



Wildfire Messaging Awareness Survey Methodology – 2020 Fire Season

Meet and Confer – October 20, 2020

Collaborative Research Designed for:



Objectives

The overall objective of this research is to measure the public's awareness of messaging related to wildfire preparedness and safety. Specific research objectives include:

- Measure awareness of utility messages related to wildfire preparedness
- Identify recall of specific message topics
- Identify recall of message channels
- Measure recall and understanding of Public Safety Power Shutoff or PSPS
- Evaluate sources customers are most likely to turn to for information about PSPS
- Evaluate understanding of information and whether customers feel equipped to act
- Explore actions taken by customers to prepare for wildfire season
- Measure awareness of utility's efforts to reduce the risk of wildfires
- Measure satisfaction with outreach and interactions with the utility
- Understand whether customers feel connected to resources before, during, and after a wildfire, and when a PSPS event was called for Pacific Power (not for Liberty or BVES)
- Determine whether resources provided to community-based organizations (CBOs) are effective in reaching target demographics within their organizations



Research Approach

In order to cost effectively and quickly conduct research among California customers of Pacific Power, Liberty Utilities, and Bear Valley Electrical Service, MDC will conduct one study with customers of all three utilities.

- Consolidated survey instruments, with utility logos and names piped in so customers' survey experience is customized for their utility
- Standardized questions across utilities, with room to insert 1-2 unique questions for each utility (if desired/appropriate)
- CBO interview guides will be custom-developed for each utility
- Standardized data processing
- Each utility will receive separate and unique crosstabs and PowerPoint reporting deliverables, covering only their own customer base



Audience

Residential and business customers of Pacific Power, Bear Valley Electric Service, and Liberty Utilities in California. Respondents will be screened to ensure:

- They are customers of the utility
- They are the person (or one of the people) likely to make decisions about their electric services

Key contacts within CBOs

- Pacific Power: Great Northern Services (Siskiyou County); Happy Camp Family/Community Resource Center; Family & Community Resource Center of Weed; Mt. Shasta CRC
- Liberty: Sierra Community House (Foodbank and Family Resources), South Lake Tahoe Family Resource Center, Mono County Social Services, Portola Family Resource Center
- BVES: 4 CBOs planned
- Utilities to make a warm hand-off to MDC Research in order to facilitate research interviews



Methodology

The research will be administered using a mixed mode online/phone survey methodology for each utility.

- A total of n=550 random customer surveys will be conducted (n=500 web and n=50 phone)
- In addition, 30 telephone interviews will be conducted with Critical Customers
- 4 in-depth interviews will be conducted with community-based organizations (CBOs)



The base customer study will be conducted using an online survey methodology:

- Up to n=500 completed online surveys (n=350 to n=500 expected, depending on list size and response rate) per utility
- Customers will be invited to participate in online surveys via emails issued by MDC; MDC recommends 1 invitation and 1 reminder email
- Emails will be sent to all residential and business customers in California with email addresses available for use
- Quotas will not be established for the online survey, as we do not want to turn away willing customers; no data weighting is envisioned



Methodology (cont.)



The secondary methodology will be a phone survey of customers without an email address available for the online survey:

- n=50 random telephone surveys planned; options for more phone surveys if significant differences between phone and web responses are noted
- Quotas will not be established for the telephone survey, as we do not want to turn away willing customers; no data weighting is envisioned
- n=30 telephone surveys with critical customers (using the same survey instrument as random customer telephone surveys)



The CBO interviews will be conducted via 30-minute in-depth interviews (using Microsoft Teams or similar) and will be conducted by a trained moderator.

- This in-depth interview approach allows for greater depth of engagement than a standard survey, and a trained moderator will be able to probe and clarify responses in a more conversational manner customized to each CBO, rather than using a standardized call script
- MDC recommends an incentive be offered for stakeholders of CBOs to encourage participation and as a “thank you” for participation



Survey Languages

Both online and phone surveys will be available in English and Spanish. No quotas are envisioned for Spanish-speaking customers, and customers will have the choice to participate in their language of choice.

- If customer lists are able to target Spanish-speaking customers, initial phone outreach will be handled by a bilingual interviewer
- If customers are not identified in the list, or if customers identified as English-speaking, prefer to conduct the survey in Spanish, a callback will be established for a Spanish-speaking interviewer to conduct the survey at a convenient time
- All online survey invitations will have text in Spanish providing a link for customers to access the Spanish survey; if customers click the English link, they will have the ability to change the survey language to Spanish if they prefer

