



March 21, 2024

Vincent Tanguay  
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Pacific Gas and Electric Company  
300 Lakeside Drive  
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## NOTICE OF VIOLATION

Mr. Vincent Tanguay:

Pursuant to Public Utilities Code section 326 and Government Code section 15475.1, the Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety (Energy Safety) has conducted an inspection of work completed by Pacific Gas and Electric Company in accordance with its 2023 Wildfire Mitigation Plan (WMP) and determined the existence of one or more violations. Energy Safety therefore issues Pacific Gas and Electric Company a Notice of Violation (NOV), identifying noncompliance with an approved WMP or any law, regulation, or guideline within the authority of the Office.<sup>1</sup>

On November 28, 2023, Energy Safety conducted an inspection of Pacific Gas and Electric Company's WMP initiatives in the vicinity of the city of Willits, California. The inspection report is enclosed herewith. Energy Safety found the following violation(s):

Violation 1. Energy Safety observed that in implementing 2023 WMP initiative number 8.2.3.1 - Pole Clearing, Pacific Gas and Electric Company failed to provide accurate data for an unnumbered pole at coordinates 39.390884356626955, -123.34761947739408. Energy Safety considers this violation for failure to provide accurate data to be in the Minor risk category.

Violation 2. Energy Safety observed that in implementing 2023 WMP initiative number 8.2.3.1 - Pole Clearing, Pacific Gas and Electric Company failed to adhere to a required protocol of pole clearing on pole number 121372843 at coordinates 39.414468934293, -123.361763449499. Energy Safety considers this violation for failure to adhere to protocol to be in the Minor risk category.

Violation 3. Energy Safety observed that in implementing 2023 WMP initiative number 8.2.3.1 - Pole Clearing, Pacific Gas and Electric Company failed to adhere to a required protocol of pole clearing at an unnumbered pole at coordinates 39.49699199735, -123.366467972922. Energy Safety considers this violation for failure to adhere to protocol to be in the Moderate risk category.

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<sup>1</sup> Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, section 29302(b)(2)

## Response Options

Energy Safety may prescribe a timeframe for resolution of a violation associated with the assigned risk category.<sup>2</sup> Within 30 days from the issuance date of this NOV, the electrical corporation must provide a response advising Energy Safety of corrective actions taken or planned to remedy the above identified violation(s) and prevent recurrence. Alternatively, the electrical corporation must advise Energy Safety that it will not correct the violation, including the reasoning or justification for inaction and all supporting documentation.<sup>3</sup>

This response shall be filed in the Energy Safety e-Filing system under the 2023 NOV Docket<sup>4</sup> and the associated file name(s) must begin with the NOV identification number provided above.

Pursuant to Government Code section 15475.4, if the electrical corporation intends to request a hearing “to take public comment or present additional information,” it must also do so within the 30-day timeframe. If a petition for hearing is not received by the deadline, then the determination and conditions set forth in this NOV become final.

Prior to its response or request for hearing, the electrical corporation may also request an informal conference with Energy Safety’s Compliance Assurance Division for the purpose of disputing any issues raised in this NOV no later than five (5) business days before the response deadline.<sup>5</sup> Requests for informal conference with Energy Safety must be e-mailed to [compliance@energysafety.ca.gov](mailto:compliance@energysafety.ca.gov), with a copy sent to all Energy Safety Compliance Assurance Division staff identified in the NOV.

Pursuant to Public Utilities Code section 8389(g), following receipt of the electrical corporation’s response to this NOV and resolution of any disputes, this matter may be referred to the California Public Utilities Commission for its consideration of potential enforcement action, as it deems appropriate.

Sincerely,

*Patrick Doherty*

Patrick Doherty  
Program Manager | Compliance Assurance Division  
Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety  
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Cc:

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<sup>2</sup> Energy Safety Compliance Guidelines, pp. 5-6

<sup>3</sup> Energy Safety Compliance Guidelines, pp. 6-7

<sup>4</sup> <https://efiling.energysafety.ca.gov/EFiling/DocketInformation.aspx?docketnumber=2023%20NOV>

<sup>5</sup> Energy Safety Compliance Guidelines, p. 6

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# INSPECTION REPORT

## Overview

### Inspection Categories

The Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety (Energy Safety) conducts inspections to verify the work performed by an electrical corporation as reported in an approved Wildfire Mitigation Plan (WMP) or subsequent filing, and to assess general conditions of electrical infrastructure that may adversely impact an electrical corporation’s wildfire risk.

A Notice of Violation (NOV) is issued for any instances of noncompliance discovered during an inspection related to an electrical corporation’s execution of its WMP initiatives.

### Correction Timelines

Violations must be corrected in a timely manner. Energy Safety may prescribe a timeframe for resolution of a violation. If Energy Safety assigns a risk category to a violation, an electrical corporation must correct the violation as required per the timelines provided in Table 1.<sup>6</sup>

**Table 1. Risk Category and Correction Timelines**

Risk Category	Violation and defect correction timeline
Severe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Immediate resolution</li></ul>
Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2 months (in High Fire Threat District (HFTD) Tier 3)</li><li>• 6 months (in HFTD Tier 2)</li><li>• 6 months (if relevant to worker safety; not in HFTD Tier 3)</li></ul>
Minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 12 months or resolution scheduled in WMP update</li></ul>

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<sup>6</sup> Energy Safety Compliance Guidelines, p. 5



# Inspection Summary

Table 2 provides a summary of the selection of the WMP inspection location and initiative. Table 3 provides a summary of the violation(s) found during the inspection. Details regarding the inspection that identified the violation(s) are provided in the Inspections Details Section below.

***Table 2: Inspection Location and Initiative Summary***

Electrical Corporation:	Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E)
Report Number:	PGE_CAC18_20231128_0934
Inspector:	CAC18
WMP Year Inspected:	2023
Quarterly Data Report (QDR) Referenced:	Quarter 2 (Q2)
Inspection Selection:	Energy Safety viewed the contents of the Q2 QDR and performed an analysis that resulted in the selection of the WMP initiatives and locations referenced in this report.
Relevant WMP Initiative(s):	Pole Clearing (2023 WMP initiative number 8.2.3.1)
Date of inspection:	November 28, 2023
City and/or County of Inspection:	Willits, Mendocino County
Inspection Purpose:	Assess the accuracy of Pacific Gas and Electric Company’s QDR data, completeness of its work, compliance with WMP requirements, and compliance with its protocols.

**Table 3: WMP Inspection Violation(s)**

Violation #	Structure ID	Lat/Long	HFTD	Initiative Number	Violation Type	Severity	Violation Description
Violation 1	120418697	39.390884356627, -123.347619477394	Non-HFTD	8.2.3.1 - Pole Clearing	Data Accuracy	Minor	Failure to report pole clearing location data accurately
Violation 2	121372843	39.414468934293, -123.361763449499	Tier 2	8.2.3.1 - Pole Clearing	Adherence to Protocol	Minor	Failure to achieve required clearance
Violation 3	None	39.49699199735, -123.366467972922	Tier 2	8.2.3.1 - Pole Clearing	Adherence to Protocol	Moderate	Failure to achieve required clearance

# Inspection Details

## Violation 1:

### Relevant Requirements:

Pacific Gas and Electric Company's WMP states the following regarding pole clearing:

1. "PG&E performs removal/clearing of vegetation around select Transmission and Distribution poles and towers..." and "...to maintain a firebreak of at least 10 [feet (ft)] in radius (out from the pole) up to 8 ft up from the ground."<sup>7</sup>

Version 3.1 of Energy Safety's Data Guidelines states the following with respect to data submitted by an electrical corporation when reporting on its 2023 WMP initiatives:

1. "Electrical corporations must ensure location accuracy in their [geographic information system] data submissions..."<sup>8</sup>

### Finding:

Energy Safety arrived at the provided location at 1650-1720 S Main St, Willits, CA, 95490, USA, 39.390884356627, -123.347619477394 and found neither utility poles nor electrical equipment where pole clearing was reported as completed. Therefore, Energy Safety was unable to verify that Pacific Gas and Electric Company completed pole clearing work. The inspector's observation was that there was a parking lot light pole at the location reported by Pacific Gas and Electric Company, with the nearest electrical pole located approximately 300 feet to the northeast.

Energy Safety concludes that Violation 1 is Minor because of these facts:

1. The reported location provided by Pacific Gas and Electric Company where pole clearing was reported as completed was a parking lot light post and not an electrical pole or equipment.
2. The nearest electrical pole that showed indications of pole clearing was approximately 300 feet to the northeast.

## Violation 2:

### Relevant Requirement:

Pacific Gas and Electric Company's WMP states the following regarding pole clearing:

1. "PG&E performs removal/clearing of vegetation around select Transmission and Distribution poles and towers..." and "...to maintain a firebreak of at least 10 ft in radius (out from the pole) up to 8 ft up from the ground."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Pacific Gas and Electric Company, "Pacific Gas and Electric Company 2023 Wildfire Mitigation Plan," Mar. 27, 2023. p. 535 [Online]. Available: <https://www.pge.com/assets/pge/docs/outages-and-safety/outage-preparedness-and-support/2023-wildfire-mitigation-plan.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety, "Data Guidelines, Version 3.1," Feb. 17 2023, p. 10 [Online]. Available: <https://efiling.energysafety.ca.gov/eFiling/Getfile.aspx?fileid=53475&shareable=true>

<sup>9</sup> Pacific Gas and Electric Company, "Pacific Gas and Electric Company 2023 Wildfire Mitigation Plan," Mar. 27, 2023. p. 535 [Online]. Available: <https://www.pge.com/assets/pge/docs/outages-and-safety/outage-preparedness-and-support/2023-wildfire-mitigation-plan.pdf>

**Finding:**

On pole number 121372843 at 127 Mill Creek Dr, Willits, CA, 95490, USA, 39.414468934293, - 123.361763449499, the inspector observed that pole clearing was not completed per protocol. The inspector's observation is documented in Violation 2 photographs, which are attachments to this report. Photo numbers Item6GIimg1, Item6GIimg2, Item6IA1img1, and Item6IA1img2 depict a non-exempt 3-foot tall, irrigated landscaping within the 10 ft firebreak radius.

Energy Safety concludes that Violation 2 is Minor because of these facts:

1. Pacific Gas and Electric Company's WMP clearance work was identified as complete at this location.
2. A vegetation exemption does not exist at this location.
3. The location of the pole is in a residential community next to a pedestrian sidewalk and street.
4. The vegetation is maintained by the owner.
5. The vegetation density is minimal.

**Violation 3:****Relevant Requirement:**

Pacific Gas and Electric Company's WMP states the following regarding pole clearing:

1. "PG&E performs removal/clearing of vegetation around select Transmission and Distribution poles and towers..." and "...to maintain a firebreak of at least 10 ft in radius (out from the pole) up to 8 ft up from the ground."<sup>10</sup>

**Finding:**

On an unnumbered pole at 29501 N Highway 101, Willits, CA, 95490, USA, 39.49699199735, - 123.366467972922, the inspector observed that pole clearing was not performed. The inspector's observation is documented in Violation 3 photographs, which are attachments to this report. Photo numbers Item14GIimg1, Item14GIimg2, Item14GIimg3, Item14IA1img1, Item14IA1img2, and Item14IA1img3 depict live vegetation and dead brush within the 10 ft firebreak radius.

Energy Safety concludes that Violation 3 is Moderate because of these facts:

1. Pacific Gas and Electric Company's WMP clearance work was identified as complete at this location.
2. There is no evidence at the location indicating that pole brushing occurred.
3. Flammable vegetation was present within the 10 ft firebreak radius.
4. The vegetation density is moderate and is in contact with the pole.

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<sup>10</sup> Pacific Gas and Electric Company, "Pacific Gas and Electric Company 2023 Wildfire Mitigation Plan," Mar. 27, 2023. p. 535 [Online]. Available: <https://www.pge.com/assets/pge/docs/outages-and-safety/outage-preparedness-and-support/2023-wildfire-mitigation-plan.pdf>



# Exhibits

Exhibit A: Photo Log

Structure ID: 121372843

Violation 2

	
<p>Item6GImg1: Pole ID</p>	<p>Item6GImg2: Overall pole</p>



**Item6IA1Img1:** Live vegetation within 10-foot radial clearance.



**Item6IA1Img2:** View showing live vegetation within 10-foot radial clearance. Tape measure at base of pole extends ten feet.

**Structure ID: None**

**Violation 3**



**Item14GIimg1:** Pole ID not present. The number 65561 is an unknown tag number.

**Item14GIimg2:** Overall view of pole.



**Item14GIimg3:** Top view of pole showing heavy vegetation.

**Item14IA1img1:** Sapling resprout at base of pole.



**Item14IA1img2:** Live vegetation within the firebreak 10-foot radial clearance.



**Item14IA1img3:** Dead wood within the firebreak 10-foot radial clearance.