

Cleveland National Forest Fire Hardening and Safety Power Line Replacement Project

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



SDG&E® is committed to providing safe and reliable energy, which means we may need to replace and upgrade equipment to ensure the overall system is continuing to deliver reliable energy.

This project, formally known as the Cleveland National Forest project, is a cornerstone of SDG&E's community fire safety and system-hardening efforts. The project is critical to ensuring we are doing all we can to protect the forest and our customers who live in and around the area.

SDG&E and its contracted crews will be installing a new, fire safe, underground distribution circuit to feed the Federal and State operated communications array at the summit of Cuyamaca Peak, within Cuyamaca Rancho State Park. Additionally, SDG&E will be removing the existing overhead distribution circuit that runs up the west face of Cuyamaca Peak, within a High Fire Threat Zone on Cuyamaca Rancho State Park and Cleveland National Forest lands. Construction activities include: site preparation, trenching, underground conduit installation, removal of 65 existing wood poles, installation of 2 weatherized steel poles, and restoration.

SDG&E will continue to work closely with the United States Forest Service, Cuyamaca Rancho State Park and area residents to ensure construction activities are as least disruptive as possible.

The information provided below recaps the project's benefits and highlights some of the most frequently asked questions. Please feel free to contact us directly should you have any additional questions or concerns.

Q&A

What Are the project benefits?

- Enhanced safety and reliability of the transmission system
- Improved electric system performance during extreme weather conditions
- Reduced cost and environmental impacts for future maintenance activities

Why has SDG&E proposed an increase in the size of conductors?

First and foremost, the impetus behind these projects is public safety. Since the wildfires of 2007, we have put a tremendous amount of effort into identifying ways to 'harden' our overhead electric system. SDG&E has designed the pole replacement projects to withstand known local weather conditions and wind speeds. Additionally, it is important to note that SDG&E has proposed to install the *smallest* standard cable utilized by the utility for new construction and reconstruction projects throughout our service territory that will also ensure compliance with California Public Utility Commission (CPUC) General Order 95, Rule 31.1.

Will the increased conductor size increase the temperature of the new conductors?

Many factors must be considered when measuring temperature. The actual operating temperatures of the proposed conductors would vary greatly due to system loads and configurations and current weather conditions. Temperatures are also limited to power line ratings. Ratings are established by other power line elements, such as transformers, substations, disconnect switches and relay settings. New conductors do not automatically translate into higher temperatures.

Why is SDG&E proposing an increase in pole heights?

Pole heights are generally increased with implementation of the fire hardening project in order to achieve increased conductor spacing. This increased spacing provides for greater distances between conductors and reduces risk of conductor to conductor contact. The pole heights are also increased to properly maintain appropriate ground clearances.

Will all new infrastructure remain in current SDG&E Rights-of-Way?

It is our intent to rebuild all new infrastructure facilities within our existing ROW. However, we cannot confirm we will be able to accomplish this in every instance. For example, we may need to incorporate design changes to improve public safety, reliability and resource protection which may require additional rights-of-way. We will work proactively and cooperatively with individual property owners and agencies should the need to acquire or revise easement rights occur.

How do you know steel poles are safer than the existing poles?

Existing wood poles, as compared to the proposed steel poles, are more susceptible to fire damage, woodpecker damage, termite damage, and deterioration due to weather conditions. Proposed steel poles are not susceptible to these deterioration factors and will remain standing during wildfire conditions due to the fire-resistant material resulting in improved system reliability.

Why can't you just underground all these lines?

SDG&E has worked with the USFS on each of the proposed projects to prioritize locations where it is feasible to underground. However, there are several issues to consider when converting overhead power lines to an underground system; increased construction cost, increased maintenance cost, environmental impacts caused by trenching and acquiring new easements and rights of way. Also, should a power outage occur, the time it takes to restore power is generally longer since the failure is underground and not as easy to locate as overhead systems.

Why is SDG&E proposing placing weather stations on the new poles? Does this mean that SDG&E can spy on my property?

SDG&E has installed and is currently monitoring 144 pole mounted weather stations and five Remote Automated Weather Stations throughout its service territory. The weather network was installed with the

original intention to monitor and better understand the fire weather conditions that lead to potential catastrophic wildfire across San Diego County and are not retrofitted with camera functionality.

What does SDG&E do with the data collected from weather stations? Is this information made public?

We have used the enhanced understanding acquired from the weather network to help develop a Fire Potential Index (FPI). The FPI is a planning and decision support tool that incorporates weather and fuels information to rate the overall fire threat within predetermined subsets of the SDG&E service territory. The FPI is currently being incorporated into operations to assist decision makers in determining when field activities should be restricted and when no hot work should occur, when sensitive relay settings are enabled, when and where crews are staged, and other considerations. Weather data from the SDG&E weather stations is made available to our customers through <http://www.sdge.com/tools/wind-speed-dashboard> and is also delivered directly to the National Weather Service and the fire agencies.

Will SDG&E use information from the weather stations to shut off my power?

The California Public Utilities Commission has acknowledged that SDG&E has the authority to shut off power in emergency situations when necessary to protect public safety. However, SDG&E does not have a standard requirement, or set of guidelines, that would trigger a shutoff.

SDG&E utilizes the information from the weather network, together with other collected data and live field observations, in exercising its judgment to make independent, site and condition-based decisions related to the operation of its electric system.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information on the Project, please visit sdge.com/cnf or contact SDG&E Regional Public Affairs Manager, Todd Voorhees, at **1-844-765-6388** or tvoorhees@semprautilities.com.