

2024

Wildfire Mitigation

This summer, some utilities are ready to launch their Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) programs.

A Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) is a last resort mitigation tool initiated by utilities to proactively de-energize specific (usually pre-identified) powerlines in high risk areas during critical fire weather to reduce the risk of electrical system ignition of wildfires.

PSPS differ from other de-energizations which occur as a result of damage or as requested for responder safety because they are usually planned in response to environmental conditions, they may include 24-48 hours' notice to emergency management personnel and customers, and they require complex coordination with many private and public entities.

What to expect:

PSPS's may occur in these locations:

Puget Sound Energy, Pacific Power, Chelan PUD, and Avista are prepared to conduct Public Safety Power Shutoffs across or in part of their service territories. Together, these policies may impact the following local jurisdictions:

- Adams County
- Chelan County
- Columbia County
- Colville Tribe
- Ferry County
- Garfield County
- Island County
- Jefferson County
- Kitsap County
- Lincoln County
- Lummi Tribe
- Muckleshoot Tribe
- Pierce County
- Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe
- Puyallup Tribe
- Samish Tribe
- Skagit County
- Snoqualmie Tribe
- Spokane County
- Spokane Tribe
- Stevens County
- Suquamish Tribe
- Swimonish Tribe
- Thurston County
- Upper Skagit Tribe
- Walla Walla County
- Whatcom County
- Whitman County
- Yakama Tribe
- Yakima County



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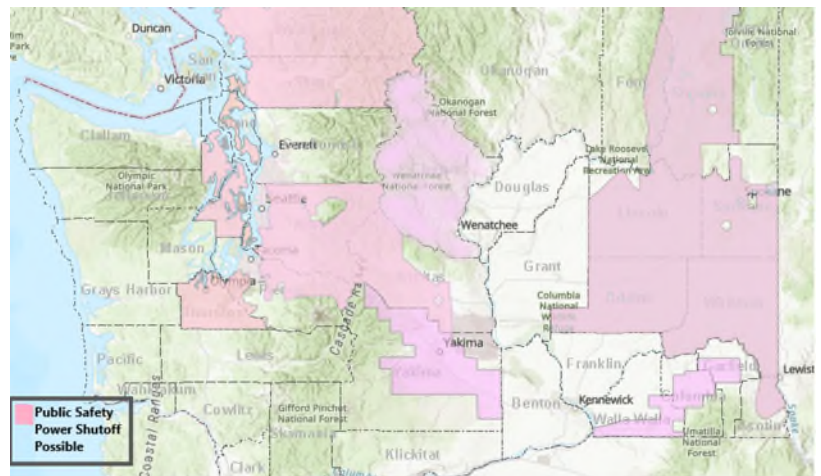


Figure 1. Map of where PSPS policies are in affect, 2024

The entirety of service territories are shown on the map, however, Public Safety Power Shutoffs are more likely to occur in locations with historically high fire risk.

Notifications are expected:

Utilities are expected to follow adopted Incident Command procedures and should be notifying local jurisdiction emergency managers and our office when they believe they may initiate a de-energization. They plan to give at least 48 hours' notice, pending how quickly environmental conditions change. They are using language similar to weather warnings to indicate how likely a planned power-shutoff is. Not all utilities are using all of these categories, but you may see language very similar to this:

Type	Ideal Timeframe	Notification message	Typical audiences and channels
Watch	48-72 hours	PSPS power outage is possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency and community response partners • Critical facilities
Warning	24-48 hours	PSPS power outage is possible based on current weather forecast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical Life Support customers (phone call) • Potential impacted customers (automated notification) • Website and outage map • Opt-in notifications • Media and social media channels
Probable	12 hours	PSPS power outage is probable in your area at <i>[date/time]</i> . Please take steps to prepare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All audiences • Webpage and outage map • Media and social media
Imminent	1-4 hours	PSPS power outage is scheduled to start in your area at <i>[date/time]</i> . Please take steps to prepare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All audiences/channels
Initiated/ Updates	0 hours and every 12 hours	Your power has been shut off. <i>[Status update information]</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All audiences/channels • Estimated time of restoration kept up to date on outage map.
Restoration started/ occurring	After weather "all clear" and every 12 hours	We are working to restore your power. Check the Outage Map for estimated time of restoration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All audiences/channels • Estimated time of restoration kept up to date on outage map.
Power Restored	When power restoration has been completed	Your power has been restored	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All audiences/channels
Canceled	As needed	The PSPS power outage has been canceled due to improving environmental conditions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All audiences/channels

You may see more/longer outages that are not PSPS

Utilities recognize that Public Safety Power Shutoffs should be a tactic of last resort to mitigate wildfire ignition. Other tactics they have instituted include vegetation management, equipment hardening, and stricter recloser policies. A [recloser](#) is a piece

of equipment that automatically attempts to close a circuit that has been tripped (perhaps by a branch making contact with the lines).

Normally, these are important to keeping the power on because without them, a crew must go to manually inspect the circuit and fix it which takes hours. However, during fire weather conditions, if a recloser attempts to close a circuit which is not safe to close (the branch that hit the lines didn't fall away, for example), it can cause sparks and ignite fires. Therefore, many utilities have instituted recloser policies which are

scalable to fire risk conditions. The less fire risk, the more automated reclosers are used; the more fire risk, the less reclosers are used. This means that during high fire risk conditions, jurisdictions may experience more unexpected de-energizations despite no PSPS warning occurring.



Figure 2: graphic courtesy of Avista

How to Prepare

Please keep in mind that Public Safety Power Shutoffs will be only used as a last resort and that responses to outages will occur very similarly as to normal, unplanned outages.

Coordinate

Public Safety Power Shutoff Programs are new to Washington, so it is especially important to ensure that you know how the notification pathway will occur in your area.

- Ensure you have the correct emergency numbers to reach the utility. Often, jurisdictions will have the outage hotline number instead of direct access to the utility emergency management office. If you need to update your contacts, please reach out to us—we can get you connected to the right people.
- Ensure the utility puts the County **and** Tribal Emergency Manager contact on their notification list.
- If any local jurisdiction has limited capacity to coordinate directly with their utilities, continue to share impacts and shelter locations with the SEOC and our office will share back with the utilities to help prioritize restoration to those areas.
- State Agencies should work with the State Emergency Operations Center as per their ESF Functions to understand de-energization impacts and to prepare critical infrastructure for power interruptions. If State Agencies need additional information, please feel free to contact us and we will help.

Community Care

- Local jurisdictions will need to work with the utilities to identify critical infrastructure or vulnerable populations that need priority restoration.

- Local jurisdictions should depend on their mutual aid agreements and sheltering plans as previously established for storms or other long-term outages. We do recommend gathering your local decision makers to understand whether you intend to open up cooling shelters during a potential PSPS.
- Be prepared to echo outage messaging and relay preparation instructions to residents (collecting water, for example)
- Also note that PSPS de-energizations may impact customers' natural gas and water service if appliances or pumps use electricity to operate. Customers do not need to turn off natural gas or water mains during an outage.

Resources

The following resources may help:

Chelan PUD

- Chelan PUD's outage map: [Chelan PUD Outage Portal](#)
- Chelan PUD's wildfire settings including specific geographical locations: [Wildfire Mitigation Settings \(chelanpud.org\)](#)

Avista

- Avista's outage map: [Avista - Outage Map \(myavista.com\)](#)
- About Avista's PSPS Program including FAQs: [Public Safety Power Shutoffs \(myavista.com\)](#)

Pacific Power

- PSPS Map which shows watch, warning, and event areas: [Public Safety Power Shutoff \(pacificpower.net\)](#)
- General information about wildfire mitigation including recloser policies: [Wildfire Safety \(pacificpower.net\)](#)

Puget Sound Energy

- PSE's outage map: [PSE | Outage Map and Restoration Times](#)
- About PSE's PSPS Program: [PSE | Public Safety Power Shutoff](#)
- How to self-identify as medically dependent customer: [PSE | Life support & medical emergencies](#)

Washington Energy Resilience & Emergency Management Office:

If you have more questions or concerns, feel free to contact us anytime.

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- To find wildfire planning support resources
- To discuss Utilities' Wildfire Mitigation Plan
- To understand coordination and mitigation during PSPS
- To get support contacting utilities or other entities.

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- To report a PSPS in your area
- To elevate priority restoration needs or report downstream impacts
- To receive information about outages, estimated restoration times, and more