



City of Healdsburg

Electric Department
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Visit us at www.ci.healdsburg.ca.us

Healdsburg Utility Wildfire Safety Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How does the City of Healdsburg get its electric power?

A: To deliver energy to our customers, the City owns generation plants (geothermal, hydroelectric, solar, natural gas) throughout northern California. Once the energy is produced, it is transported across the State's transmission grid, a network of high-voltage powerlines, to the City's substation at Badger Park. The City owns and operates the distribution powerlines that deliver electric power from the substation to our electric customers.

- ✓ "Electrical Grid 101: All You Need to Know!"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nbPmsBmo03Y>
- ✓ U.S. Department of Energy Infographic: "Understanding the Grid"
<https://www.energy.gov/articles/infographic-understanding-grid>

Q: Can the City guarantee power because we have our own electric utility?

A: As with most things there are no guarantees; this includes the supply of electric power. Planned maintenance, birds, squirrels, weather events, and the occasional car accident can cause power outages and customers should be prepared for these events. We do provide 24/7 on-call staff coverage to speed outage restoration after-hours and our maintenance and repair programs tend to prevent many outages from occurring. The emergency Utility Hotline can be reached by calling (707) 431-7000 or toll free at (855) 755-6586.

Q: Who do I call if I experience a power outage or other utility-related emergency or issue?

A: Call (707) 431-7000 or (855) 755-6586. You will be asked to enter your account's phone number including the area code. After that a live representative will assist you with your problem.

Q: How is the City preparing for the increasing threat of wildfires?

A: The City has and continues to implement best practices such as constant patrolling of electric lines as well as annual inspections; installing new equipment, line clearance tree trimming, and is actively developing a long-term wildfire mitigation plan for our electric utility. Recently the City completed system hardening work along North Fitch Mountain Road. This work strengthen the poles and wires while also moving conductors further away from trees.

Q: Will the City turn off electric power should a fire or a high-wind event occur in Healdsburg?

A: If there is a safety concern, the City will assess the situation and may shut down (de-energize) portions of the powerlines. Power outages in Healdsburg are rare and the City's proactive work -- such as ongoing tree trimming and overhead line maintenance -- significantly reduce the need to de-energize lines, but electric outages and public-safety power shutdowns are still a possibility.

Q: What areas within Healdsburg are most likely to be affected by power shutdowns for public safety?

A: The areas most likely to experience power shutdowns are along the western slope of the ridge east of the golf course and adjacent to the City's open spaces. These areas are within the City's Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) and by their nature have increased vegetation and risk of wildfire.

Q: How will the City's electric customers know if there is a public-safety power shutdown?

A: If the City needs to de-energize powerlines in the event of a disaster such as a wildfire, the City will make every effort to communicate those shutdowns in advance via tools including NIXLE, emergency alerts on the City's website (www.cityofhealdsburg.org), and social media. The City is taking preventative measures to lessen or avoid the need for power shutdowns.

Q: How do I know if the City has my most up-to-date contact information, including my cell phone number?

A: City utility customers can update their contact information by calling CRC (707) 431-7000 or toll free (855) 755-6586. You will be prompted to enter your phone number, after that select option 2 and a live representative will assist you in updating your billing information.

Q: As a customer, what should I do to prepare for a power outage?

A: Great question. The City of Healdsburg has developed an emergency preparedness brochure (in both English and Spanish) to help the community better prepare for natural disasters in general. Included in the brochure is information on preparing for natural disasters including how to create an "emergency kit". A digital version of the brochure is available on the City's website here: <https://www.ci.healdsburg.ca.us/460/Emergency-Services>.

Specific to a public-safety power shut-down, below are some actions that you, your family, friends, and neighbors should do to prepare.

- ✓ Sign up for the City's emergency alerts via NIXLE by texting your zip code (95448) to 888777
- ✓ Keep your cell phone charged and identify back-up charging methods for phones and other electronic devices.
- ✓ If the power does go out, make sure to turn off all unnecessary appliances such as stoves, clothing iron, hair dryers, lights, and/or curling irons.
- ✓ Freeze containers of water for ice to help keep food cold in the freezer, refrigerator, or coolers in case the power goes out. If your normal water supply is contaminated or unavailable, the melting ice will also supply drinking water.
- ✓ Make sure to have a supply of bottled water. It is recommended to store one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days.
- ✓ Prepare or re-stock your emergency kit with flashlights, portable cell-phone chargers, fresh batteries, first aid supplies, cash, water, and food that will last up to five days.
- ✓ Keep emergency, family, and other important phone numbers accessible in hard copy

- ✓ Plan for any medical needs such as, ongoing prescriptions, medications that need refrigeration, or medical devices that require power.
- ✓ If you are dependent on an electric or battery-dependent medical technology such as a breathing machine, a power wheelchair or scooter, or home oxygen or dialysis, it is critical that you have a plan in place for an extended power outage.
- ✓ Plan ahead for the needs of pets and/or livestock.
- ✓ Know how to manually open your garage door or other property access points that rely on power.
- ✓ If you have a backup generator, make sure the generator is ready and safe to operate. Always follow the generator's safety instructions and never refuel your generator while it's running.
- ✓ Identify any unique needs of your family and loved ones should there be a loss of power.
- ✓ After power is restored, remember to reset clocks, irrigation controls, programmable thermostats and other electronic devices.

Review these additional resources to help you prepare for public-safety power shut-downs and wildfires.

- ✓ Fact sheet on public-safety power shut-downs: http://prepareforpowerdown.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Statewide_FactSheet_0503.pdf
- ✓ Disaster preparedness information from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security: <https://www.ready.gov/wildfires>
- ✓ CAL FIRE wildfire preparedness information: <http://www.readyforwildfire.org/>

Q: PG&E is stating that they will de-energize portions of California's transmission systems when wildfires occur. How will this affect Healdsburg?

A: The state's transmission grid, a series of high-voltage powerlines, is extremely reliable. The City does depend on PG&E's transmission system to power the City's sub-station, but the primary transmission feed does not run through fire-threat zones (Tier 2 or 3). While the City did lose its transmission source during the 2019 Kincade Fire, shutting down transmission lines is rare and citywide power outages are very unlikely.

Q: How fast will power be restored after a public-safety power shutdown?

A: It depends on the specific situation – it could be a few hours, 24 hours, or longer. Regardless of the reason for the power outage, the City will take every safe and sensible step to restore power as soon as possible. During widespread outages, the City of Healdsburg will provide status updates through social media and NIXLE alerts of estimated times to restore power. We encourage the City's electric customers to sign up for NIXLE by texting your zip code (95448) to 888777. Following the City's Facebook and Nextdoor pages will also provide up-to-date and current information from the City.

Q: What if I or a family member are dependent upon medical devices or limited mobility?

A: Yes, the City wants to know. City electric customers with a disability and/or functional need can provide updated contact information and alert the City of their needs through an online form. To update your contact information, go to: <https://bit.ly/UTILAFN>

Q: What if I have more questions about public-safety power shut-downs?

A: Please email electric@ci.healdsburg.ca.us with your questions and comments.