Wildfire Mitigation Plan

Due to the growing threat of catastrophic wildfires, NorthWestern Energy is exploring new ways to protect our customers and communities from wildfires.

What is NorthWestern Energy doing to prevent wildfires?

Maintaining a resilient electrical grid – Starting in 2010, NorthWestern Energy began a major investment to improve our distribution system to make our electric service more reliable. While these investments did not focus specifically on wildfire mitigation, improving reliability also decreases the likelihood of creating a spark that could lead to a wildfire.

Managing vegetation – We have proactive efforts in place to mitigate trees or tree branches falling into power lines and to maintain healthy forests. This includes doing aerial and ground assessment of our powerlines and removing any vegetation that is at high risk of causing a wildfire.

Situational awareness – We have a Wildfire Operational department that focuses on monitoring weather forecasts and environmental conditions across our service territory. We're also implementing new field cameras that will allow us to monitor our system and detect wildfires as soon as they start.

Operational practices – New system technologies provide us with the ability to actively change how the electrical grid operates during high-risk conditions. We may also adjust work practices such as tool choice, vehicle access routes or the potential stoppage of proactive work.

System preparedness – We're increasing the scope and frequency of ground and aerial assessments of our electrical system so we can repair issues before they cause fires. We're also using a technology called Lidar to evaluate portions of the system and using a risk model to prioritize maintenance work.

Communication and outreach – Ensuring the safety of our customers and the public is of utmost importance to us. As wildfire conditions change, we will proactively communicate with our impacted customers and community members, particularly when service may be interrupted.

Public Safety Power Shutoffs – As a last resort, we will de-energize electrical infrastructure in specific areas, during periods of time when the risks of continuing to operate electrical infrastructure are unacceptably high. Known as Public Safety Power Shutoffs, or PSPS, this is an increasingly common method for energy companies to prevent wildfires.

Learn more about our wildfire mitigation efforts at NorthWesternEnergy.com/wildfire.

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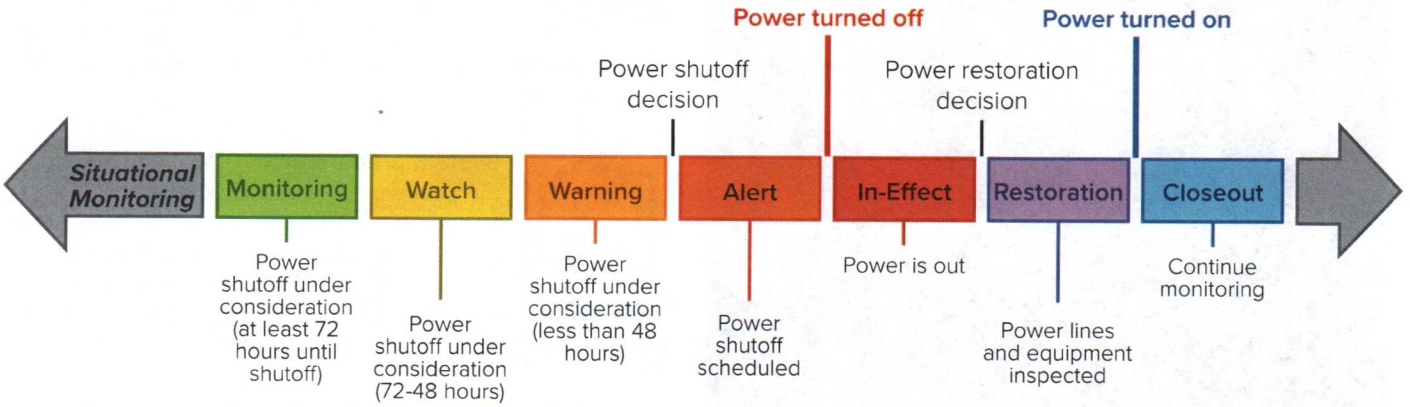
Public Safety Power Shutoffs

Our Public Safety Power Shutoff plan helps us prevent wildfires and keep our communities safe. If extreme weather conditions threaten our ability to safely operate the electrical grid, we will turn off power to help protect public safety.

How does NorthWestern determine when it should implement a power shutoff?

Our Public Safety Power Shutoff strategy includes a clearly defined, phased approach that guides us in the decision to implement a shutoff.

During each stage of the process, we are assessing the need for a public safety power shutoff. During any stage, we may decide a proactive outage is not needed.



How will customers be informed of a Power Shutoff?

If your home or business will be impacted by a Public Safety Power Shutoff, you will hear from NorthWestern Energy a number of times throughout the process.

- Automated phone calls
- Email
- Social Media
- Paid Advertising (radio, TV, etc.)
- Website
- Outage Map
- Text

How long does a Public Safety Power Shutoff last?

Public Safety Power Shutoffs can vary in length. We will not restore power until weather conditions have improved to the point where we can safely operate the electrical grid. After the extreme weather conditions have passed, we will patrol electrical lines to make sure no branches, tress or other items have fallen into the lines. Once any damage has been repaired, NorthWestern Energy will restore power. A Public Safety Power Shutoff, plus the time to patrol and make repairs, could last several hours or even days. If storm damage occurs, restoration could take longer.

Learn more about Public Safety Power Shutoffs at NorthWesternEnergy.com/PSPS

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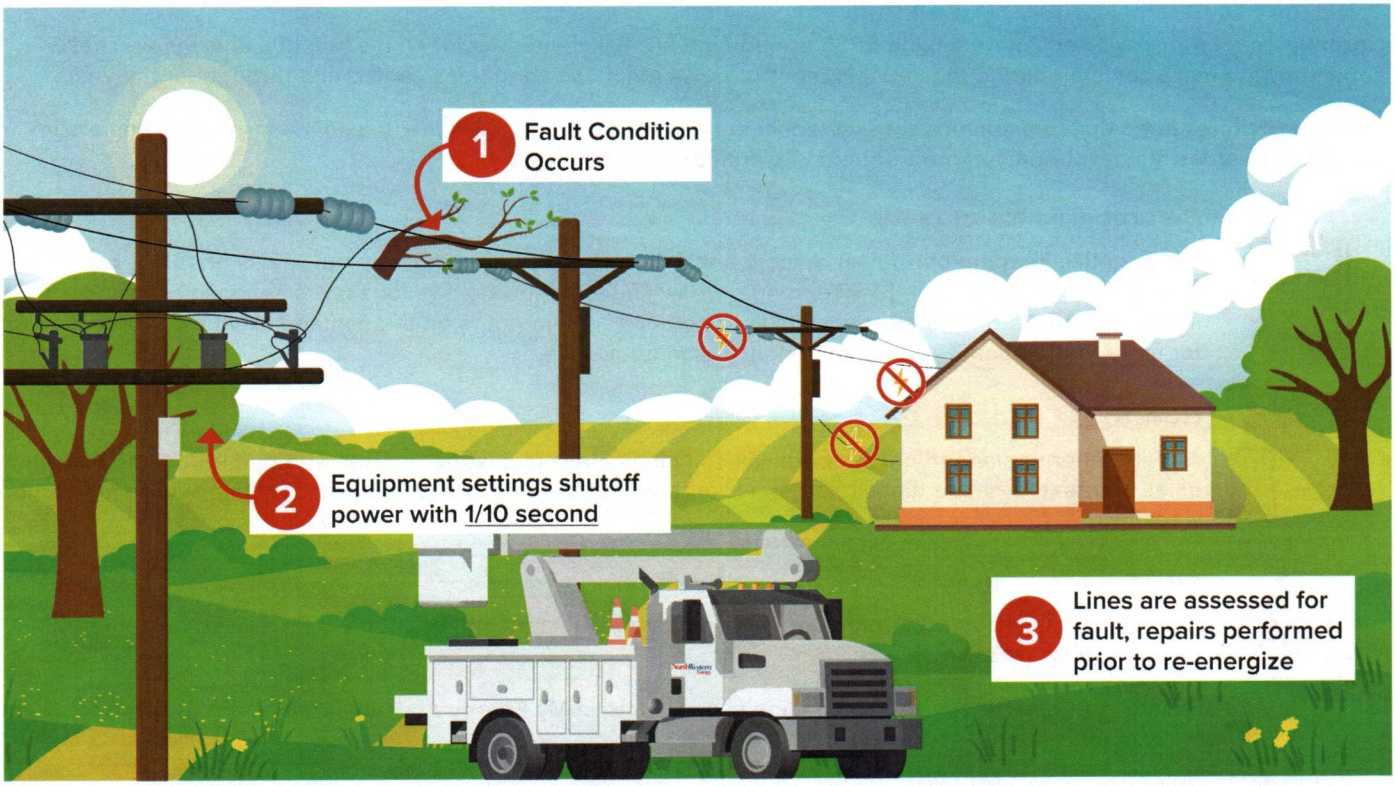
Enhanced Powerline Safety Settings (EPSS)

NorthWestern Energy is doing our part to help prevent wildfires. One way we're doing that is through technology to change how the electrical grid operates during high-wildfire-risk conditions and by adjusting work practices to avoid starting a wildfire.

What are Enhanced Powerline Safety Settings (EPSS)?

NorthWestern Energy uses real-time information and data from our risk models to evaluate the condition of our electric system and the environment around it. During high-risk environmental conditions, such as high temperatures, low humidity, high winds and dry vegetation, we may elect to turn on Enhanced Powerline Safety Settings (EPSS) as one of our operational defense strategies.



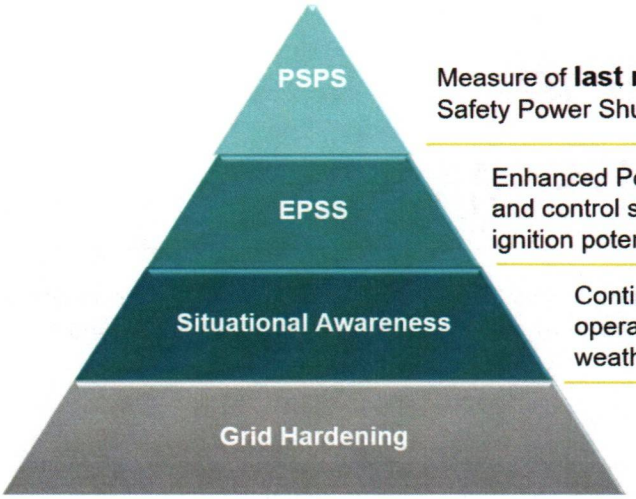
How does EPSS work?

EPSS makes the electrical system more sensitive to potential hazards and automatically turns off power when a fault, such as a tree branch, contacts a powerline.

NorthWestern Energy distribution system includes protective devices called automatic reclosers. Under normal conditions, when a tree branch contacts a powerline, our system will quickly de-energize the line and automatically attempt to restore power. This reduces the number of outages as well as the duration of outages to a momentary flicker. This improves the overall reliability of the system by reducing sustained outages to a momentary flicker.

During times of increased wildfire risk, we will enable Enhanced Powerline Safety Settings and operate our system more conservatively. A line that has been automatically de-energized will remain off until our crews can patrol the area to check for damage before safely restoring power.

Operational Defense Hierarchy



Measure of **last resort**: Proactive de-energization of electric assets (Public Safety Power Shutoff) in response to severe forecasted fire weather

Enhanced Powerline Safety Setting: engineered enhanced protection and control settings during heightened wildfire conditions to reduce ignition potential

Continuously monitor environmental conditions to make informed operational decisions. Deploy smoke detection cameras and weather stations for increased situational awareness.

Enhanced proactive maintenance, targeted grid hardening, vegetation management, and deployment of technology with the focus of reducing ignition potential

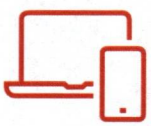
What to expect

NorthWestern Energy will consider enabling EPSS during high fire risk conditions when it's hot, dry, and windy. These conditions are more common during the summer months; however, these conditions can be met throughout the year.

Using EPSS helps keep our communities safe by reducing the risk of starting a wildfire. It also means that customers in high fire risk areas may experience more frequent unplanned outages.

Be prepared for outages

We prioritize keeping our power reliable and will work to restore power as quickly as possible, safely. However, when we enable EPSS settings, we will need to send crews for assessments and repair of our infrastructure. Patrols can last several hours or longer, depending on the damage. Check our outage map for more information if you are experiencing an outage.



How to get updates

As with other unplanned outages, we will communicate with customers impacted by EPSS outages through email and text for those that signed up for outage notifications. We will also update our outage map on our website.

Sign up for alerts

NorthWestern Energy accountholders may receive automated texts and/or emails, based on your preference for receiving alerts.

Ensure your current contact information is up to date in My Energy Account. Visit NorthWesternEnergy.com to learn more.

How can you stay informed and prepared?

☑ Update your contact information for outage notifications at northwesternenergy.com/notifications

☑ Find information during an outage at northwesternenergy.com/outages

☑ Make a plan for outages for you and your family at northwesternenergy.com/outagesafety

☑ Learn more about our wildfire prevention work at northwesternenergy.com/wildfire

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