

2023 SDG&E PSPS Public Education & Communications Study Post-Season

Research Results | January 2024

Prepared for:



Prepared by:





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Introduction

Background + Objectives

- During extreme weather conditions and only when absolutely necessary, San Diego Gas and Electric (SDG&E) may need to turn off power in order to keep communities safe against wildfires.
 - This is referred to as a Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS).
- The CPUC has requested that several California utilities conduct a “Pre” PSPS event survey and a “Post” survey.
 - The surveys are offered over the phone and online in 23 languages, including English.
- The objectives of the research are to assess language preference, language of wildfire communications received, and the usefulness of those communications.
 - Additionally, its goals are to gauge the level of preparedness for PSPS events and satisfaction with SDG&E wildfire communication efforts.
 - Key differences between customers in High Fire Threat Districts (HFTD) vs. Non-HFTD are also identified.
- When there is no PSPS event (such as in 2022), the same questionnaire is used in the “Post” as the “Pre” for that year, and comparisons are analyzed.
 - If there is an event, such as customers being notified in 2023, a slightly different questionnaire is used and comparisons are made between the current “Post” and the last “Post” when an event occurred (in this case 2020).

Research Design

Methodology

- Telephone and online surveys employed
- Offered in English and 22 other languages
- 2023 “Post” field period 12/1/23 – 12/15/23
- SDG&E identified as the sponsor of the research
- Incentive – online survey respondents were each offered a \$15 Amazon gift card for completing the questionnaire

Sample

- 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
- All customers who received a PSPS notification in 2023 are included in the “Post” sample
- After de-duping, a total of 499 pieces of sample was provided
 - From this, a total of n=75 completed surveys was achieved, with nearly all (n=68) living in an HFTD

* Only six small businesses completed the survey, therefore they are not analyzed separately

Respondent Screening

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





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Executive Summary

Executive Summary



Languages

- With the limited number of completes (n=75), only one person took the survey in Spanish and only two spoke it regularly.
 - All others are English speakers.
- Because nearly the entire sample prefers communications in English, results are provided in total and do not split out other languages.



Favorability

- Compared to the 2020 “Post” wave, SDG&E favorability is essentially unchanged (64% vs. 65%) top-2-box score.
- The majority (79%) feel that SDG&E provides reliable electric service (consistent with 2020).
- Satisfaction with SDG&E wildfire efforts has increased (68% → 84%), as it did with the PSPS program overall (64% → 84%).
- Opinions about PSPS communications have also improved substantially (60% → 85%).
- Improvements can also be seen in most SDG&E individual performance scores, especially the PSPS program attributes.
- With nearly all of this wave’s respondents residing in an HFTD (n=68 of the total n=75), comparisons with this segment essentially mirror the total sample.
 - Comparisons are not conducted with Non-HFTD due to their extremely small sample size (n=7).



Awareness

- Awareness of wildfire communications from SDG&E has increased (66% → 79%).
 - The vast majority say they received it directly from SDG&E (primarily email and direct mail), and a quarter (down from 2020) indicate it came via mass communications.
 - Down substantially is the proportion saying that they saw it from an SDG&E advertisement (24% → 9%).
- A handful (7%) of respondents say they received wildfire communications from a non-SDG&E source.
- Nearly all (95%) are aware of the PSPS program this wave (up from 67% in 2020).

Executive Summary (continued)

PSPS Preparedness

- Nearly all (92%) say they are at least somewhat prepared for a PSPS event, and the percentage feeling completely prepared has increased from 16% to 60%.
 - Nearly all actions taken to prepare have increased significantly, led by purchasing enough water and non-refrigerated food.

PSPS Alerts

- One in five indicate that they had to evacuate due to a wildfire within the past few months
- A solid majority (80%) of the total respondents say they received a PSPS notification.
 - These respondents typically received 2 or 3 notices.
 - A text, email or recorded call from SDG&E are the most common methods for receiving alerts, and all are considered useful.
- SDG&E.com is the most used source for receiving updates during an outage, followed by the Alerts App and calling SDG&E.
 - Nearly all (92%) who used SDG&E.com for updates are satisfied with it.



Conclusions + Potential Implications

Conclusions

Potential Implications

- Respondents were pulled from a customer list of people who received a PSPS notification.
 - Most of these respondents remember receiving the notification.
- Overall favorability towards SDG&E has remained consistent with 2020, but opinions about the utility’s wildfire safety and preparedness efforts have improved.
 - These improvements occurred even though there was a decline in the proportion of Hispanics, who historically express a more positive opinion compared to non-Hispanics.
- This wave also sees an improvement in SDG&E wildfire and PSPS communications.
 - Customers are more happy with the notification process as well as receiving updates and follow-up communications from SDG&E.
 - There is also a decline in receiving wildfire/PSPS information from non-SDG&E sources.
- Customers are doing a better job at preparing for a PSPS event.
 - However, most of these respondents reside in an HFTD, where customers tend to be more cognizant of wildfire safety.



- The notification process appears to be improving.
- Continue to send multiple notifications through a variety of methods.
- Continue communicating the steps SDG&E is taking to ensure the safety of its customers and employees during the wildfire season.
- Use findings from the 2020 report when developing strategies for reaching the Hispanic/Latino segment.
- Continue to provide information on the need and importance of wildfire safety and the PSPS program.
- Promote SDGE.com as the source for PSPS updates should an event occur.
 - Also inform customers of the variety of languages in which information and updates are available on the website.
- Information about PSPS preparedness should certainly be stressed in HFTD, but should also be provided to those in a Non-HFTD.