as needed.*

Failing poles pose safety, reliability and fire risks. In 2020, Liberty Utilities will accelerate the testing and replacement of poles throughout our service territory by more than 600%, from 322 poles inspected last year to more than 2,000 inspections scheduled this year.

### *Replacement of the Brockway Substation in Kings Beach.*

The Brockway Substation is a 60-year-old facility that was constructed with wooden poles and cross arms and obsolete oil-circuit breakers. This facility has been deemed a fire hazard and will be decommissioned and replaced this year. Work on this project is expected to begin in June 2020.



## PUBLIC SAFETY POWER SHUTOFFS (PSPS)

A PSPS is a safety procedure utilized by electric utilities to proactively turn off power when and where weather conditions create a high wildfire risk. The practice of de-energization, which is becoming more and more frequent, is supported by the California Public Utility Commission (CPUC) as a safety best practice.

While no one factor determines the need for a PSPS, Liberty has identified key regional triggers that would warrant issuing a PSPS should all thresholds be met. The key factors that are considered are:

- The Energy Release Component (ERC) which is a measurement of moisture in both live and dead fuels
- Wind speeds (typically 40 mph or higher)
- Fosberg Fire Weather Index which evaluates the potential influence of weather on wildfire and considers factors such as wind, humidity and temperature

In partnership with fire weather experts, Liberty monitors real-time weather data and forecasts and regularly tests fuel moisture during the fire season. If it is determined that the forecasted wind speed, fuel moisture level and evaluated factors within the Fosberg Fire Weather Index meet or exceed safety thresholds, Liberty will initiate a PSPS.

In the event that a PSPS is a possibility, Liberty Utilities will alert medically sensitive customers, cities, counties, public safety partners, regional utilities, cell tower operators, and critical facilities of the potential need to shutoff power. We will keep the community apprised as conditions evolve and will attempt to provide a minimum of 48 hours' notice to all potentially affected customers, public safety partners, and the media prior to turning off the power. Please be aware that the factors that influence a power shutoff can be difficult to forecast, and customers may not receive a 48-hour warning prior to a PSPS event.

Liberty will attempt to contact customers through calls, texts and emails using the contact information on file. It is critically important that customers keep the contact information for their account up to date. We encourage you to call a customer service agent to update your account's contact information to be that you receive these important notifications. If a member of your household is dependent on life sustaining medical equipment you may qualify for the medical baseline program and priority notification. Information on this program can also be obtained by contacting customer service. Liberty customer service agents are available at 1-800-782-2506. In addition to direct customer notifications, PSPS updates will be posted to our website (LibertyUtilities.com) and on our social media channels.



## WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER

Liberty's top priority is the safety of customers and our communities, and we will take every action to keep our beautiful region safe from the risk of wildfire. To learn more about our wildfire mitigation programs, Liberty customers are encouraged to call 800-782-2506, visit [LibertyUtilities.com](http://LibertyUtilities.com) and follow Liberty Utilities on Twitter via @LibertyUtil\_CA or Facebook via @LibertyUtilitiesLT.

We appreciate the community's understanding and cooperation, as we take action to keep the area safe from wildfires.

## CALIFORNIA PROP 65 WARNING

Liberty Utilities uses natural gas and petroleum products, solvents and other chemicals in our operations. We also use wooden utility poles treated with wood preservatives. Petroleum products and their combustion by-product, wood preservatives and other chemicals used in our operation contain chemicals known to the state of California to cause cancer, birth defects or other reproductive harm. Please avoid contact with wooden utility poles. More safety information can be found at <http://oag.ca.gov/prop65/chemicals>.