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## Texas Electric Utility Approach To Mitigating and Responding to Wildfire Threats

May 2022

While over 90 percent of wildfires are caused by human activities, electric utilities in Texas recognize their role in mitigating the risk of and responding to wildfires, particularly in rural areas of the state where a fire could grow and spread most quickly. Texas is facing drought conditions statewide, and the state’s utilities take significant steps to mitigate the risk of wildfires and respond to threats. The Texas Department of Emergency Management (TDEM) leads statewide coordination during times of wildfire threat, such as when the National Weather Service issues a Red Flag Warning, when an area faces an average sustained wind speed of 15 mph or greater and a relative humidity of 25 percent or lower.

Given the geographic diversity of the state, each utility’s service area faces different and utility-specific risks of wildfires, including some areas with far greater potential for wildfires than others. In Texas, utilities file their emergency operations plans (EOPs) with the Public Utility Commission annually. Each utility is required to include a wildfire annex as part of its EOP.

### Texas utilities have detailed wildfire mitigation strategies

#### Coordination

Utilities actively engage with local and state leaders, who are the primary authorities for implementing local emergency ordinances.

#### Vegetation Management

Each utility maintains vegetation management programs to inspect, patrol and trim around power lines to mitigate the risk of fire threats caused by power lines.

#### Awareness

When a red flag warning is issued, affected utilities alert appropriate personnel and ensure proper measures are taken to mitigate the specific risk, which could include staging of employees in strategic locations and, to the extent possible, taking preventative measures such as brush reduction and application of fire retardants.

#### Vigilance

Utilities perform routine facility inspections to identify equipment issues that could contribute to wildfire hazards, including pole and pole arm replacements. Utility employees take precautions when operating vehicles to avoid idling or traversing through tall grass and other measures to avoid increasing fire risks.

#### Response and Recovery

Utilities may create fire teams to protect utility infrastructure during a wildfire, avoiding further spread. Once a threat has abated, the team will wet/rewet facilities as appropriate and the utility will assess damage and begin the system recovery process.

#### Ongoing Assessment

Utilities work with predictive technologies to determine the most effective approach to vegetation management to reduce outages and wildfire risks from utility lines.