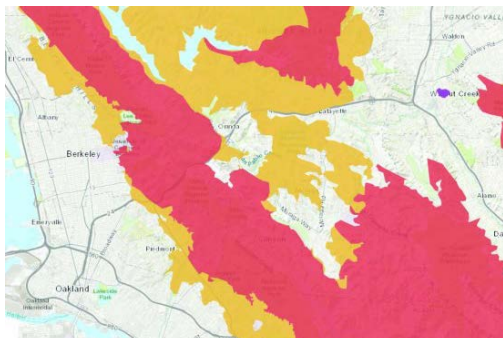


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Orinda urges residents to plan for longer blackouts

By Sora O'Doherty



Orinda has released a guide to assist residents in planning for potential two- to five-day PG&E shutoffs. Because most of Orinda has been designated by the California Public Utilities Commission as "elevated" (Tier Two) or "extreme" (Tier Three) risk for wildfire, it is highly likely that PG&E may find it necessary to turn off the electricity as part of a Public Safety Power Shutoff. Due to the length of a potential power shutoff, residents should take precautionary measures to prepare for this potential eventuality.

PG&E has announced that their PSPS program will include all electric lines that pass through high fire-threat areas, including Orinda and nearby communities, as a precautionary measure intended to help reduce the risk of wildfire in the Bay Area. A PSPS is likely to occur during extreme weather conditions, such as during low humidity levels, forecasted sustained winds above 25

mph, conditions of dry fuel, a red flag warning from the National Weather service, and on-the-ground, real-time observations.

Peak wildfire conditions occur in September and October, and according to the materials prepared by the city, PG&E is constantly monitoring weather conditions to determine wildfire threat. For Orinda, the primary threat of a wildfire comes in from Briones Regional Park, where wildfire danger results from strong Diablo winds mixed with low humidity levels in the fall months.

PG&E plans to notify residents of a PSPS 48 hours, 24 hours, and just before a PSPS is going to occur, however, for residents to receive the alerts, they must ensure their PG&E account information is updated. PG&E states it will update residents with the status of the PSPS while it is occurring and notify residents when the power will be turned back on, but the city of Orinda also advises residents to sign up for Nixle alerts and updates from the Orinda Police Department.

If you are at home during an outage, PG&E suggests that you use perishable food supplies first, but after the power has been off for more than a few hours foods in your refrigerator may not be safe and should be avoided. During a power outage, take quick showers and limit use of sinks to conserve water in case Republic Services or EBMUD are impacted by the outage.

Persons with disabilities requiring power for medical equipment should go to nursing centers or a hospital. The Orinda Community Center, located at 26 Orinda Way, will serve as a Community Resource Center in the event of a PSPS. You can visit the Community Center to charge your devices and speak to city or PG&E staff. The Community Center will be open in the event of an emergency, but Orinda City Hall will be closed to the public during a PSPS.

Planning ahead for potential outages

Here are simple ways to prepare for a planned power outage:

Ensure your car has at least a half tank of gas at all times. In the event of a PSPS, gas stations will likely be closed.

Purchase or update a home generator or another uninterrupted power supply to keep essential functions running and to keep WiFi connectivity and to charge your cell phones.

Assemble emergency supplies, such as:

A battery-powered radio

A large portable power supply

One gallon of water per person, per day

Nonperishable food (a one week's supply)

Flashlights

Method for cooking food without electricity

Surge protectors for appliances/electronics

Cash (in case ATM/bank is closed)

Links:

To learn more about a potential shutoff from PG&E, visit www.pge.com/en_US/safety/emergency-preparedness/

www.pge.com/natural-disaster/wildfires/public-safety-power-shutoff-faq.page. For more information, visit www.pge.com and pge.com/news.

Update your PG&E account information at: www.pge.com/mywildfirealerts or by calling the PG&E contact center at 1-866-743-6589

Sign up for Nixle at <https://local.nixle.com/>

Sign up for notifications from the Contra Costa County Office of the Sheriff's Community Warning System at <https://cwsalerts.com/registration/>

Visit www.cityoforinda.org for updated information

Potential caption for map:

Source: City of Orinda Planning Department

Above is the Orinda-specific fire-threat map. The area coded red is Very High Fire Severity Zone (Tier 3) and orange is High Fire Severity Zone (Tier 2).

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