

August  
2018

# MONTHLY DATA REPORT



Consumer  
Protection and  
Enforcement  
Division  
California Public  
Utilities Commission



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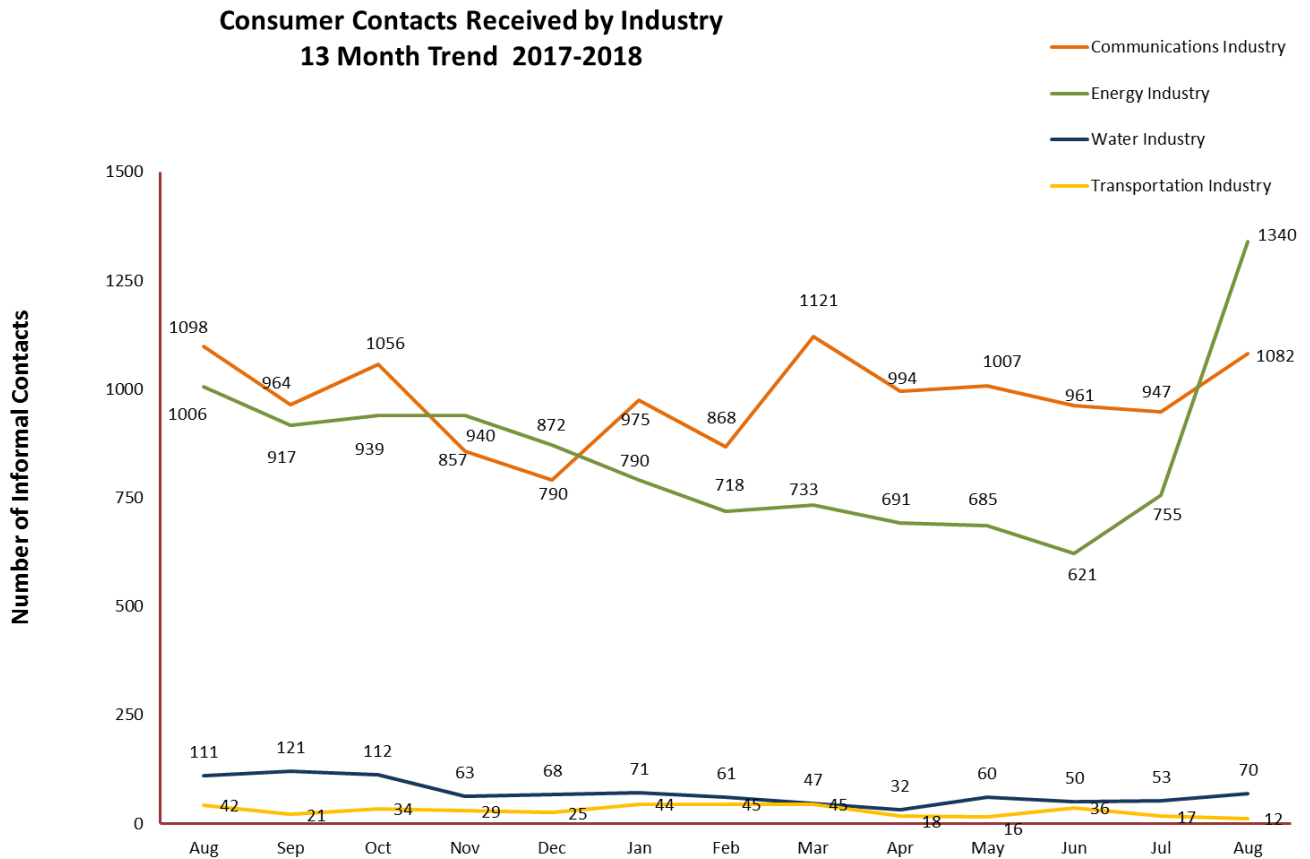
The Consumer Protection and Enforcement Division (CPED) serves the public interest and the mission of the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) by assisting consumers in resolving their informal complaints against service providers under the Commission's jurisdiction. CPED is proud to be able 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

2,504 CONTACTS (August 2018)



Overall, 2,504 total informal consumer contacts were received during August 2018 across the four regulated industries. August shows an increase of approximately 41.3% from the 1,772 informal contacts received during July 2018; and a 33.0% increase from the prior 12-month average of 1,877.

**Communications:** 1,082 categorized informal contacts related to Communications were received during August 2018, which is an increase of 14.3% from the 947 contacts received during July 2018. The contacts received during August shows to be 11.6% higher than the prior 12-month average of 970.

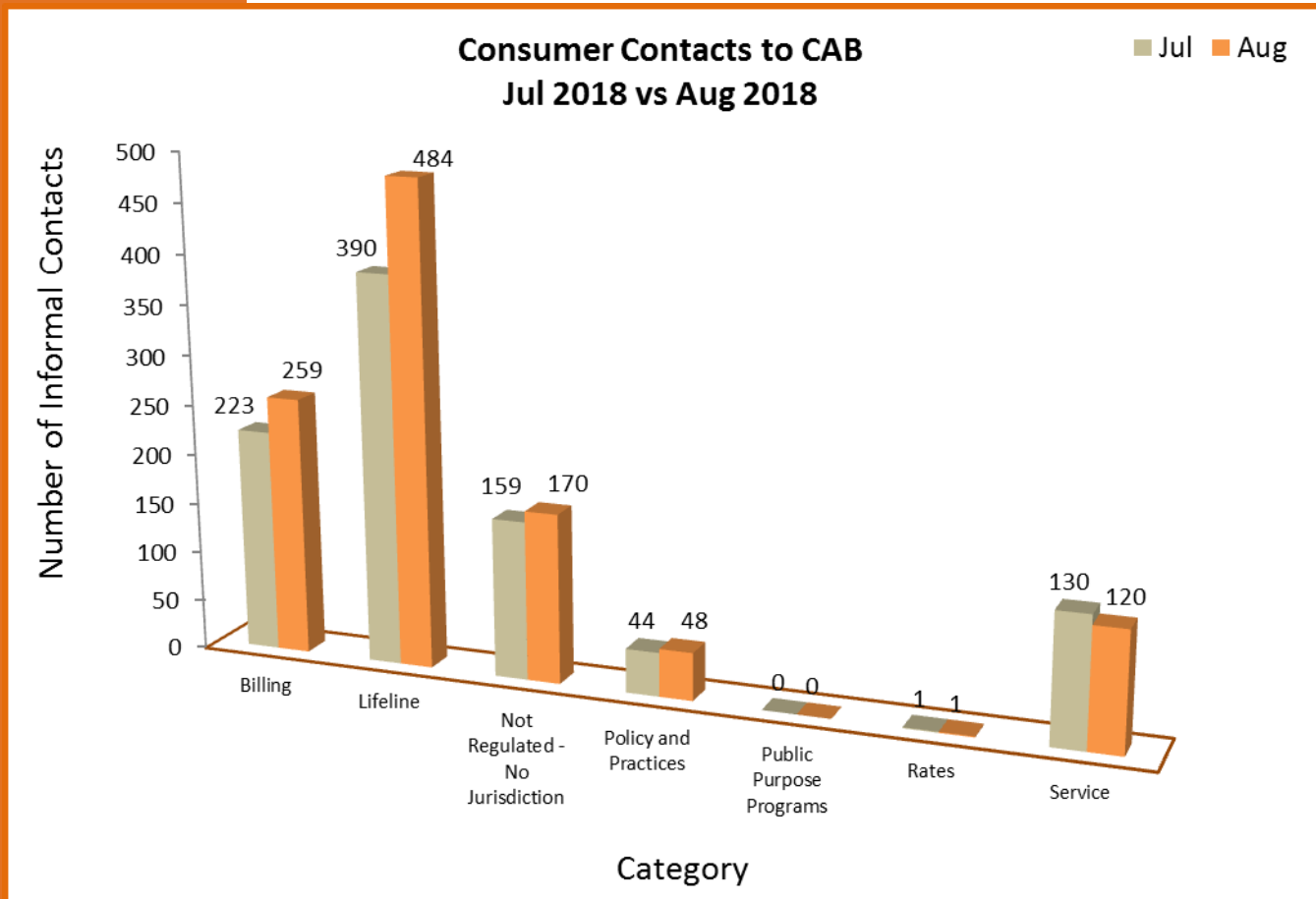
**Energy:** 1,340 categorized informal contacts related to Energy were received during August 2018, which is an increase of 77.5% from 755 contacts received during July 2018. Contacts received in August 2018 are 66.3% higher than the prior 12-month average of 806. Overall, the significant increase in energy contacts in August is largely attributable to a spike in contacts regarding high bill/high usage charges from San Diego Gas and Electric consumers.

**Water:** 70 categorized informal contacts related to Water were received during August 2018. This is a 32.1% increase from the 53 contacts received in July 2018. Water contacts remain nominally below average, with August 2018 being 1.0% lower than the prior 12-month average of 71.

**Transportation:** 12 categorized contacts related to Transportation were received during August 2018. August 2018 Transportation contacts are 29.4% lower than the 17 contacts in July 2018 and 61.3% lower than the prior 12-month average of 31. (Note: Transportation is no longer processing Household Good Carriers and Private Carrier complaints as of July 1<sup>st</sup> 2018, pursuant Senate Bill 19 Hill-2017.)

# Communications

1,082 CONTACTS (August 2018)



During August 2018, CAB received 1,082 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.

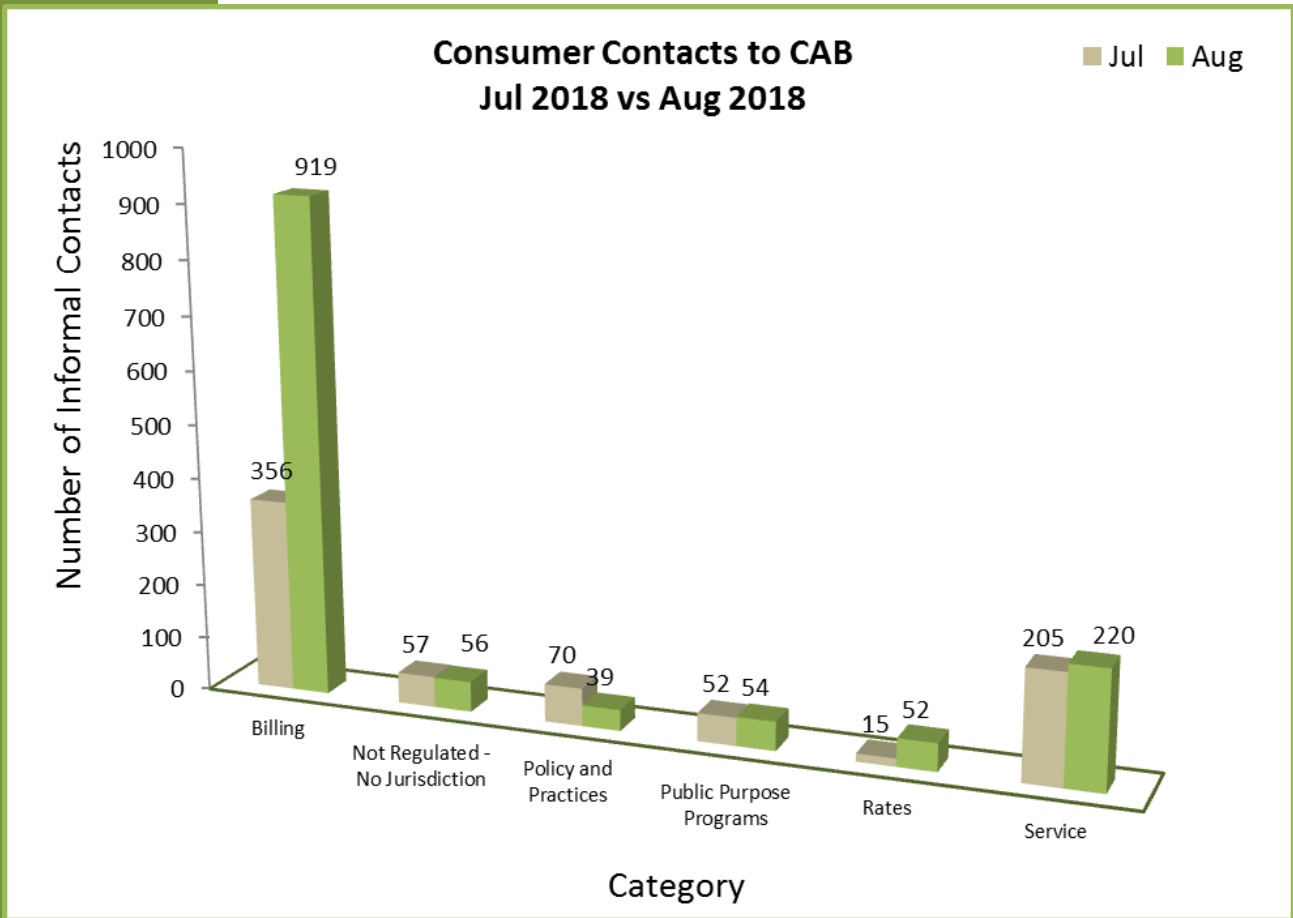
The Billing category shows a 16.1% increase in contacts from July to August. The main contributors for the increase in Billing are high bill complaints with AT&T Mobility and Sprint Spectrum.

Lifeline contacts experienced a 24.1% rise in contacts in August. The increase is due to increase in identity verification contacts as well as equipment issues.

In addition to the 1,082 categorized contacts, CAB received 207 uncategorized (pending processing and misdirected) contacts.

# Energy

1,340 CONTACTS (August 2018)



In August 2018, CAB received 1,340 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 a 158.1% increase from July to August. While several subcategories under Billing experienced an increase, High Bill was the most significant; this is due to high bill/ high usage charge complaints with San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E). The spike in SDG&E complaints included a large number from consumers in the Orange County area. CAB has asked SDG&E to respond comprehensively to these informal complaints, e.g. baseline and meter checks, payment arrangements, etc.

Also, Policy and Practices contacts decreased by 44.3% due to less safety cases in August. PG&E was the top contributor of safety contacts in July and has since decreased in August.

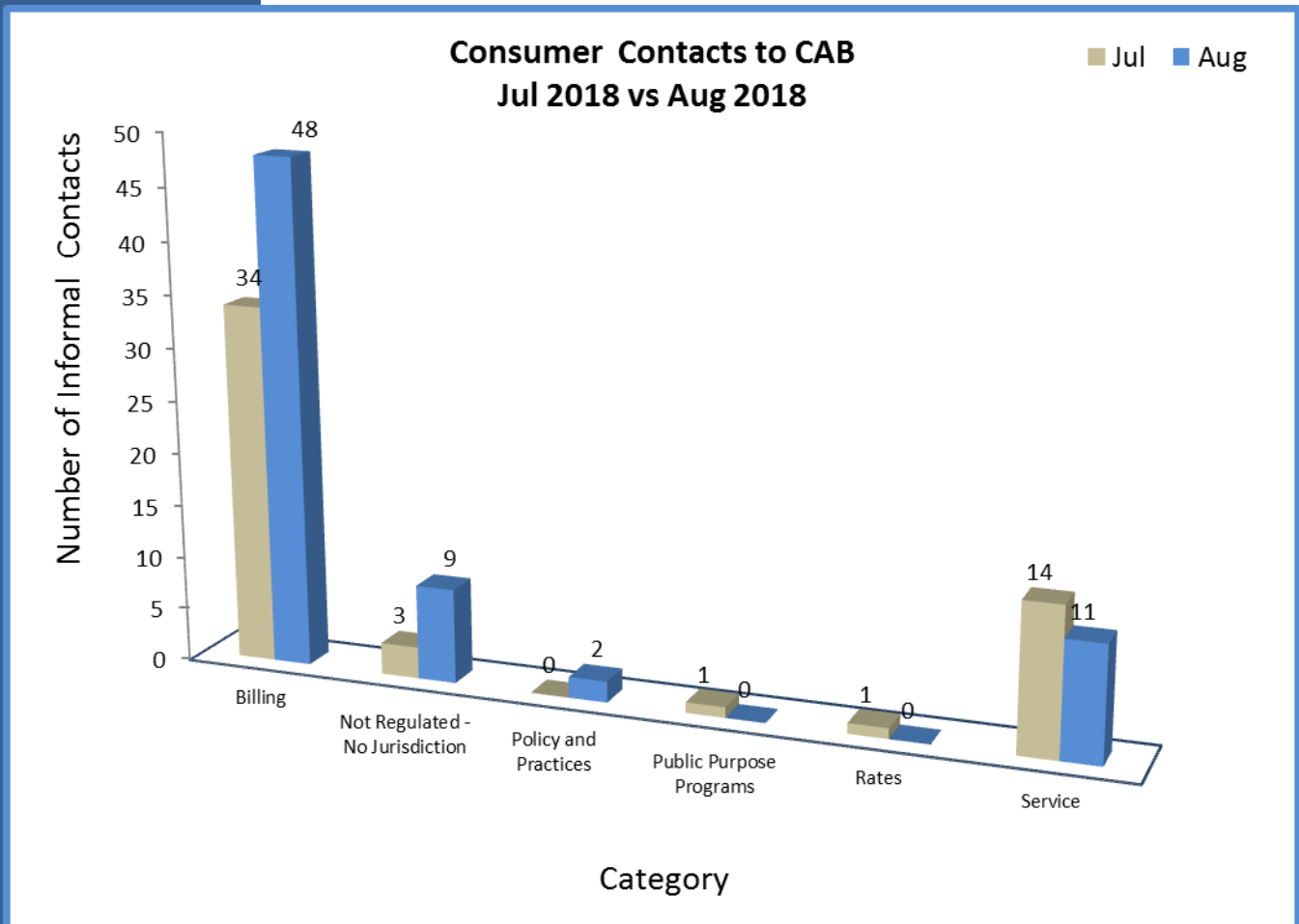
Rates related contacts increased by 246.7% from July to August. Baseline contacts with PG&E, SDG&E, SCE, as well Rate protests with SDG&E contributed to the increase.

In addition to the 1,340 categorized contacts, CAB also received 108 uncategorized (pending processing and misdirected) contacts. CPED Monthly Data Report 4



# Water

70 CONTACTS (August 2018)



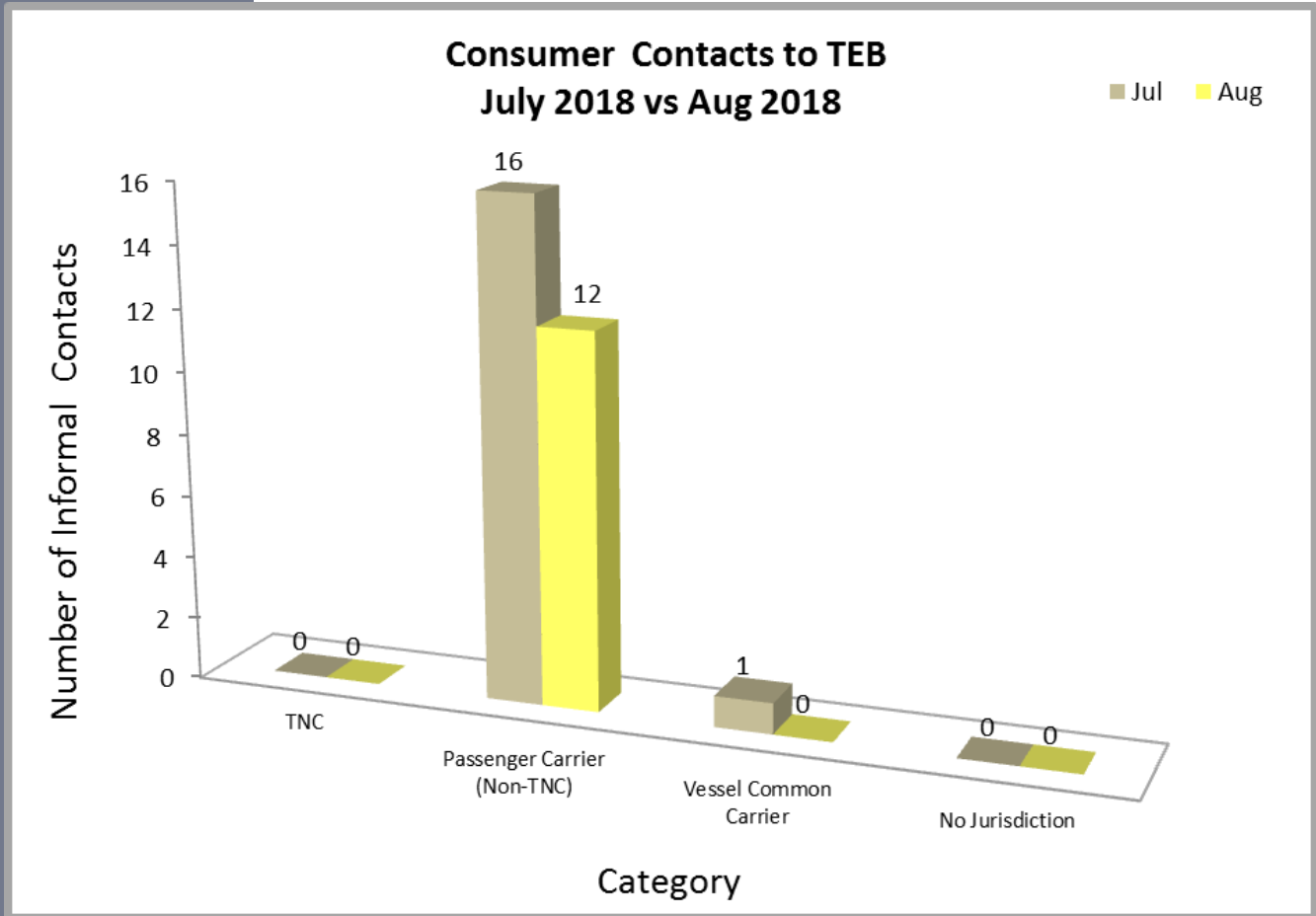
CAB received 70 Water-related informal contacts in August 2018, allocated into one of the six defined categories of Billing, Not Regulated-No Jurisdiction, Policy and Practices, Public Purpose Programs, Rates, or Service.

There is a noticeable increase of 41.2% in Billing-related contacts from July to August. The increase is from the rise in High Bill related contacts from several utilities with no primary contributor to the increase.

In addition to the 70 categorized contacts, CAB also received 36 uncategorized (pending processing and misdirected) contacts.

# Transportation

12 CONTACTS (August 2018)



In August 2018, TEB received 12 written complaints compared to 17 for the previous month of July, a decrease of about 29.4%. The complaints decreased in part because the Commission no longer regulates household good carriers.

Passenger carrier 12 complaints (limo, buses) comprised mainly of (6) operating or advertising without a permit, (3) operating on a revoked or denied permit, (2) for loss and damage, and (1) for safety issues.

Each of the complaints involved a specific carrier, so 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 August 2018, CPED received **30** contacts identified as having a safety 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>9</b>
Emergency Services/Health Concerns	3
Utility Infrastructure	6
<b>Energy</b>	<b>20</b>
Emergency Services/Health Concerns	6
Property Restoration	4
Utility Infrastructure	10
<b>Water</b>	
No Safety Contacts	
<b>Transportation</b>	<b>1</b>
Operating Without Active Authority	1

## 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.