

May  
2018

# MONTHLY DATA REPORT



Consumer  
Protection and  
Enforcement  
Division  
California Public  
Utilities Commission



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 2 OVERVIEW
- 3 COMMUNICATIONS
- 4 ENERGY
- 5 WATER
- 6 TRANSPORTATION
- 7 SAFETY CONCERNS
- 8 GLOSSARY

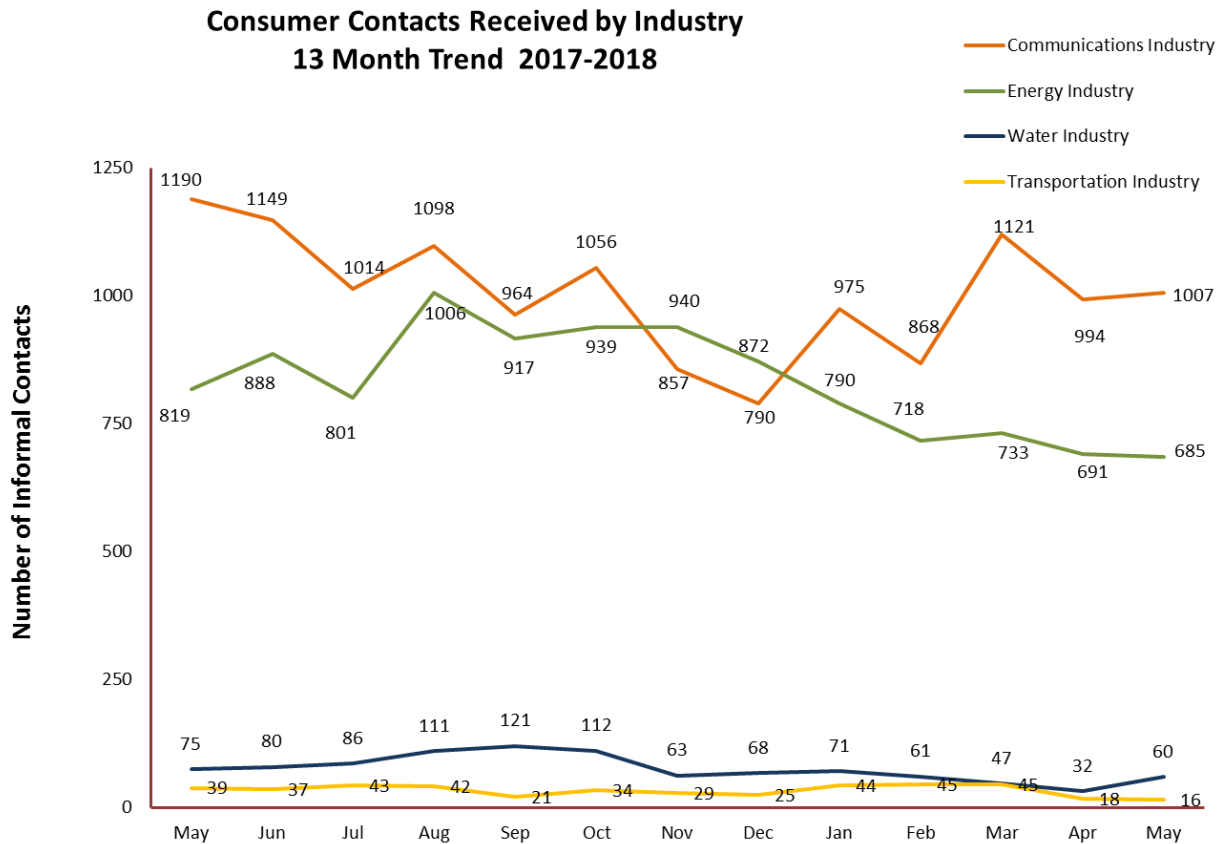
The Consumer Protection and Enforcement Division (CPED) serves the public interest and the mission of the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) by assisting consumers in resolving their informal complaints against service providers under the Commission's jurisdiction. CPED is proud to be able to assist consumers with an informal complaint resolution process, with answers to questions, and with referral information. In assisting consumers, we are able to gain a useful picture of consumer issues and trends.

This report is based on contacts (informal complaints and questions) received by the Consumer Affairs Branch (CAB) and the Transportation Enforcement Branch (TEB) within CPED, and presents both annual and monthly data for the communications, energy, water, and transportation industries. Page 2 presents annual trend data, and Page 3 through Page 6 report data by industry for the current month. For context, the report also includes comparable data from the previous month. Page 7 presents contact data specifically related to safety concerns, by industry. A glossary of terms used in this report can be found on Page 8.

The Consumer Protection and Enforcement Division serves as the first line of support for consumers of CPUC-regulated services. CPED collects and resolves consumer informal complaints, enforces laws and regulations governing transportation carriers, and investigates allegations of utility waste, fraud, and abuse.

# Overview

1,768 CONTACTS (May 2018)



Overall, 1,768 total informal consumer contacts were received during May 2018 across the four regulated industries. May shows a decrease of approximately 1.9% from the 1,735 informal contacts received during April 2018; and a 9.9% decrease from the prior 12-month average of 1,962.

**Communications:** 1,007 categorized informal contacts related to Communications were received during May 2018, which is an increase of 1.3% from the 994 contacts received during April 2018. The contacts received during May shows to be on par with the prior 12-month average of 1,006.

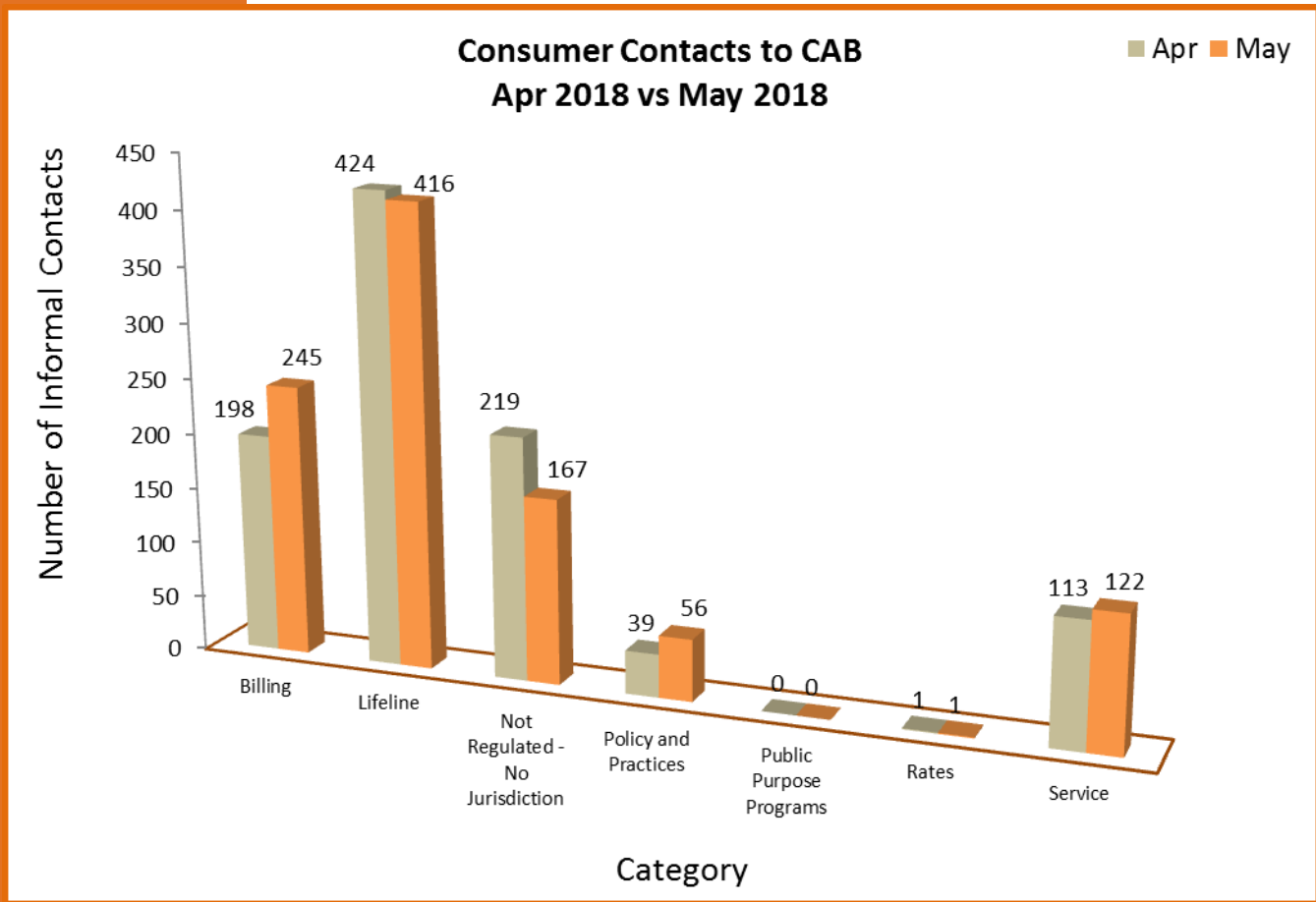
**Energy:** 685 categorized informal contacts related to Energy were received during May 2018, which is a decrease of 0.9% from 691 contacts received during April 2018. Contacts received in May 2018 are 18.7% lower than the prior 12-month average of 843.

**Water:** 60 categorized informal contacts related to Water were received during May 2018. This is an 87.5% increase from the 32 contacts received in April 2018. Water contacts remain below average, with May 2018 being 28.3% lower than the prior 12-month average of 77.

**Transportation:** 16 categorized informal contacts related to Transportation were received during May 2018. May 2018 Transportation contacts are 11.1% lower than the 18 contacts in April 2018 and 54.3% lower than the prior 12-month average of 35.

# Communications

1,007 CONTACTS (May 2018)



During May 2018, CAB received 1,007 Communications-related informal contacts, allocated into one of the defined categories of Billing, LifeLine, Not Regulated-No Jurisdiction, Policy and Practices, Public Purpose Programs, Rates, or Service.

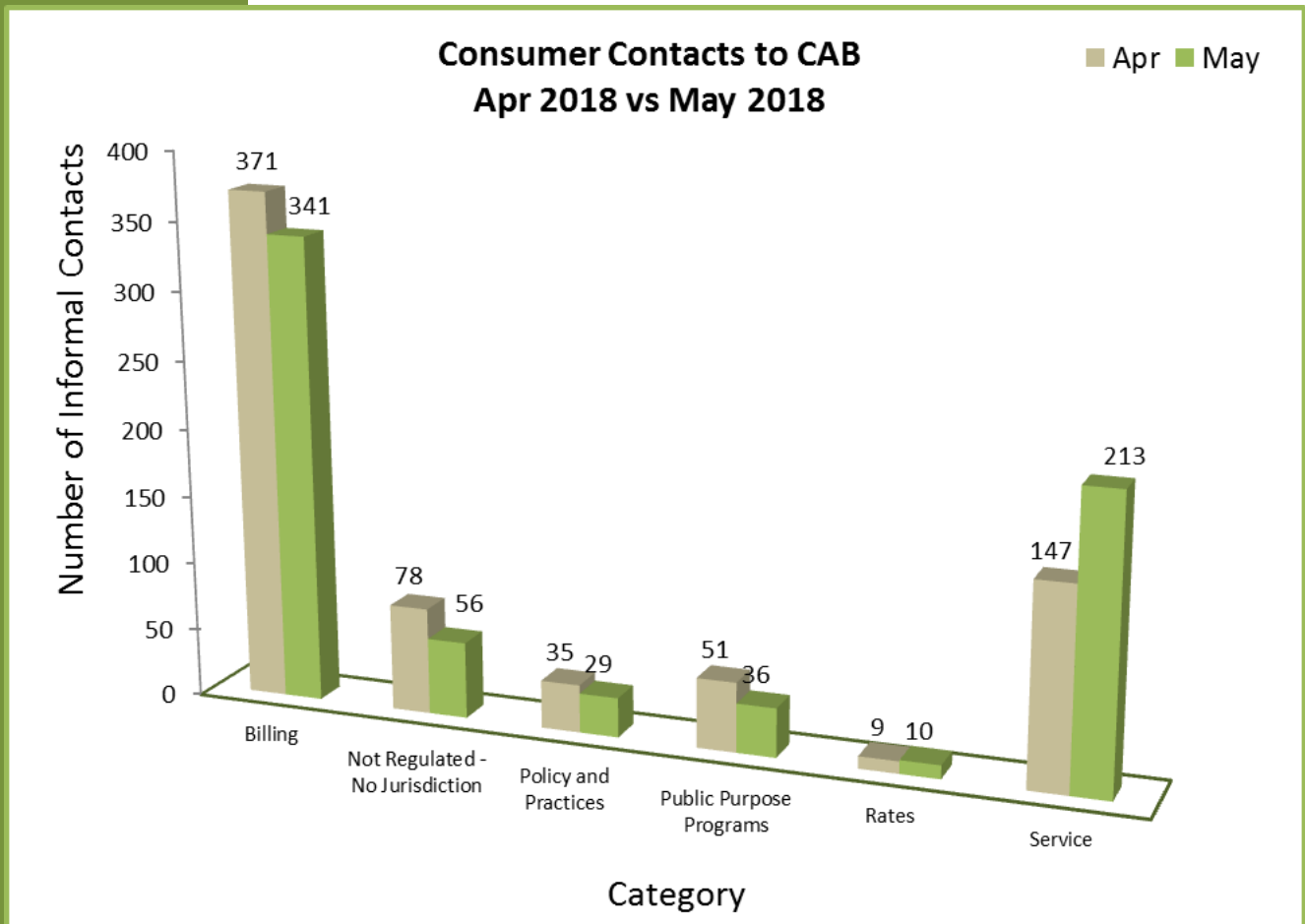
The Billing category shows a 24% increase in contacts from April to May. The increase was a general increase that cannot be attributed to one company.

Policy and Practices contacts increased by 44%; while primarily comprised by Abusive Marketing subcategory related contacts, no specific company was a primary contributor.

In addition to the 1,007 categorized contacts, CAB received 165 uncategorized (pending processing and misdirected) contacts.

# Energy

685 CONTACTS (May 2018)



In May 2018, CAB received 685 Energy-related informal contacts allocated amongst the six defined categories of Billing, Not Regulated-No Jurisdiction, Policy and Practices, Public Purpose Programs, Rates, or Service.

Energy Billing cases show an 8% decrease from April to May. There was an overall decrease in contacts across Billing subcategories with no single company being a primary contributor.

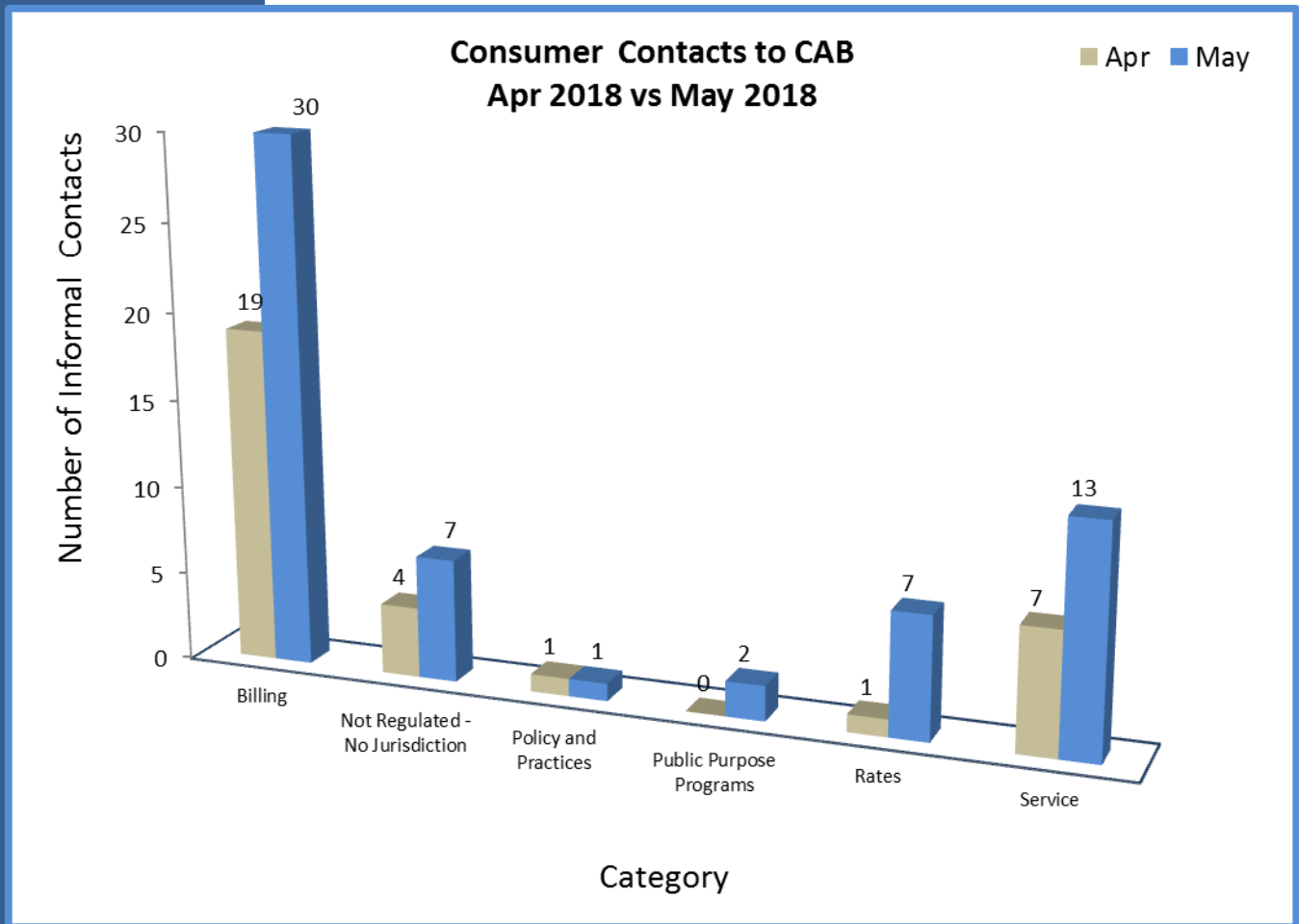
Service-related contacts show a 45% increase in May. This is due to increase in “Disconnection Non Payment” subcategory-related contacts. The increase is evenly distributed amongst PG&E, SDG&E, and SoCal Gas Company.

In addition to the 685 categorized contacts, CAB also received 43 uncategorized (pending processing and misdirected) contacts.



# Water

60 CONTACTS (May 2018)



CAB received 60 Water-related informal contacts in May 2018, allocated into one of the six defined categories of Billing, Not Regulated-No Jurisdiction, Policy and Practices, Public Purpose Programs, Rates, or Service.

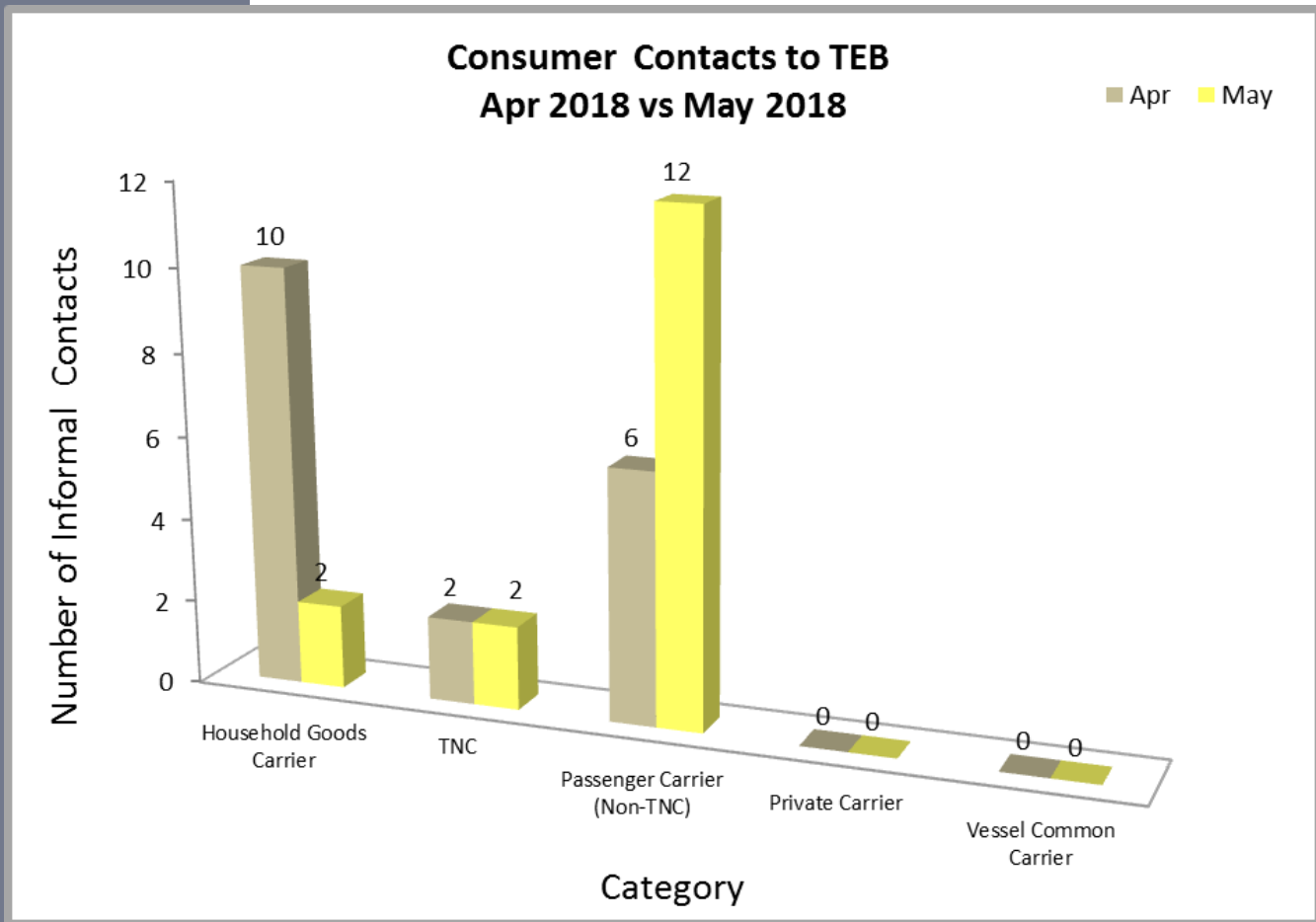
Billing-related contacts experienced an increase from April to May. The High Bill subcategory was the main reason for the Billing related increase but no specific company being a sole contributor.

Rates also experienced a noticeable increase with The Rate Protest subcategory being the main factor; San Jose Water Company being the top contributor in Rate Protest contacts in May.

In addition to the 60 categorized contacts, CAB also received 30 uncategorized (pending processing and misdirected) contacts.

# Transportation

16 CONTACTS (May 2018)



TEB received a total of 16 transportation complaints in May 2018, allocated into one of the five defined categories of Household Goods Carrier, TNC, Passenger Carrier (Non-TNC), Private Carrier, or Vessel Common Carrier.

Complaints against household goods carriers decreased by 80% since April. This indicates that fewer households relocated in May, which is consistent with the cyclical nature of the industry, which peaks in the summer and is sporadic the rest of the year.

Passenger carrier complaints against limos and buses increased by 100% since April. No trend or pattern could be attributed to the complaints relative to the over 9,000 carriers under CPUC jurisdiction.

# Safety Concerns Across Industries

During May 2018, CPED received **32** safety-related contacts identified as having a safety concern component across the four reported industries. The contacts presented below are a subset of those presented on pages 3-6 of this report. Safety contacts are classified by the type of safety concern.

<b>Communications</b>	<b>10</b>
Emergency Services/Health Concerns	3
Utility Infrastructure	7

<b>Energy</b>	<b>14</b>
Company Practice	2
Utility Infrastructure	12

<b>Water</b>	
No Water Safety Contacts	

<b>Transportation</b>	<b>8</b>
Operating Without Active Authority	8

## Definitions for Safety-Related Contacts:

**Company Practice** includes service-related issues perceived to impact consumer safety such as lengthy appointment wait times for service restoration.

**Consumer Property** includes issues with consumer owned property such as unsafe appliances (heaters, stoves, etc.)

**EMF/Power Surges/Voltage fluctuations** include cases related to Electromagnetic Field (EMF) concerns (e.g. Smart Meters), consumer household power surges and electricity voltage fluctuations.

**Emergency Services/ Health Concerns** include immediate or perceived concerns due to potential outages or events, such as inability to reach 911 during phone outage, or failure of medical equipment during power outages.

**Gas Leak** includes any concerns related to gas leaks in the utility distribution system or in the consumer's premises.

**Operating Without Active Authority** involves operations without a valid permit or certificate, including operations with a suspended or revoked permit or certificate.

**Property Restoration** includes issues regarding ground hazards such as holes, trenches, tripping hazards, debris removal, tree trimming and street lighting.

**Security Concerns** includes issues perceived to impact consumer security such as phone line privacy issues, unlisted phone numbers, or utility personnel identification.

**Utility Infrastructure** includes issues regarding infrastructure that is faulty or in disrepair such as hanging cables, exposed wires, leaning utility poles, analog meters and transformers.

**Water Safety or Quality** includes immediate or perceived concerns relating to water quality such as color, odor or presence of chemicals in drinking water.

# Definitions

## Consumer Affairs Branch

The following definitions were compiled to assist with understanding consumer contacts information.

Type of Contacts Definitions	
Informal Consumer Contacts	Informal Contacts are consumers' communications received by CAB via phone calls, letters and electronic submissions (email/web form). Contacts can consist of complaints, questions, or feedback from consumers regarding the policies and practices of specific utilities or the CPUC. These contacts are reported as Categorized or Uncategorized.
Categorized Contacts	These are informal contacts which have sufficient information to be allocated into one the defined categories: Billing, Lifeline, Not Regulated-No Jurisdiction, Policy and Practices, Public Purpose Programs, Rates, and Service based on the primary (overarching) reason for the contact.
Uncategorized Contacts	These are contacts which are pending assignment, lack sufficient information to be processed (Unknown), or contacts in which the consumer intended to contact some other entity, and mistakenly contacted CAB (Misdirected).

Category Definitions	
Billing	Consumer contacts related to disputed items appearing on a consumer's utility bill, the appearance of the bill, or other utility charges.
Lifeline (Billing & Appeals)	Consumer contacts related to the Lifeline Program, which assists low income telecommunications customers. It includes items related to Lifeline Appeals or Lifeline Billing disputes.
Not Regulated – No Jurisdiction	Consumer contacts related to concerns, disputes, and issues where the CPUC does not have jurisdiction.
Policy and Practices	Consumer contacts related to utility and/or CPUC policies and practices.
Public Purpose Programs	Consumer contacts related to programs that assist utility consumers, including income-based and disability-based programs.
Rates	Consumer contacts related to rate design, rate protests and baseline rates.
Service	Consumer contacts related to the service provided to the consumer by the utility.
Uncategorized Definitions	
Misdirected	Consumer contacts intended for some other entity such as consumer attempting to contact their utility. CAB assists these consumers by redirecting them to the entity best able to address their concerns.
Pending Assignment	Category not identified due to case pending processing.
Unknown	Category not identified due to lack of information from consumer.