

NORTH CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
INC.
WILDFIRE MITIGATION
PLAN



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I. Overview

A. Policy Statement

North Central Electric Cooperative, Inc. ("NCECI") exists to provide safe, affordable, and reliable electric service. NCECI takes the safety of staff and the membership seriously. The Cooperative has developed this Wildfire Mitigation Plan in compliance with applicable law, to identify potential risks within our system, prevention methods, and to ensure the safety of staff and our membership.

B. Purpose of Wildfire Mitigation Plan

NCECI's Wildfire Mitigation Plan utilizes a broad range of activities performed throughout the Cooperative. The Wildfire Mitigation Plan is subject to the direct supervision of the Engineering and Operations Manager. All Cooperative employees are responsible for contributing to and performing the activities described in the Wildfire Mitigation Plan. NCECI's Wildfire Mitigation Plan begins with system design, construction, operation, maintenance, inspection, and repair activities aimed at significantly reducing the potential for NCECI's facilities to become the source of ignition for a fire. Nevertheless, the presence of our facilities and the range of climate and fuel (vegetation) conditions faced in NCECI's service territory present some risk that our facilities, no matter how diligent or conservative our practices, might become the contributing source of ignition for a fire.

NCECI's Wildfire Mitigation Plan is a "living document", subject to modification as regulations and laws are updated, advances in technology occur, and our operational circumstances change.

Additionally, NCECI will coordinate with the relevant County Emergency Managers, local elected representative's offices at the State and Federal level, tribal entities, and our membership, and will review our Wildfire Mitigation Plan annually to ensure continuous improvement and maximum effectiveness.

The goals and activities included in NCECI's Wildfire Mitigation Plan focus on a comprehensive and integrated assessment of the risks posed by NCECI's distribution system. This involves an assessment of its equipment and facilities, weather conditions, the density and condition of potential fuels such as vegetation, and the potential threat to public safety. NCECI's commitment to fire safety, prevention, mitigation, response, and recovery is a crucial element of our mission.

With this overarching view of fire risk assessment in mind, NCECI presents the activities comprising its Wildfire Mitigation Plan.

C. Organization of Wildfire Mitigation Plan

This Wildfire Mitigation Plan includes the following elements:

- Plan Objectives;

- Roles and Responsibilities;
- Wildfire Risks and Drivers;
- Wildfire Prevention Strategies; and
- Community Outreach and Public Awareness

II. Objectives of Wildfire Mitigation Plan

A. Minimizing Sources of Ignition

NCECI's Wildfire Mitigation Plan is founded upon the goal of minimizing the probability that the various components of our distribution system might become the original or contributing source of ignition for a fire. NCECI continues to evaluate prudent, cost-effective changes and improvements to its physical assets that could and should be made to meet this objective and is implementing preventative operations, construction and maintenance plans consistent with these evaluations.

B. Resiliency of Electric Grid

The secondary goal of this Wildfire Mitigation Plan is to improve the resiliency of the electric grid. NCECI continues to evaluate and incorporate new technologies and equipment into its electric system. NCECI's Engineering and Operations Department is responsible for evaluating new equipment and standards for emerging and pre-commercial technologies. This department is continually evaluating the many new types of technologies which may improve electric reliability and public safety and give special attention to technologies that may contribute to NCECI's fire-safety goals and objectives.

C. Minimizing Unnecessary or Ineffective Actions

The final goal for this Wildfire Mitigation Plan is to measure the effectiveness of specific wildfire mitigation strategies. Where a particular action, program, or protocol is determined to be unnecessary or ineffective, NCECI will assess whether a modification or replacement is merited.

This plan will also help determine if more cost-effective measures would produce the same or better results.

III. Roles and Responsibilities

A. Cooperative Roles and Responsibilities

NCECI's Wildfire Mitigation Plan is subject to the direct supervision of the Engineering and Operations Manager.

All Cooperative employees are responsible for contributing to and performing the activities described in this Wildfire Mitigation Plan including:

- Conduct work in a manner that will minimize potential fire dangers.
- Take all reasonable and practicable actions to prevent and suppress fires resulting from NCECI electric facilities.
- Coordinate with federal, state, and local fire management personnel to ensure that appropriate preventative measures are in place.
- Immediately report fires, pursuant to specified procedures.
- Take corrective action when observing or having been notified that fire protection measures have not been properly installed or maintained.
- Ensure compliance with relevant federal, state, and industry standard requirements.
- Maintain adequate training programs for all relevant employees.

B. Community Outreach and Communication

- In the event of a wildfire, NCECI would utilize all communications channels available including social media, website updates (www.nceci.com), and local media. This will provide timely updates on service interruptions, safety information and any restoration progress.
- Work closely with local fire departments, providing training on our systems, response plans, and fire safety measures to enhance coordination during wildfire events.

IV. Wildfire Risks and Drivers

Within NCECI's service territory and the surrounding areas, the primary risk drivers for wildfire are the following:

- Extended drought;
- Vegetation type;
- High winds and high temperatures;
- Lack of moisture and dry soil conditions.

V. Wildfire Preventative Strategies

A. General Strategies

The regular and routine efforts the Cooperative takes to minimize fires involving its distribution lines include the following:

- NCECI line crews routinely receive hazard recognition and fire extinguisher training to help them identify and handle fire risk issues. Fire extinguishers are carried on vehicles and are tested regularly. During periods of higher fire risk, water cannons are carried on designated vehicles and equipment.

- NCECI follows RUS guidelines which require the routine line patrol of the Cooperative's distribution system.
- Annually, NCECI conducts a pole inspection of approximately 10% of the total system utilizing an outside contractor. Damaged or rejected poles found during this inspection are addressed in a timely manner based on the severity of damage and/or decay.
- Members and the public receive communications from NCECI requesting their assistance in calling the Cooperative with any hazards they see.
- Weather conditions are considered when planning work and determining travel plans.
- Employees are advised to be cautious and on the lookout for smoke and fire hazards while working.

B. Weather Monitoring

Although the risk of fire is a year-round reality, there are certain recurring environmental and weather conditions when the risks of uncontrolled wildfires in NCECI's service territory are abnormally high and the dangers most severe. If and when these abnormal and dangerous conditions are anticipated or occur, NCECI is prepared to mobilize personnel and resources to abate, mitigate and respond to these conditions and any potential fire threats.

NCECI will use the following resources for monitoring weather conditions and wildfire risk:

<https://ndresponse.gov/burn-ban-restrictions-fire-danger-maps>

<https://ndresponse.gov/sites/www/files/documents/gallery/FireDanger/BurnBarn-Restrictions/ND-fire-danger-guide-web-pdf.pdf>

<https://www.des.nd.gov/contact/countytribal-contacts>

www.weather.gov/bis

C. Design and Construction Standards

Distribution infrastructure is designed and constructed in accordance with RUS (Rural Utility Services) standards, which meet or exceed the current NESC (National Electric Safety Code). Material is chosen on a case-by-case basis depending on engineering analysis or minimum design standards as indicated in NCECI's current Construction Work Plan.

D. Vegetation Management and Inspections

NCECI performs routine line patrols on the system according to RUS specifications and reports any vegetation issues such as trees or brush that may be near or in the distribution power lines. The service orders are then placed in queue to be completed by a contract tree trimmer or Cooperative crews. Danger trees are taken care of on the spot or placed for immediate attention. Trees and vegetation that are found out of rotation of line patrols are also addressed when found on a normal days' duties as well as those that are consumer reported.

VI. Community Outreach and Public Awareness

NCECI has created a multi-level approach to community education and outreach as our contribution to public awareness of fire threats, fire prevention and emergency preparedness.

The key elements of this approach are:

- Member education including emergency preparedness and backup generator safety;
- Educational information disseminated through the *Statewide* magazine;
- Work closely with local fire departments, providing training on our systems, response plans, and fire safety measures to enhance coordination during wildfire events.

VII. Evaluating The Plan

On an annual basis, the Cooperative will evaluate the Plan, including plan performance and compliance. Such review will include a review of any claims, maintenance, operations, training, and communication issues.

This Wildfire Mitigation Plan is subject to review by NCECI's Board of Directors. NCECI will present this plan to its Board on an annual basis. During such annual review, any issues with the Plan and Plan compliance will be identified and addressed.

I, Lori Kittleson, the Secretary of the Board of Directors certify that the foregoing Wildfire Mitigation Plan was approved by the Board of Directors of North Central Electric Cooperative, Inc. on January 30, 2026.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lori Kittleson", is written over a horizontal line.