Who We Are

On July 1, 2021, the Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety was established as a new state department under the California Natural Resources Agency to ensure electrical utilities are reducing utility-related wildfire risk. Our mission expanded to underground safety with the addition of the Underground Facilities Safe Excavation Board in January 2022.

Our Vision
A sustainable California, with no catastrophic utility-related wildfires, that has access to safe, affordable, and reliable electricity.

Guiding Principles

- **Effective collaboration**: Coordinating an integrated utility wildfire mitigation approach
- **Local perspective**: Developing a flexible, localized utility wildfire mitigation approach
- **Long-term resilience**: Creating a planning horizon to focus on longer-term resilience and adaptation
- **Risk-informed, data-supported decisions**: Using data effectively to understand and plan for risk
Legislative History & Mandate


• **Wildfire Safety Division** established January 2020
• **Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety** established July 2021
• **Underground Facilities Safe Excavation Board** transferred January 2022
  Transferred through Senate Bill 856 (2020).

High-level Regulatory Scope

1) Oversee and enforce electrical corporation compliance with wildfire safety rules and regulations. (Pub. Util. Code, §§ 8385 et seq.)

2) Set “locate & mark” safety standards, coordinate education programs, and investigate excavation damage of underground facilities due to “dig-ins”. (Gov. Code, § 4216.12)
Innovative Regulatory Framework

Enacted to reduce utility-ignited wildfires through investments in electrical grid resiliency and mandated utility safety reforms.

Key Elements

- Separated wildfire safety oversight from ratemaking
- 3-year Wildfire Mitigation Plan w/ 23 specific content requirements
- Created a Wildfire Safety Advisory Board of technical experts to advise the Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety
- Created annual safety culture assessments
- Created a voluntary Safety Certification w/ seven conditions, which encourage electrical corporations to invest in safety, including requiring safety metrics in executive incentive compensation.
Core Statutory Responsibilities

- Wildfire Mitigation Plans (WMP) Evaluation
- WMP Compliance Assurance
- Annual Safety Culture Assessments
- Safety Certification Review
- Executive Compensation Structure Review
- Set Safety Standards for Locate & Mark and Excavation Practices
- Coordinate Education and Outreach programs
- Investigate Excavation Dig-ins & Recommend Enforcement Actions
Wildfire Mitigation Plans

- How do utilities understand their wildfire risk?
- How are they applying mitigations to reduce that risk?
- How are they improving over time?
Plan Evaluation Process

Established new, public evaluation process in 2020 to enable cross comparisons and encourage growth.

- Standardized Template
- Performance Metrics
- Maturity Survey
- Assess Plans for:
  a) Completeness
  b) Technical Feasibility
  c) Resource Use Efficiency
  d) Forward-looking Growth

Have authority to require revisions to a Plan before decision.
Plan Compliance

Inspections, Audits, and Investigations since program inception in May 2020

• Conducted over 15,000 inspection activities
• Directed corrective action on over 500 defects & violations
• Directed Independent Evaluation of 2020 & 2021 Plan implementation
• Issuing final compliance report for 2020 Plans in Fall 2022
Underground Safety Board

Nine-Member Board of Experts in Contract Excavation, Utility Management and Locating, and Agricultural Operations

• Issued 30 Notices of Probable Violation since 2020
• Developed in-house, case study-based education course for Dig Safe Law violators
• Partnered with agricultural community to promote farmer “call before you dig” participation
• Developed regulations on power tool use around buried utilities and requirements for onsite meetings for farming tickets
• Currently developing standards for abandoned line management, identifying utility location through potholing, and the planning and design of excavation work
DATA DRIVEN
FORWARD-THINKING
INNOVATIVE
SAFETY FOCUSED

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