



# Brewer's Brief: Public Safety Power Shutoffs

## PREPARING FOR PUBLIC SAFETY POWER SHUTOFFS

### THE BRIEF:

Due to the tragic wildfire losses in recent years, California's major power companies namely San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E), Southern California Edison (SCE) and Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) will be implementing pre-emptive "[Public Safety Power Shutoffs](#)" (PSPS) when the risk of fire is high due to weather conditions. This program was initiated last year and was limited mostly to rural areas. Electricity companies are now including high-voltage transmission lines and may therefore impact both rural and urban areas.

To help CCBA members better understand the changes and challenges of the updated PSPS policies we have prepared the following factsheet outlining:

- [How Public Safety Power Shutoffs Work](#)
- [The Limitations of Brewery Insurance](#)
- [Back Up Power Options](#)
- [Additional Resources](#)

### HOW DOES THE PUBLIC SAFETY POWER SHUTOFF SYSTEM WORK?

The new rules make one thing abundantly clear: No single factor drives a Public Safety Power Shutoff, meaning they have the authority and the intention to cut the power to an entire region if they deem a threat serious enough. **Outages can last up to 48 hours.**

### POWER SHUTOFF PROGRAM CRITERIA:

- Red Flag Warning declared by the National Weather Service (Not an automatic PSPS trigger, but a good indicator)
- Low humidity levels, generally 20 percent and below
- Forecasted sustained winds generally above 25 mph and wind gusts in excess of approximately 45 mph
- Condition of dry fuel on the ground and live vegetation
- On-the-ground, real-time observations from PG&E's Wildfire Safety Operations Center and field crews

### WHICH REGIONS ARE MOST LIKELY TO BE AFFECTED?

The regions that are most likely to be affected by PSPSs are defined as Elevated Risk (Tier 2) and Extreme Risk (Tier 3) wildfire regions.



To learn more about Tier 2 and Tier 3 wildfire regions check out the California Public Utilities Commission interactive [High Fire-Threat District Map](#) which details each tier.

**NOTE:** Electricity providers are taking absolutely no risks as their equipment has been ruled a contributing factor to some of the wildfires throughout California. As such they are ready and authorized to shutoff power in **ALL** regions rather than traditional “high risk” regions. This includes communities who may not be affected by extreme conditions but happen to be served by the same power transmission lines.

### **\*\*\*BREWERY INSURANCE UNLIKELY TO COVER LOSSES\*\*\***

With the backing of the state of California, utilities are not liable for losses due to these planned shutoffs as they will provide “adequate notice” when possible. One important factor to know is that because the power shutdowns are deliberate and anticipated, **they are not considered a covered cause of loss**, such as fire, windstorm, rainstorm, etc. and as a result, your brewery insurance policy may not cover a loss due to a deliberate power shutdown.

**The CCBA highly recommends contacting your insurance agency to inquire what your policy covers and more importantly what isn’t covered.**

### **HOW BREWERY OWNERS CAN MITIGATE THE RISK: BACK UP POWER**

In the event of a Public Safety Power Shutoff brewery owners are likely to have numerous concerns regarding powering their operation. From the largest needs like refrigeration and manufacturing equipment all the way down to lower intensity needs like battery chargers’ - power is required to prevent loss of business productivity and functionality. Emergency power options to consider:

**USB POWER BANKS:** Charging phones, laptops other USB powered devices

- Power Level: 10 Watts
- Cost Level: >\$100

**RECREATIONAL INVERTER:** Small refrigerators, TVs, lights charging etc.

- Power level: Up to 2,000 watts
- Cost: \$400-\$1,000

**MIDSIZED INVERTER:** Midsize refrigerators, individual appliances, lights, heaters and air conditioning

- Power level: up to 3,500 watts
- Cost: \$1,000-\$1,700

**LARGE INVERTER OR PORTABLE:** These generators can be very helpful in a power outage that doesn’t last too long. It can power everything the recreational



and midsize inverters can handle, but has the juice to power well pumps, sump pumps, electric rang stoves and conventional dishwashers.

- Power level: up to 7,500 watts
- Cost: \$3,000 to \$4,000

**HOME STANDBY GENERATORS:** Professionally installed (or pull-behind). These generators power up automatically during an outage to provide uninterrupted current. They can power everything in a typical home simultaneously, up to their maximum output. They can be set up to run indefinitely on natural gas or can be fueled by propane. No need to connect cables, flip a switch, or start the engine.

- Power level: up to 20,000 watts
- Cost: \$2,000–\$6,000

**STANDBY INDUSTRIAL GENERATORS:** These are professionally installed permanent backup generators that can be tailored to your operation. While they are a massive capital investment, they have the potential to power everything from industrial refrigeration, boilers, climate control, pumps, etc.

- 50 – 150 kW
- \$10,000 to \$30,000

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES REGARDING CA UTILITY POWER SHUTOFFS, WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS AND SAFETY**

Staying Informed:

- [Sign Up Program for Public Safety Power Shutoffs](#)
- [CalFire: Ready for Wildfire](#)
- [California PUC: Wildfires Resources](#)