



Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS) June 2019



Background

Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS) is the practice where Southern California Edison (SCE) shuts off power in high fire risk areas to reduce fire risk during extreme & potentially dangerous fire weather conditions. Debris and tree limbs can be blown into power lines during wind events, which could cause a power interruption (electric wire falls). Depending upon the situation, these interruptions have the potential to generate sparks that could ignite a fire. When strong winds coupled with abundant fuel, dry conditions & difficult to access terrain, fighting fires is difficult.

Preemptively shutting off power is just one SCEs prevention & mitigation strategies to ensure community safety when extreme weather conditions are present. The shutoff will last as long as the extreme & potentially dangerous fire weather conditions exist along w/ additional time to repair/inspect equipment. Frequency of PSPS depends on various weather & environmental factors and follows a typical timeline (<https://www.sce.com/safety/wildfire/pmps>):

Days Ahead of Event			
4-7	3	2	1
Extreme fire conditions forecasted; SCE does predictive modeling to assess potential impact.	SCE monitors fire weather alerts & refines predictive models; first responders placed on alert	Extreme conditions forecasted #1 PSPS notification	Extreme conditions imminent #2 PSPS notification
Power Shutoff			
Extreme fire conditions validated #3 PSPS notification			
Power Restoration			
Extreme fire conditions subside to safe levels; equipment inspected; power restored #4 PSPS notification			

State & Local Protocols / Orange County

- OC Control One receives notifications from SCE 24-48 hours in advance of anticipated PSPS events
- County Emergency Operations Center may activate & request status reports from cities, special districts, etc.
- OCEMS maintains situational awareness over medical/health system & will seek frequent status updates from all hospitals to monitor impacts; Hospitals may receive notifications from multiple sources (SCE, CAHAN, etc.)
- Resource requesting follows same protocol established in emergency operations plans

Hospital Preparedness & Response

AFL 17-06 - Reporting Emergency or Disaster-Related Occurrences, reminds facilities that licensing regulations require facilities to report all emergency and or disaster-related occurrences that threaten welfare, safety, or health of patients, to CDPH L&C Program. AFL 17-06 (<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CHCO/LCP/Pages/AFL-17-06.aspx>).

California Regulations require that a hospital’s emergency lighting & power backup system shall function for a minimum of 24 hours (22CCR70841.Emergency Lighting and Power System). If the PSPS program is in effect and causes the power to go out in a facility, this triggers an “unusual event” as defined in the Public Health and Medical Emergency Operations Manual and response protocol. Outages related to the PSPS are to be reported to the L&C District Office CDPH Orange L&C and to the OC Medical and Health Operational Area Coordinator (MHOAC) via email emsdutyofficer@ochca.com.

Hospitals should assess the following areas & mitigate risk prior to an event (Hospital Planning for Power Outages):

- Energy usage under normal operating conditions.
- Essential functions and minimum electricity needs and backup generators sized appropriately
- Procedures to prioritize emergency power allocation to key resources (i.e. HVAC, ventilators, patient monitors)
- Emergency generator system tests that assure reliable startup and sustained operation
- Immediate emergency generator fuel amount & continued fuel delivery in the event of an extended power outage