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## PG&E hosts Wildfire Safety Webinar targeting Access and Functional Needs customers

By Vera Kochan

Lamorinda is in the middle of fire season again, and Pacific Gas & Electric Company offered its customers a July 25 webinar aimed at enlightening Access and Functional Needs (AFN) residents. The webinar began with updates on PG&E's efforts to combat wildfires before discussing resources and partnerships to support special health needs individuals with regards to the company's Medical Baseline Program.

Hosting the webinar were PG&E's Senior Manager of Customer Emergency Planning and Operations Tom Smith, and Program Manager of the Public Safety Power Shutoff Program Lizz Stout.

First on the agenda was PG&E's Community Wildfire Safety Program discussion. Smith briefed the webinar attendees on the layers of safety which include: using the latest technologies, such as weather cameras to monitor daily conditions; ensuring safety with enhanced protection and temporary outages; keeping trees and branches away from power lines; installing stronger powerlines and poles to withstand severe weather; and undergrounding 10,000 miles of powerlines in the highest fire risk areas to reduce ignition risk.

Stout discussed customer resources with regards to PG&E's Medical Baseline Program in the event of a Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS). Customers can receive an additional monthly allotment of energy or a discount based on their rate, as well as extra notification attempts in advance of a PSPS, if the customer doesn't respond to previous alerts. To apply for the Medical Baseline Program visit: [pge.com/medical-baseline](http://pge.com/medical-baseline).

If you need extra help but don't qualify for Medical Baseline, vulnerable customers can still receive additional notification attempts, doorbell rings or a door hanger from PG&E if you did not respond to previous PSPS notifications. To certify for Vulnerable Customer status visit: [pge.com/vcstatus](http://pge.com/vcstatus).

If someone falls under the category of Medical Baseline or Self-Identified Vulnerable customer, PG&E will notify them before a PSPS via a phone call, text or email. If there is no response to these notifications, PG&E will make additional attempts to reach out by ringing the doorbell or leaving a door hanger.

During a PSPS, Community Resources Centers provide solutions and up-to-date information, such as personal and medical device charging, mobile battery chargers, ADA-accessible restrooms, cooling/heating stations, bottled water/snacks, seating, and ice.

PG&E also shares partnerships with local food banks to provide food replacement packages during a PSPS and up until three days after power is restored. Meals on Wheels provides home-bound seniors with nutritious meals delivered to their homes. The service is provided to eligible and enrolled seniors who are impacted by a PSPS. For more information visit: [pge.com/disabilityandaging](http://pge.com/disabilityandaging).

Disability Disaster Access & Resources is targeted for individuals with medical and independent living needs who either live in High Fire-Threat Districts or have experienced two or more PSPS events since 2020. These may include customers who use an electrical medical device or assistive technology, have a disability or chronic condition, or rely on electricity to live independently. Some of the resources provided consist of emergency planning assistance, portable backup batteries, accessible hotel accommodations, accessible transportation, food vouchers, fuel cards for generators, and more. For more information visit: [pge.com/ddar](http://pge.com/ddar).

The Portable Battery Program is available to customers with specific medical needs who have experienced at least one PSPS since 2021, or five or more Enhanced Powerline Safety Settings outages (when power is shut off due to a detected problem on the line). PG&E provided resources include portable backup batteries, insulin cooler wallets, mini-fridges for medications or food, and extension cords. For more information visit: [pge.com/portable-battery](http://pge.com/portable-battery).

PG&E also offers a Generator and Battery Rebate Program: [pge.com/backuppowers](http://pge.com/backuppowers); a Backup Power Transfer Meter Program: [pge.com/transfermeter](http://pge.com/transfermeter); a Self-Generation Incentive Program: [pge.com/sgip](http://pge.com/sgip); and Fixed Power Solutions: [pge.com/residentialstorageinitiative](http://pge.com/residentialstorageinitiative).

Partnering with the California network of 211s, PG&E provides AFN customers with a single source of information and connection to available resources in their communities. The services include a 24/7 connection point for all AFN households before, during and after a PSPS; PSPS education and connection to critical resources (i.e., transportation, portable backup batteries); live phone services in English and Spanish; and 300 additional languages available through tele-interpretation services. For more information visit: [211.org](http://211.org).

Reach the reporter at: [vera@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:vera@lamorindaweekly.com)

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