



California ISO  
Your Link to Power

## News Release

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### Power grid operator urges fire-safe July 4

*Reduces threat of transmission emergencies*

FOLSOM, Calif. – California wildfires can threaten property and personal safety virtually all year long, but Independence Day, with fireworks, cookouts and outdoor projects, can be especially fire prone. Wildfires can also impact the high-voltage transmission network that moves power through the Golden State. That is why the California Independent System Operator Corporation (ISO) is urging everyone to be careful this Fourth of July holiday.

“Even small wildfires can impact the power grid,” said ISO Director of System Operations Debi Le Vine. “Smoke and ash can foul the insulators on high-voltage lines and the heat from a fire reduces the air’s insulating ability. This can cause short circuits disrupting the flow of power. Fires can also burn wooden utility poles and damage electric lines knocking them out of service.”

The ISO works closely with Cal Fire and other agencies to monitor fires that could impact the grid. The ISO has also developed a tool based on Google Earth that allows ISO operators to see where fires are burning in relationship to transmission lines, with information about weather and grid conditions overlaying the fire maps. This year, the ISO added a new service that automatically gathers and disseminates data on fires, wind, lightning strikes, earthquakes and other potential threats to the grid. Together, the two tools provide a detailed view of existing and potential threats to the grid making it easier for ISO operators and engineers to plan ahead for potential contingencies.

“These high tech tools allow us to stay one step ahead of potential threats to the power grid. We can see how weather, geography and other factors might influence a fire’s behavior,” said LeVine. “This gives us a better sense of how that fire is going to affect the transmission grid. With enough information and enough time, we can take steps to reduce the impact to California consumers.”

Fire prevention remains the best way to reduce the threat and that is why the ISO continues to issue its Fourth of July reminder, urging caution with fireworks, outdoor grills and any source of ignition.

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The California ISO operates the state’s wholesale transmission grid, providing open and non-discriminatory access supported by a competitive energy market and comprehensive planning efforts. Partnering with more than 90 client organizations, the ISO is dedicated to the continual development and reliable operation of a modern grid that operates at the least cost to the benefit of consumers. The ISO bulk power market allocates space on transmission lines, maintains operating reserves and matches supply with demand. Recognizing the importance of global climate change, the ISO welcomes new, advanced technologies that will help meet the energy needs of 30 million Californians efficiently and cleanly. The ISO is a nonprofit public benefit corporation.