



# CPUC FACT SHEET

November 2017

## **October Wildfire-Impacted Consumers: Learn About Protections That Energy, Water, and Telecommunication Utilities Must Offer You**

On Nov. 9, 2017, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) approved emergency orders that energy, water, and telecommunication utilities must take to help protect consumers impacted by the October 2017 wildfires.

### **Discontinue Billing**

Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), Southern California Edison (SCE), Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas), San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E), and Liberty Utilities must discontinue billing customers whose homes are not capable of receiving utility services, and utilities cannot assess a disconnection charge.

### **Waive Deposit Requirements for Re-Establishing Service and Expedite Move-in and Move-out Service Requests**

A major hurdle for evacuees trying to transition from shelters, other temporary housing arrangements, and uninhabitable homes to more permanent housing can be credit deposits that utilities require as a condition of providing service. PG&E, SCE, SoCalGas, SDG&E, and Liberty must waive deposit requirements for wildfire victims seeking to reestablish service. This waiver will last for one year. Additionally, the utilities must expedite move-in and move-out service requests.

### **Stop Estimated Energy Usage for Billing**

PG&E, SCE, SoCalGas, SDG&E, and Liberty Utilities must stop energy usage estimates for billing for the time the home/unit was unoccupied as a result of the wildfires.

### **Minimum Billing**

PG&E, SCE, SoCalGas, SDG&E, and Liberty must modify any monthly access charge or minimum charges for affected customers so that the customer will not be assessed these charges for the time period after the customer's home was rendered unserviceable by the fire.

### **Implement Payment Plan Options**

Payment plans are an important tool for preserving access to utility service for customers struggling to keep up with their bills. PG&E, SCE, SoCalGas, SDG&E, and Liberty must offer wildfire victims payment plan options. Affected customers who have prior arrearages and have lost their homes or have been displaced and are seeking to establish service in a new residence, must be offered a payment plan with an initial payment of no greater than 20 percent of the amount due, and with equal installments for





the remainder of not less than 12 billing cycles. For affected customers who currently have service but go into arrearage after Oct. 17, 2017, the utilities must offer a payment plan with an initial payment of no greater than 20 percent of the amount due, and with equal installments for the remainder of not less than eight billing cycles.

### **Suspend Disconnection for Non-payment, Waive Deposits and Late Fees**

Having access to essential utility services is critical for affected customers to regain stability. Some customers may fall behind on utility payments as they bear the costs of rebuilding their homes. PG&E, SCE, SoCalGas, SDG&E, and Liberty must suspend disconnection for non-payment and associated fees for affected customers. The utilities must also waive the deposit and late fee requirements for affected customers who pay their utility bills late. The waiver will last for one year.

### **Support Low Income Customers**

PG&E, SCE, SoCalGas, SDG&E, and Liberty must extend all California Alternate Rate for Energy (CARE) eligibility by 12 months in impacted counties, and they must freeze all standard and high-usage post enrollment verification requests in impacted counties until at least Dec. 31, 2017.

### **Community Choice Aggregators**

Many of the affected residents receive energy service from community choice aggregators (CCAs), such as Marin Clean Energy (MCE) and Sonoma Clean Power (SCP). Some of the actions described above, such as service disconnection, are PG&E's responsibility for CCA customers. However, other actions require coordination between the CCAs and the utility. PG&E must meet and confer with the CCAs in affected wildfire areas as early as possible to discuss their roles and responsibilities for each emergency customer protection.

### **Telecommunication Service**

Communication companies in fire-impacted areas must refund their customers for the periods that the customers were without service due to the October 2017 fires. Carriers of Last Resort must waive connection charges for affected customers. Further, for customers of the low income California LifeLine program, communication companies must suspend the de-enrollment for non-usage rules and delay the renewal process for the affected consumers.

### **Water Service**

California-American Water Company, Golden State Water Company, Kenwood Village Water Company, and Mayacama Golf Course Sewer Utility must work cooperatively with affected customers to resolve unpaid bills, and minimize disconnections for non-payment. They must also waive reconnection or facilities fees and suspend deposits for affected customers who must reconnect to the system, and provide reasonable payment options to affected customers. Bills must be waived for October for those customers who lost their homes in the fires.

*Follow the CPUC's actions related to the wildfires at [www.cpuc.ca.gov/October2017Fires](http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/October2017Fires).*

*If you need assistance from the CPUC, please contact us at [public.advisor@cpuc.ca.gov](mailto:public.advisor@cpuc.ca.gov) or 866-849-8390.*

