

THE SPARK

WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS IS YEAR ROUND

Digital Version



When It's Dry and Windy: Red Flag Warnings & Power Safety Shutoffs

The National Weather Service (NWS) monitors conditions that enable wildfires to ignite easily and spread rapidly. If these conditions are present, two key fire-weather alerts may be issued to help the public prepare:

1. Fire Weather Watch (FWW)
 - Issued when critical fire weather is possible, but not yet occurring. BE PREPARED.
2. Red Flag Warning (RFW)
 - Issued when critical fire weather is occurring or imminent. Conditions for NM include: (source: SW Coordination Center)
 - Sustained 20-ft winds > 20 mph or gusts > 35 mph
 - Relative humidity < 15%
 - Fire danger HIGH or above
 - Weather is forecasted to last 3+ hours

Vegetation dryness is a major factor when issuing these warnings. RFWs/FWWs are not issued based on wind or humidity alone. Dry thunderstorms, drought, and extended dry periods may also trigger warnings.

However, fires can grow rapidly even without official alerts. Fuel conditions change by slope, elevation, and vegetation type. Stay alert and be prepared on any dry, windy day. Visit [NWS Albuquerque](#) and [NWS El Paso](#) to find real-time RFW and FWW updates. Some fire departments and communities will also post alerts via social media or display red flags in public areas.

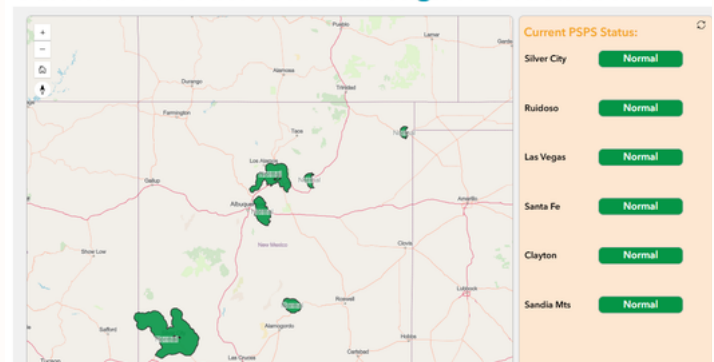
Power Safety Shutoffs: What to Expect

Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) programs reduce wildfire ignition risk from electrical lines during high-wind, high-risk weather. Power may be shut off quickly, but restoring it takes time—crews must inspect the full line(s) before they can be safely re-energized. If your utility uses PSPS, sign up for notifications and understand their process. During outages, communities may offer charging stations at public centers. PSPS are used as a last-resort mitigation measure and are now standard in several regions of the U.S.

TIPS TO PREVENT IGNITIONS

- Check daily fire-weather updates for your area from the [NWS | Fire](#).
- If a RFW or FWW is issued, modify or postpone high-risk outdoor activities like debris burning.
- Avoid open flames, grinding, welding, or anything producing sparks on dry/windy days.
- Carry water, a shovel, and a fire extinguisher when working outdoors.
- Review local, state, and federal fire restrictions before recreating or working outdoors.

Current PSPS Alert Status in High Fire Risk Areas



PNM's PSPS Status Alert map found at pnm.com/pssp.

ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE

- Know your utility's PSPS policy and sign up for alerts.
- Secure Mylar balloons and report vegetation touching powerlines. (mylar balloons get caught in powerlines and can cause arcing)
- Plan for outages. This includes medications requiring refrigeration, pet needs, and cooling options.

