



Pathfinder

"If you want to go fast go alone. if you want to go far go together."
-African proverb

Teamwork Matters

A message from
the City Manager



JASON STILWELL

All of us should be preparing for the electricity to go off during a Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS). PG&E will preemptively shut down power, under certain conditions, to reduce the risk of large-scale fires. In a worst-case situation, we could see days without power in Santa Maria.

So far, we have no indication of a pending PSPS event in Santa Maria – but they have happened elsewhere. I want to get the word out that the City is planning for it, and you can learn more at www.cityofsantamaria.org/powershutoff.

The most important thing that you can do in preparation for a power shutdown is to prepare yourself and family first. If a local emergency is declared, all City employees (you) become [Disaster Service Workers](#). It is important that we prepare our families, so that we can continue to provide essential services for our community.

Do this now: To assist the City in contacting you, please ensure that all of your contact information is accurate with Human Resources and with your department. If you need assistance, your Department Secretary can provide you with a new Employee Info Card. Please ensure that your contact information is up to date and continue to update it if there are changes. This is critical in order to provide you with emergency information. You may also [sign up for alerts from PG&E](#), or call (866) 743-6589 to ensure that your most current contact information is on file.

Always ensure that you save all of your work on your computer at the end of every day and keep hard copies of essential documents you may need to reference during an emergency. Frequently fill up your vehicle's gas tank; do not run low.

If a PSPS were to happen, the City would receive advance notice by PG&E, possibly 48 hours ahead. Departments will communicate with employees regarding a staffing plan. Plan on reporting to your regular work location and you may be assigned to tasks or duties outside your normal scope of work. Once the power is shut off, some but not all City buildings will go to generator power, and many IT systems and communications will be unavailable.

Cell phone infrastructure may or may not work following a power shutoff, so it is recommended that you keep your cell phone charged and consider having a backup battery.

PG&E has done three PSPS since October 2018, affecting tens of thousands of people. On the evening of Saturday, September 7th, Southern California Edison enacted a PSPS, shutting off electrical power to 650 people in western Goleta and part of the Gaviota coast.

It could happen here. PG&E's main power distribution lines to Santa Maria cross through wildfire-prone land from Morro Bay to here. Our region has experienced huge wildfires, including the Alamo Fire near Twitchell Reservoir in 2017, then the Thomas Fire. It was that deadly blaze, and others, that led to the creation of the PSPS program.

Jason