

# ENHANCED POWERLINE SAFETY SETTINGS

INFORMATION SHEET  
COLORADO

KEEPING COLORADO'S PEOPLE AND PLACES SAFE FROM WILDFIRE IMPACTS



## About Enhanced Powerline Safety Settings

Xcel Energy puts safety at the foundation of everything we do. As climate conditions have changed, the traditional idea of a fire "season" has evolved into a year-round battle against larger, stronger and faster wildfires. Given the growing risks of wildfires across Colorado and the West, we're working hard every day to continually improve safety and reduce wildfire threats across our service area.

As part of this commitment, Xcel Energy's comprehensive fire risk mitigation program is designed to help protect lives, homes, and Colorado's open space from the threat of wildfire. The Enhanced Powerline Safety Setting (EPSS) program is one of the tools we use.

With this program, we operate our system more conservatively in areas of high risk of wildfires. We do this by enabling more sensitive settings on powerline protective equipment when wildfire risk is elevated because of high temperatures, dry conditions and high winds. This approach helps keep our customers and communities safe, and although we do our best to minimize impacts, some customers may experience more frequent or longer outages if fire risk is high in your area.

## How it works

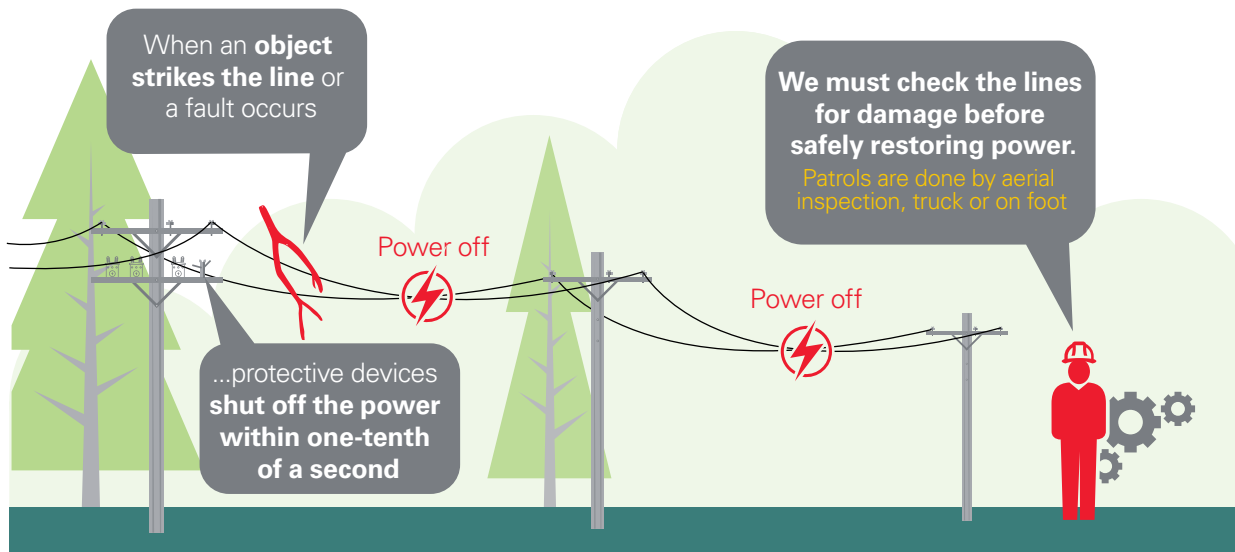
Our distribution system – the poles and wires that deliver electricity in your community – is monitored 24/7 by both technology and people. In targeted areas identified as high-risk wildfire zones, we have upgraded the electric system with special sensing equipment to help improve safety during Red Flag days or other high-risk wildfire days.

With these enhanced safety settings, we operate the system more cautiously during times of high wildfire risk. When there is a significant issue on the line, such as a tree branch contacting a powerline or lines galloping during a high wind event, this sensing equipment keeps the line de-energized until crews can patrol the area to ensure it's safe to restore service.

This process helps reduce fire risks and improves safety, but it can cause customers to experience more or longer outages as it takes additional time to patrol the line.

**Learn more:** For more information on these safety settings, visit [xcelenergywildfireprotection.com](https://www.xcelenergywildfireprotection.com). For questions, call **833-352-0087** or email [info@XcelEnergyWildfireProtection.com](mailto:info@XcelEnergyWildfireProtection.com).





### What to expect

- These enhanced powerline safety settings will be in effect only when wildfire potential is the greatest. That includes times of high fire danger, such as Red Flag Warnings or wildfire danger ratings of High, Very High or Extreme. These assessments are based on National Weather Service forecasts and other factors that could help fires start or spread.
- In 2021, we began testing samples of line segments, or feeders, in selected wildfire risk zones in mountain communities. More areas are being added to the program in 2022. Visit [xcelenergywildfireprotection.com](https://www.xcelenergywildfireprotection.com) for updates.
- Customers who live in communities where enhanced powerline safety settings are in place have a number of ways to report their outage.
  - Text OUT to 98936 to report an outage or text STAT to check the status of your outage.
  - Via the Xcel Energy mobile app available on iOS and Android
  - Online at [xcelenergy.com/out](https://www.xcelenergy.com/out)
  - Call **1-800-895-1999**
- Customers can sign up for outage notifications through the My Account feature on [xcelenergy.com](https://www.xcelenergy.com). (Please have your ten-digit phone number or the nine-digit premise number that appears on your Xcel Energy bill handy when you are ready to sign up.)
- You can also our website to view an outage map that displays outage details and anticipated time for restoration.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is a recloser and how are they affected by Enhanced Powerline Safety Settings?

Reclosers help us check conditions remotely and limit many outages to just a few seconds. If the systems that monitor power lines detect a problem on a segment of the line, for safety, a circuit breaker will trip to interrupt power to that line.

Many things that can cause a circuit breaker to trip are momentary, like an object or a broken tree branch that touches a power line and then falls to the ground. As its name suggests, the recloser will try to close the circuit to test whether the fault is still present. If it doesn't detect a fault, the recloser resets the circuit breaker so electricity can begin flowing again. Momentary outages – when your power goes off for a few seconds – are caused by reclosers. They are a sign that the system is working the way it is supposed to.

No reclosing is done on devices that have wildfire safety settings. This ensures we are not re-energizing a line that could potentially be hazardous.

### How do you select areas included in this program?

Enhanced Powerline Safety Settings are used in several designated risk zones as identified by the Colorado Wildfire Risk Assessment Portal (managed by the Colorado State Forest Service) along with risk probability models. The selected zones were chosen to cover a range of different conditions around the state, including weather, drought, miles of overhead line, housing density and terrain.

### Will customers be notified in advance of outages?

It will not be possible to notify customers in advance, because these will not be planned outages. They will be triggered by unpredictable conditions. While we conduct outreach to inform customers of Xcel Energy's wildfire mitigation and protection programs, we encourage everyone to stay mindful of wildfire danger in their area and know what to do in the event of a power outage.

### How can I best prepare for an outage?

We understand how disruptive it is for customers to lose power. That is why we are working hard to support our customers and communities, reduce the impact of outages and help you be prepared. Outage info, including safety tips, is available at [xcelenergy.com/Outages\\_and\\_Emergencies](https://xcelenergy.com/Outages_and_Emergencies). **Ready.gov**, the U.S. government's preparedness site, has detailed advice for outages and other emergencies at [ready.gov/Power-Outages](https://ready.gov/Power-Outages).

### What else is Xcel Energy doing to reduce wildfire risks?

Our proactive steps include inspecting, repairing or replacing equipment in wildfire risk zones; enhanced trimming of trees and other vegetation around our structures and equipment; fire-safe work practices and emergency response protocols; and working with communities to inform, educate and continuously improve our operations. Since our Wildfire Mitigation Plan launched in 2019, we've invested nearly \$230 million in wildfire protection. Learn more about Xcel Energy's Wildfire Mitigation Plan at [xcelenergywildfireprotection.com](https://xcelenergywildfireprotection.com).

