Wildfire Mitigation Plan

Dakota Valley Electric Cooperative

1. Purpose

Dakota Valley Electric Cooperative is committed to delivering safe, reliable, and affordable electricity to its members. As dry and hot seasonal conditions increase the likelihood of wildfires, the Cooperative recognizes wildfire mitigation as a critical responsibility in protecting public safety, system reliability, and community infrastructure.

This policy establishes Dakota Valley Electric's commitment, standards, and practices for reducing the risk of wildfires associated with electric utility operations.

2. Regulatory Alignment

Senate Bill 2339 (SB 2339 is designed to support and encourage electric utilities to develop, maintain, and follow wildfire mitigation plans. Compliance with regulatory standards is a minimum requirement; the Cooperative's approach reflects a broader commitment to proactive risk reduction and operational excellence.

3. Policy Statement

While it is not possible to eliminate wildfire risk entirely, Dakota Valley Electric shall take all practical and reasonable steps to reduce the potential for fires associated with its electric system. The Cooperative shall implement and maintain a Wildfire Mitigation Plan that addresses the unique characteristics of its service territory, including terrain, weather patterns, vegetation, infrastructure, and identified fire-prone areas.

Wildfire mitigation shall be treated as an organizational priority and integrated into routine operations, maintenance, inspection, and system planning activities.

4. Scope

This policy applies to all Dakota Valley Electric employees, contractors, and system operations within the Cooperative's service area, including distribution assets, rights-of-way, and associated infrastructure.

5. Wildfire Mitigation Measures

Dakota Valley Electric's Wildfire Mitigation Plan includes, but is not limited to, the following key components:

5.1 Vegetation Management

Vegetation management is a primary wildfire prevention activity. The Cooperative shall proactively clear trees, brush, and other vegetation from electric rights-of-way to maintain safe clearance from energized equipment.

- Routine trimming shall be conducted to prevent tree limbs from contacting power lines.
- Trees that present ongoing or long-term risk to system safety and reliability, including those outside of rights-of-way with the potential to fall into lines, shall be identified and removed when necessary.
- Maintaining clear rights-of-way is essential for fire prevention, system reliability, and safe access for emergency response.

5.2 Pole Inspection, Testing, and Replacement

Dakota Valley Electric shall maintain a structured pole inspection program to ensure the structural integrity of its distribution system.

- The Cooperative operates on a **10-year pole inspection cycle**, inspecting approximately **10 percent of its 51,000 poles annually**.
- Poles found to be weak, damaged, or below safety standards shall be scheduled for repair or replacement.
- This program reduces the risk of pole failures that could result in outages, conductor contact with the ground, or fire ignition—particularly during high winds and severe weather events.

5.3 Line Patrol and Line Inspection

Routine line patrols are conducted to identify potential hazards and maintenance needs throughout the system.

- Line crews patrol approximately **2,550 miles of overhead power lines**, inspecting roughly **one-third of the system each year**.
- Issues identified during patrols are documented, prioritized based on risk, and corrected in a timely manner.
- This proactive inspection process supports early detection of conditions that could contribute to wildfire risk.

5.4 Protective Devices and System Settings

Dakota Valley Electric utilizes system protection settings designed to reduce wildfire risk during high-risk periods.

- During peak fire season, selected portions of the system may be placed in a **"one-shot" protection setting**.
- Under this setting, if a fault occurs, the line will de-energize immediately and remain off until crews can inspect the area and confirm it is safe to restore service.
- One-shot significantly reduces the chance of multiple arcs, which could ignite fires. Under normal settings, a line might attempt to reclose three times, producing multiple arcs.
- A 4-year rotation of maintenance on our OCR's (oil circuit recloser). They are taken down, sent in for maintenance, and put back into the rotation of our breakers. Voltage regulators are read and inspected monthly by Dakota Valley Electric linemen.

Operational Considerations

The Cooperative does not take the decision to modify recloser or breaker settings to "one-shot" (non-reclose) lightly and, whenever feasible, strives to maintain electric service continuity for its membership.

- Potential impacts to firefighting operations due to loss of power to rural, municipal, or member-owned water systems, which may reduce available water supply.
- Limitations on the ability to mobilize agricultural equipment and resources when farmsteads lose electric service, including situations where buildings or equipment cannot be accessed or operated without power.
- Reduced effectiveness of communication systems where towers, boosters, or repeaters lack independent backup power sources
- These impacts will be evaluated alongside wildfire risk factors when considering any operational changes.

Decision-Making Framework

Prior to implementing recloser or breaker setting changes related to wildfire mitigation, Dakota Valley Electric Cooperative will:

- Consider input and guidance from applicable federal, state, and local agencies, including emergency management and fire response authorities.
- Evaluate system conditions, wildfire risk indicators, and potential impacts to member safety, emergency response, and critical infrastructure.

Communication

When wildfire-related operational changes are implemented or anticipated, the Cooperative will make reasonable efforts to inform its membership through available communication channels, including the Cooperative website and social media platforms.

5.5 Underground and Substation Inspections

- Underground system components shall be inspected routinely, and any deficiencies shall be repaired promptly.
- Substations shall be inspected monthly by Cooperative linemen.
- Reports related to substations owned by Central Power shall be submitted monthly, with Cooperative-owned equipment (Low Side) requiring correction addressed without delay.

5.6 Employee Training and Hazard Recognition

- Employees shall participate in safety and hazard recognition training provided through the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC).
- Fire prevention and wildfire hazard recognition training shall be conducted annually through classroom and field-based instruction.

5.6 Members

We encourage all members to take preventative measures around their properties by clearing potential fire fuels such as tall grass, brushes, and overgrown trees, especially those located near homes or other structures. Members that notice overgrown vegetation growing close to power lines or equipment, please contact our office

6. Continuous Improvement

Dakota Valley Electric shall periodically review and update its Wildfire Mitigation Plan and related practices to reflect operational experience, regulatory changes, technological advancements, and evolving wildfire risks

7. Commitment

Through disciplined maintenance, operational controls, employee training, and system inspection, Dakota Valley Electric Cooperative remains committed to protecting public safety, its members, and the communities it serves.

Board Approved: 04-24-26

DAKOTA VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

			OPERATING CONDITIONS			
			Normal	**Elevated**	**Extreme**	**Emergency Red Flag Warning**
				Stage 1	**Stage 2**	**Emergency Criteria**
FIELD OPERATIONS	**General Activity**	**Specific Description**				
	Vehicle Operation	Vehicle travel, off road	Business as usual	Stage 1	Stage 2	Emergency Criteria
	Inspections and Surveying	Ground, drone, aerial inspections, surveys. Follow vehicle operation requirements	Business as usual	Stage 1	Stage 2	Emergency Criteria
	Electric Equipment Maintenance and/or Replacement	Includes pole, crossarm, conductor replacement, digging, drilling	Business as usual	Stage 1	Stage 2	Emergency Criteria
	Tree Trimming	Routine tree trimming of rights-of-way	Business as usual	Stage 1	Stage 2	Emergency Criteria
	Motorized Equipment Use	Use of equipment with combustion engines such as skid loader, back yard cart, excavator, ATV, etc.	Business as usual	Stage 1	Stage 2	Emergency Criteria
	Internal Combustion Engine Use	Includes chainsaws, generators, compressors, etc.	Business as usual	Stage 1	Stage 2	Emergency Criteria
SYSTEM OPERATIONS	Recloser Settings		Business as usual	Consider alternate OCR settings in hazardous fire areas	Consider alternate OCR settings in hazardous fire areas	Consider alternate OCR settings in hazardous fire areas
	Post Fault (Outage) Guidelines		Business as usual	Consider limited testing in hazardous fire areas	Do not test in hazardous fire areas until fully patrolled	Do not test until full patrol is complete and supervisor approved

LEGEND	
Business as usual	Normal operating procedures including tailboard documenting potential risks, crews outfitted with shovel, fire extinguisher.
Stage 1	Base line requirements; round point shovel, water fire extinguisher, documented tailboard addressing fire danger and mitigations as appropriate. This should be documented during the morning tailboard session. Persons working alone are considered to be the Designated Fire Watch. Requires parking in an area with vegetation trimmed to prevent vegetation contact with hot vehicle components.
Stage 2	All STAGES 1 requirements, plus Designated Fire Watch Required. Designated Fire Watch may be a crew member also assigned responsibility for fire prevention and accountability, risk mitigation and suppression within their tool and training capabilities. The Designated Fire Watch is required to remain at the job site for 1 hr. after the end of any at risk activity. Document during the morning tailboard session. Adequate water for fire suppression.
Emergency Criteria	No work is allowed unless not doing the work leaves are creates more of a fire hazard then the work itself. Supervisor's approval must be documented.

OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

STAGE 1

Outage Response: Affected line sections will be fully patrolled for cause of outage. If no cause is found, crews may energize the line leaving the OCRs in current configuration. If current configuration is non-reclose it may temporarily removed if lock-out is determined to be cold load.

STAGE 2

Outage Response: Affected line sections will be fully patrolled for the cause of the outage. If no cause found, the may energize with the OCRs in a non-reclose configuration if possible.

STAGE 3

Outage Response: Affected line sections will be fully patrolled for the cause of the outage. If no cause found, approval to re-close must obtained from the supervisor on call. Restoration procedures will be coordinated between the crew and the supervisor on call. Restoration procedures and associated risks are to be documented.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

During all stages current weather conditions and any additional risks should be assessed before re-energizing line section. Conditions may dictate additional precautions. For example, during high temperatures and high winds; Keeping OCR on non-reclose, open tap cutouts, re-energize main line, close in taps one at a time. This limit arc duration and facilitate trouble shooting if fault conditions still remain.