

APPENDIX D

Mountain View Fire (NOV)

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

505 VAN NESS AVENUE
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298



July 24, 2026

CPUC-ID: E20201117-01

Dan Marsh
Director, Rates and Regulatory Affairs
Liberty Utilities
933 Eloise Ave
South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150

Dear Mr. Marsh:

The Safety and Enforcement Division (SED) of the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) issues the following **Notice of Violation (NOV)** to Liberty Utilities (Liberty) as part of its investigation of an incident that occurred on November 17, 2020, adjacent to 106834 US-395 in Coleville, CA. This incident resulted in a wildland fire (the "Mountain View Fire"), that burned approximately 20,835 acres of vegetation and watershed in a Tier 2 High Fire Threat District area, destroyed or damaged 97 structures, and resulted in one fatality.

SED's investigation of the Mountain View Fire identified three instances in which Liberty Utilities violated General Order (GO) 95, Rule 31.1.

Attached is a summary of the relevant code sections and SED's findings.

Please provide a response to the violation(s) no later than **August 14, 2026** (15 business days). In your response, include all corrective actions and preventive measures taken by Liberty Utilities to remedy and prevent the recurrence of such violations. If you have any questions concerning this NOV, please contact Samuel Mandell at 916-217-8294 or by email at Samuel.Mandell@cpuc.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Eric Wu".

Eric Wu, Ph.D., P.E., Program Manager
Electric Safety and Reliability Branch
Safety and Enforcement Division

Enclosure: Summary of Violations

CC:

Lee Palmer, Deputy Executive Director, Safety and Enforcement, Safety Policy and Water Division
Koko Tomassian, Director, SED
Rickey Tse, Program and Project Supervisor, Electric Safety and Reliability Branch, SED
Stephen Lee, Senior Utilities Engineer Supervisor, Electric Safety and Reliability Branch, SED
Samuel Mandell, Utilities Engineer, Electric Safety and Reliability Branch, SED
Anthony Noll, Program Manager, Wildfire Safety and Enforcement Branch, SED

Mountain View Fire
Summary of Violations

General Order 95, Rule 31.1 - Design, Construction and Maintenance states in part:

A supply or communications company is in compliance with this rule if it designs, constructs, and maintains a facility in accordance with the particulars specified in General Order 95, except that if an intended use or known local conditions require a higher standard than the particulars specified in General Order 95 to enable the furnishing of safe, proper, and adequate service, the company shall follow the higher standard.

For all particulars not specified in General Order 95, a supply or communications company is in compliance with this rule if it designs, constructs and maintains a facility in accordance with accepted good practice for the intended use and known local conditions.

Violation 1

General Order 95, Rule 31.1 requires utilities to use accepted good practices and design, construct, and maintain their facilities to account for known local conditions. General Order 95, Table 2, Footnote (zz), states, “[i]n areas that are subjected to high winds, a utility may need to take extra measures to maintain all required separations. Measures may include but are not limited to, spacer bars and increased pin spacing.” SED’s investigation determined a span on the Topaz 1261 circuit experienced a line-to-line contact involving the center and field phases (B phase and C phase). The Bureau of Land Management’s Incident Report and a peer-reviewed report published by Liberty Utilities confirmed that on November 17, 2020, two phases on the Topaz 1261 circuit contacted each other. In 2019, Liberty Utilities commissioned a study to establish proactive de-energization thresholds by analyzing historical weather data. On August 20, 2019, Liberty Utilities received the study which identified the Topaz 1261 circuit as being in an area that is subject to consistently higher wind speeds compared to other parts of Liberty Utilities’ service territory. Liberty Utilities indicated it does not have procedures for the use of line spacers in distribution circuits. Liberty Utilities did not have existing procedures and did not incorporate any design considerations to account for these consistently higher wind speeds that could compromise required conductor clearances. Liberty Utilities’ failure to have existing procedures for the use of line spacers in distribution circuits and failure to incorporate any design considerations for consistently higher wind speeds in the Topaz 1261 circuit area is in violation of General Order 95, Rule 31.1.

General Order 95, Rule 31.1 - Design, Construction and Maintenance states in part:

Electrical supply and communication systems shall be designed, constructed, and maintained for their intended use, regard being given to the conditions under which they are to be operated, to enable the furnishing of safe, proper, and adequate service.

Violation 2

General Order 95, Rule 31.1 requires utilities to design their systems to enable the furnishing of safe, proper, and adequate service. All three conductors that were installed during the time of the incident were #4 ACSR 7/1 conductors. On September 24, 2025, SED requested Liberty’s design standards for #4 ACSR conductors that were in service during the time of the incident and during the time of initial construction. In response, Liberty provided its Overhead Distribution Conductor Stringing Guide,

Revision 5, effective September 2019, which includes tables containing the sagging data necessary to string overhead distribution conductors in new construction. SED's review identified that the tables contained within this guide do not include sagging tables for #4 ACSR conductors. Liberty's response also indicated it could not locate construction standards for #4 ACSR conductors that were in service during the time of initial construction. Liberty failed to provide documents that demonstrated Liberty had design standards for the #4 ACSR conductors that were installed and in service during the time of the incident. Liberty is in violation of GO 95, Rule 31.1 for lacking design standards for equipment that is actively being operated on its system.

General Order 95, Rule 31.1 - Design, Construction and Maintenance states in part:

For all particulars not specified in General Order 95, a supply or communications company is in compliance with this rule if it designs, constructs and maintains a facility in accordance with accepted good practice for the intended use and known local conditions.

Violation 3

General Order 95, Rule 31.1 requires utilities to design, construct, and maintain their facilities in accordance with accepted good practice for their intended use. SED's investigation determined that Liberty Utilities accepted a pole loading calculation from a communication provider that contained inaccurate specifications for Liberty Utilities' facilities. On June 29, 2017, a communication provider performed a pole loading calculation for Pole #266731 that supported the incident span. The calculation modeled Liberty's facilities using #4 ACSR HF, which has specifications equivalent to #4 ACSR 6/1, instead of the #4 ACSR 7/1 that the span used. #4 ACSR 7/1 is approximately 2.8% larger in diameter and 17.5% heavier than #4 ACSR HF/#4 ACSR 6/1. A pole loading calculation that uses smaller and lighter conductors creates results that underestimate the actual stresses, loading, and resulting safety factors on a pole. Liberty provided no evidence of identifying or correcting this mistake, as this pole loading calculation was the only one in Liberty's possession from prior to the incident. It is Liberty's responsibility and accepted good practice to ensure that all pole loading calculations are accurate and to maintain the facilities in a condition that enables safe service. Liberty Utilities is in violation of GO 95, Rule 31.1 for failing to demonstrate it verified that the pole loading calculation it received from the communication provider was accurate and contained results that maintained the facilities for their intended use.