

2022 Post SDG&E PSPS Public Education & Communications Study

June 2023

Prepared for:



Prepared by:



Background + Objectives

- SDG&E may need to turn off power in order to keep communities safe during extreme weather-related conditions/events. This is especially true for wildfire-prone areas. This is referred to as a Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS). SDG&E sends its customers communications to raise awareness of these possible events.
- The main objectives of PSPS research are to assess language preference of those communications, gauge customer preparedness, and usefulness of those communications.
- Below is the standard timeline of the PSPS communications and research:
 - SDG&E sends out PSPS communications in July
 - SDG&E conducts the first survey in late September or October
 - SDG&E conducts the second survey in late December or January

DISCLAIMER

- In the past, SDG&E has only sent out the second survey if there was a PSPS event. This was due to the research design/questionnaire.
- 2022 did not have any PSPS events. Therefore, SDG&E did not perform the second survey in late December/January due to the absence of a pool of customers who experienced a PSPS.
- SDG&E was contacted by the CPUC and asked to perform the second survey. The second survey was fielded in April 2023 with customers in the HFTD and non-HFTD.
- Human memory decay over time is an exponential curve.
 - Murre, Jaap MJ, and Joeri Dros. "Replication and analysis of Ebbinghaus' forgetting curve." PloS one 10.7 (2015): e0120644.
 - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forgetting_curve
- Given the above point, please note this wave of research was fielded 4 months later than the equivalent survey from previous years. This will likely negatively impact any results where the question was dependent on recall.

Research Design



Methodology

- The survey is conducted via online and phone. It is offered in English, Spanish, the top 3 other languages in California, any other language with more than 1000 speakers in service territory.
- Survey questions are answered in quantitative and qualitative ways. There are multiple choice questions, Likert scales, and open-ended questions.
- Field period 4/10 – 4/28
- SDG&E identified as the sponsor of the research
- Incentive (Online only)
 - Residential – Each receives a \$10 Amazon gift card
 - Initially planned as drawing for one of 10 \$100 gift cards, but changed shortly after launch due to low participation rates
 - Small Business – Each receives a \$50 Amazon gift card



Sample & Quota

- SDG&E provided sample of customers (residential and small business) in High Fire Threat Districts (HFTD) and Non-HFTD (including all contact information)
- Languages, other than English, are flagged in the sample
- Total of 900 completes were achieved
 - 630 completed online and 270 via telephone interview
 - 814 residential and 86 small business interviews completed



Respondent Screening

- Respondents screened to ensure:
 - Current SDG&E customer
 - Age 18+
 - Adult head of household (residential)
 - Reviews utility bills or communications (business)
 - Not employed in a sensitive industry

Analytical notes: Due to an extremely small base size (n=8), the “Other Language” sub-group was not statistically analyzed and only respondent counts (not percentages) are shown. For clarity, statistical comparisons between sub-groups are only noted for this 2023 wave.

Executive Summary

Languages



- The distribution of surveys completed in English (91%) and Spanish (8%) is consistent with 2022 Pre-wave.
- Despite the vast majority saying English is spoken in their home/business, it has decreased marginally from last wave (94% → 92%).
 - Spanish is the most-commonly spoken non-English language (18%).
 - Due to the large portion of total respondents who prefer English, most shifts in overall scores from last wave are also seen among English-preferring respondents.
- Non-HFTD customers are more likely than HFTD to speak a non-English language (30% vs. 22%) and prefer communications in-language (11% vs. 6%).
- There is a decline in English speaking respondents who say they would prefer communications in Spanish (57% → 29%).
- One-third (34%) of respondents who prefer communications in Spanish say they are unable to understand English.
- A very small portion (n=6) prefer communications in a language other than English or Spanish, though all can understand English.

Favorability



- Two in five are favorable towards SDG&E overall, a significant decrease from last wave (56% → 41%).
 - Favorability has also decreased among those preferring English communications (53% → 37%).
 - Those who prefer Spanish are more favorable than English-preferred (84% vs. 37%).
 - Respondents aware of SDG&E wildfire communications are more favorable overall than those unaware (46% vs. 39%).
- Four in five (81%) feel that SDG&E provides reliable service without frequent outages.
 - Spanish-language respondents are more likely to feel the utility provides reliable service than their English counterparts (94% vs. 80%).
- Satisfaction with SDG&E wildfire safety efforts has declined this wave in total (64% → 52%); opinions of the PSPS program overall have also decreased (68% → 56%). *(see disclaimer on slide 1)*.
 - Decreases for both of these measures are seen among those preferring English. Ratings among Spanish-preferred are consistently more favorable and steady.
- SDG&E performs significantly lower for all wildfire performance statements, compared to last wave. *(see disclaimer on slide 1)*.
- More respondents this wave suggest improvements related to methods of SDG&E's communications (31% → 47%).

Executive Summary (continued)



Awareness

- SDG&E Wildfire communications awareness is down substantially this wave (70% → 41%).
 - This is driven by English-preferring, who are now much less aware than those preferring Spanish.
- Among respondents who are aware of SDG&E communications and prefer Spanish, two in three (67%) say they did receive the information in Spanish.
- Despite a decline from last wave, a majority recall direct communications from SDG&E (78% → 63%).
 - All sources of communications are seen as useful by at least a majority, whether provided in English or a preferred language.
- Nine in ten respondents (90%) who visited SDGE.com are satisfied with the wildfire information on the website.
- Utilization of non-SDG&E sources for wildfire information is similar to last wave.
 - Local news reports are a top external source for those who prefer non-English communications to receive in-language information.
- Despite a spike in the 2022 Pre, PSPS awareness has decreased significantly this wave (74% → 60%), down to its lowest point.
 - This decrease is driven by English language (75% → 60%). *(see disclaimer on slide 1)*.
- Sources of awareness for PSPS remain relatively consistent from last wave.
 - Most who are familiar with PSPS sources find them useful.



PSPS Preparedness & Resources

- Respondents this wave feel they are less prepared for a PSPS event (68% → 60%). *(see disclaimer on slide 1)*.
 - Those preferring English are driving this decline (68% → 59%).
- Respondents are less likely to take 11 of the 25 pre-listed actions to prepare for a PSPS event, compared to last wave.
 - This is driven by English language-preferred respondents.
 - Spanish-preferred respondents are more likely to take a number of actions, compared to their English language counterparts.
- The most-known PSPS resource is address level alerts, despite a decrease in awareness from last wave (30% → 25%).
 - Respondents are more likely to say they are not aware of any resource, compared to last wave (41% → 47%).
- The most-used resources overall are address level alerts and the generator grant program.
 - Among the small portion of Spanish-preferred respondents familiar with the resource, most utilized are the CRC language preference and the PSPS alert language preference.

Executive Summary (continued)

Non-HFTD vs. HFTD



- Compared to HFTD, respondents designated as Non-HFTD are more likely to:
 - Be a renter
 - Be age 18-44 and younger on average
 - Be Hispanic
 - Be African American
 - Have no college degree
 - Live alone
 - Have lower income.
- Both segments are more negative towards SDG&E overall, and towards the PSPS program this wave.
- Compared to their Non-HFTD counterparts, HFTD respondents are more likely to:
 - Say that SDG&E makes an effort to communicate with all customers about wildfires (57% vs. 49%)
 - Have higher awareness of SDG&E wildfire communications (49% vs. 34%)
 - Receive communications directly from SDG&E (76% vs. 49%)
 - Recall communications from government/municipality sources (48% vs. 39%)
 - Be aware of PSPS (69% vs. 53%), and hear about it from SDG&E (69% vs. 54%)
 - Be more prepared for a PSPS event (67% vs. 54%)
 - Have awareness of address level alerts, community resource centers, rebates and the generator grant program
 - Take more actions to prepare for a PSPS event.

Executive Summary (continued)



AFN vs. Non-AFN Households

- **AFN households are more likely than Non-AFN to:**
 - Prefer Spanish communications (non-English speaking is a qualifier for AFN)
 - Be favorable towards SDG&E
 - Agree that SDG&E performs well on several wildfire-related measures
 - Be aware of and satisfied with SDG&E wildfire communications
 - Be aware of and have a positive opinion of the PSPS program
 - Be prepared for extended power outages
 - Take a number of actions to prepare for wildfires
 - Have awareness of at least one of the SDG&E PSPS resources, including: PSPS alert language preferences, wellness checks and 2-1-1 partnerships.
- **AFN and Non-AFN are similar in:**
 - Feeling SDG&E provides reliable service
 - Using SDG&E PSPS resources.



Small Business

- Roughly half (45%) are favorable towards SDG&E and three-quarters (76%) feel the utility provides reliable service.
- Three in five (59%) are satisfied with SDG&E wildfire efforts, but only one-third (36%) recall receiving any wildfire communications. *(see disclaimer on slide 1).*
 - Emails from SDG&E are the most-common source for wildfire communications (55%).
- A majority feel SDG&E performs well on most of the wildfire safety statements.
- Two-thirds have awareness of the PSPS program (67%), feel they are at least somewhat prepared for a prolonged outage (67%), and have a positive overall opinion about the PSPS program (66%).

Conclusions

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- **Virtually all respondents prefer communications in either English or Spanish.**
 - Respondents who prefer Spanish-language communications tend to be more positive towards SDG&E on most measures, compared to those preferring English.

- **Several measures have declined this wave, including overall favorability towards SDG&E, the utility's wildfire efforts, and their performance on all safety statements.**
 - However, perception that SDG&E is a reliable electric service provider remains high.
- **Opinions of SDG&E and PSPS tend to be more positive among those aware of the wildfire communications, compared to those unaware.**

- **Awareness of SDG&E wildfire communications and of the PSPS program has decreased.**
- **Respondents also feel less prepared for a PSPS event, and have taken fewer steps to prepare for a prolonged power outage. (see disclaimer on slide 1).**

Conclusions

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- **HFTD respondents have higher awareness of wildfire communications and of the PSPS program, are more prepared for a PSPS outage, and take more actions to prepare for a PSPS event, compared to those in Non-HFTD.**
 - **However, favorability and awareness have decreased among both segments.**
- **Nearly half of respondents are unfamiliar with SDG&E PPS event resources.** *(see disclaimer on slide 1).*
- **AFN customers are more favorable towards SDG&E overall, and across many wildfire safety measures.**
 - **They also have higher awareness of communications and PPS, and have taken more steps to prepare for outages.**

