



# 5 Minute Meeting

Effective Date:

September 3, 2021

Topic:

Changes to work requirements during R4 and R5 conditions

AUDIENCE:

Electric Operations & E.O. Contract Crews

***Effective immediately there is a change in the planning and execution of work where R4 & R5 fire index ratings are present when working in any forest, brush, or grass-covered land.***

As a result of several recent ignitions that have occurred while PG&E crews or its Electric contractors were performing work on facilities, we are implementing the following changes immediately.

Before PG&E employees or contractors start work on or near any forest, brush, or grass-covered lands, they must review the requirements contained in [Utility Standard TD-1464S](#), "Preventing and Mitigating Fires While Performing PG&E Work," for more information on the general requirements and other mitigations for traveling to, performing work on, or operating in any forest, brush, or grass-covered land.

## **TARGET AUDIENCE**

This information targets all PG&E Electric employees and contractors working on or near PG&E facilities located near any forest, brush, or grass-covered lands using equipment, tools, and/or vehicles whose use could result in the ignition of a fire. This includes areas that may seem urban or suburban but contain vegetation.

## **GENERAL REQUIREMENTS**

Ensure all the requirements laid out in TD-1464S are always followed. Performing work in areas near Grass, Forest, or brush during an R4 or R5 rating will require evaluation of if the work should be performed de-energized as a risk reduction strategy. In addition, the crew must ensure that they have the appropriate water buffalo as close to the worksite as practical and have the required 200 feet of hose to extinguish any possible ignition. The hose on the water buffalo must be extended and ready for use and, at a bare minimum, reach the work location. Each day, before beginning work, the water buffalo must be started and tested to ensure it is in good working order. Additionally, these locations will require a dedicated fire watch with the sole responsibility of responding to any possible ignition. If work must be performed energized in these locations, then site preparation must be performed prior to work beginning to remove fuels under the facility to bare mineral soil in a 15-foot radius below the facility. When working in areas of forests, clear the area to bare mineral soil and consider wetting the trees in the immediate vicinity of the work location. You will also need to be aware of possible wire contacts between the work location and the next structure and have a plan for how to respond to an ignition if one were to occur mid span.

## **REQUIREMENTS BEFORE SCHEDULING NEW WORK**

Before scheduling work, Field Engineers, Work Coordinators, and General Foremen must perform an environmental assessment of



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the worksite to establish if it is on forest, brush, or grass-covered lands. This assessment determines if equipment and conductors, both primary and secondary, should be de-energized before performing the work, or if site preparation for fuel elimination is required prior to performing the work energized. Document the results of this assessment on the job package. Site preparation to eliminate/minimize fuels in the immediate vicinity of the work site is a good practice regardless of if the work is done energized or de-energized but is a requirement for all areas being worked energized, no matter the voltage being worked.

## **PROJECTS CURRENTLY SCHEDULED**

Field Engineers, Work Coordinators, and General Foremen must perform a desktop review of all currently scheduled work to determine if the worksite is on forest, brush, or grass-covered lands. If it is determined that the work location is on forest, brush, or grass-covered lands then the site safety assessment listed above for new work must be performed. This assessment determines if equipment and conductors, both primary and secondary, should be de-energized before performing the work, or if site preparation for fuel elimination is required prior to performing the work energized. Document the results of this assessment on the job package. Site preparation to eliminate/minimize fuels in the immediate vicinity of the work site is a good practice regardless of if the work is done energized or de-energized but is a requirement for all areas being worked energized no matter the voltage being worked. For any of the existing scheduled work that needs an outage, please submit for the appropriate AFW. For work that does not have the appropriate lead time for the Control Center or customer notification, please evaluate if site preparation is an appropriate mitigation for the risk, or if the work should be rescheduled to allow for the proper protocol to be followed.

## **Inclusion Plan**

5 Minute Meetings serve as an interim tool for documenting and communicating changes to our standards and procedures quickly, Furthermore the requirements in this communication will be incorporated into the appropriate guidance documents and will be formally sent through the Management of Change (MOC) process and rolled out at our earliest opportunity.



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## Frequently Asked Questions

**Question:** If the equipment I need to operate is in a forest, brush, or grass-covered land can I still operate it?

**Answer:** Yes, switching activities can still be performed as outlined in TD-1464S

**Question:** If the pole I am replacing is on the street and has adjacent spans that are in a forest, brush, or grass-covered land, do I need to clear these lines?

**Answer:** No, but you will need to evaluate if the work is better performed de-energized. If the work is to be performed energized then the crew will need to have a plan of how to respond if a mid-span ignition were to occur and have a dedicated fire watch to ensure that wires do not contact each other and be prepared to react if they do.

**Question:** If I am replacing a secondary crossarm in a forest, brush, or grass-covered land do I need to deenergize the conductors?

**Answer:** No, but you will need to either De-energize the conductors or clear a 15-foot radius below the pole before work can be performed energized.

**Question:** If I am working on a Transmission line that has a Distribution crossing mid span. Do I need to De-energize the Distribution as well?

**Answer:** No, but if you are moving the Transmission wire you will need to appropriately guard, barricade, or protect the Distribution line to eliminate the potential of the two lines making contact.

**Question:** If I am replacing a primary crossarm that has a Transmission overbuild and I have decided to do the work de-energized. Do I need to de-energize the Transmission as well?

**Answer:** No, you are not required to de-energize the Transmission as well, but you will need to have safeguards in place to ensure that you nor any conductive objects infringe on the Minimum Approach Distance (MAD) for the Transmission voltage at any point in time.

**Question:** If I have a job to transfer open wire secondary from an old pole to a new pole. does that need to be done de-energized?

**Answer:** No, it doesn't require it to be done de-energized as every location needs to be evaluated separately. As a suggestion though any transfers of vertical open wire should be done de-energized simply due to the spacing and the margin for error being extremely low in this style of construction.

For more information or to provide feedback, please contact Robert Merrick (R2Mc).