

# MONTHLY DATA REPORT

March  
2018



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.

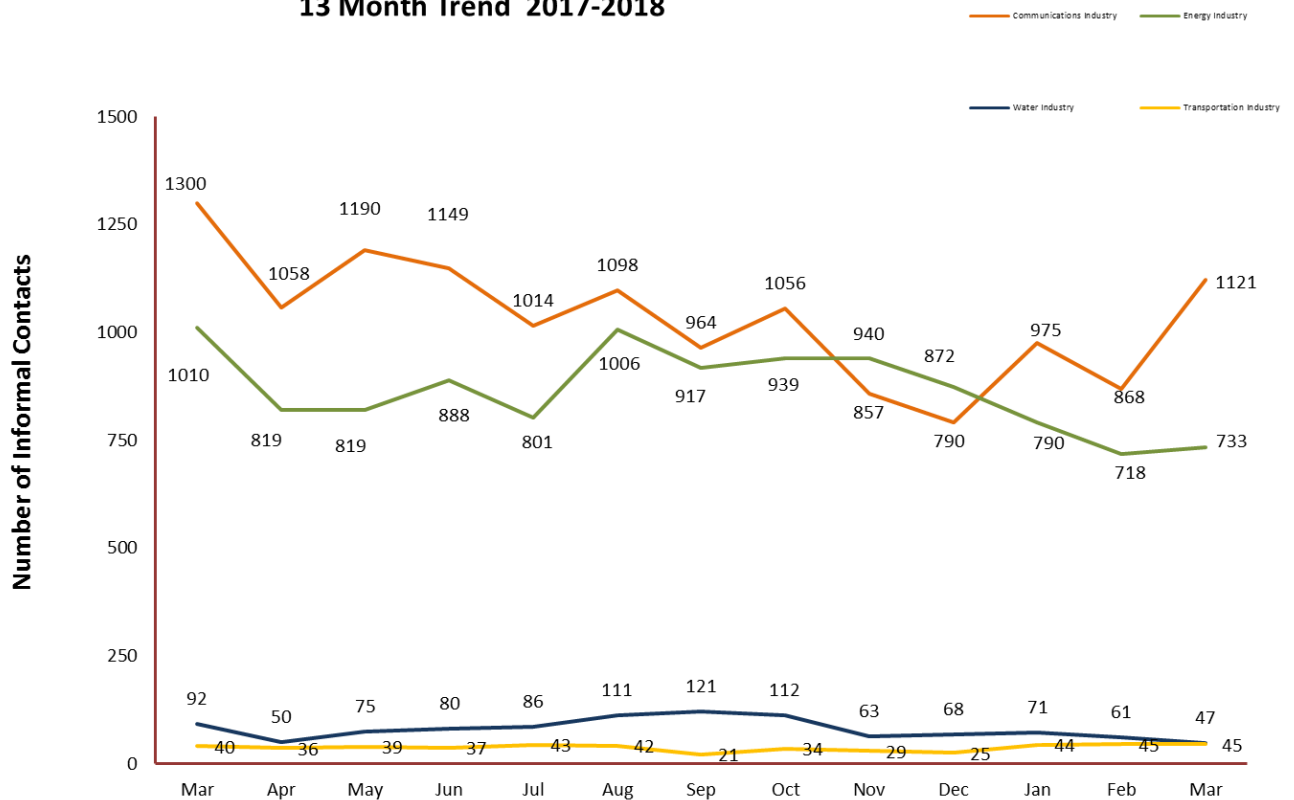
This report is based on contacts (informal complaints and questions) received by the Consumer Affairs Branch (CAB) and the Transportation Enforcement Branch (TEB) within CPED, and presents both annual and monthly data for the communications, energy, water, and transportation industries. Page 2 presents 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

1,946 CONTACTS (March 2018)

**Consumer Contacts Received by Industry  
13 Month Trend 2017-2018**



Overall, 1,946 total informal consumer contacts were received during March 2018 across the four regulated industries. March shows an increase of approximately 15% from the 1,692 informal contacts received during February 2018; and a 4% decrease from the prior 12-month average of 2,022.

**Communications:** 1,121 categorized informal contacts related to Communications were received during March 2018, which is an increase of 29% from the 868 contacts received during February 2018. The contacts received during February experienced a 9% increase compared to the prior 12-month average of 1,027.

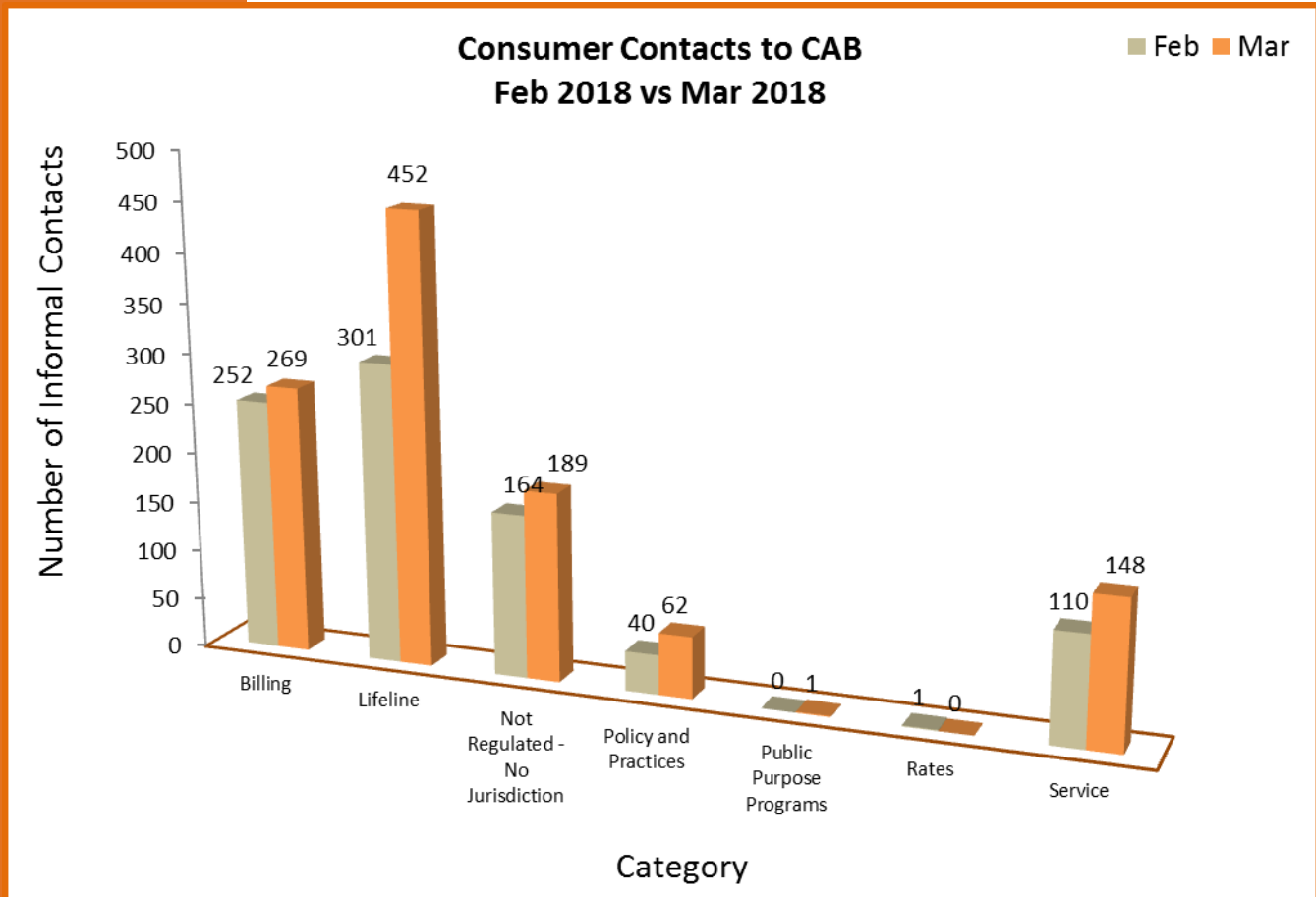
**Energy:** 733 categorized informal contacts related to Energy were received during March 2018, which is an increase of 2% from 718 contacts received during February 2018. Contacts received in March are 16% lower than the prior 12-month average of 877.

**Water:** 47 categorized informal contacts related to Water were received during March 2018. This is a 23% decrease from the 61 contacts received in February 2018. Water contacts went to below average with March being 43% lower than the prior 12-month average of 83.

**Transportation:** As in February, March total categorized contacts received were 45. March Transportation contacts are 24% higher than the prior 12 month average of 36.

# Communications

1,121 CONTACTS (March 2018)



During March 2018, CAB received 1,121 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.

LifeLine-related complaints increased by 50% in March, primarily due to contacts regarding LifeLine Identity Verification, LifeLine freeze, and consumer issues with making requests for LifeLine Program Applications.

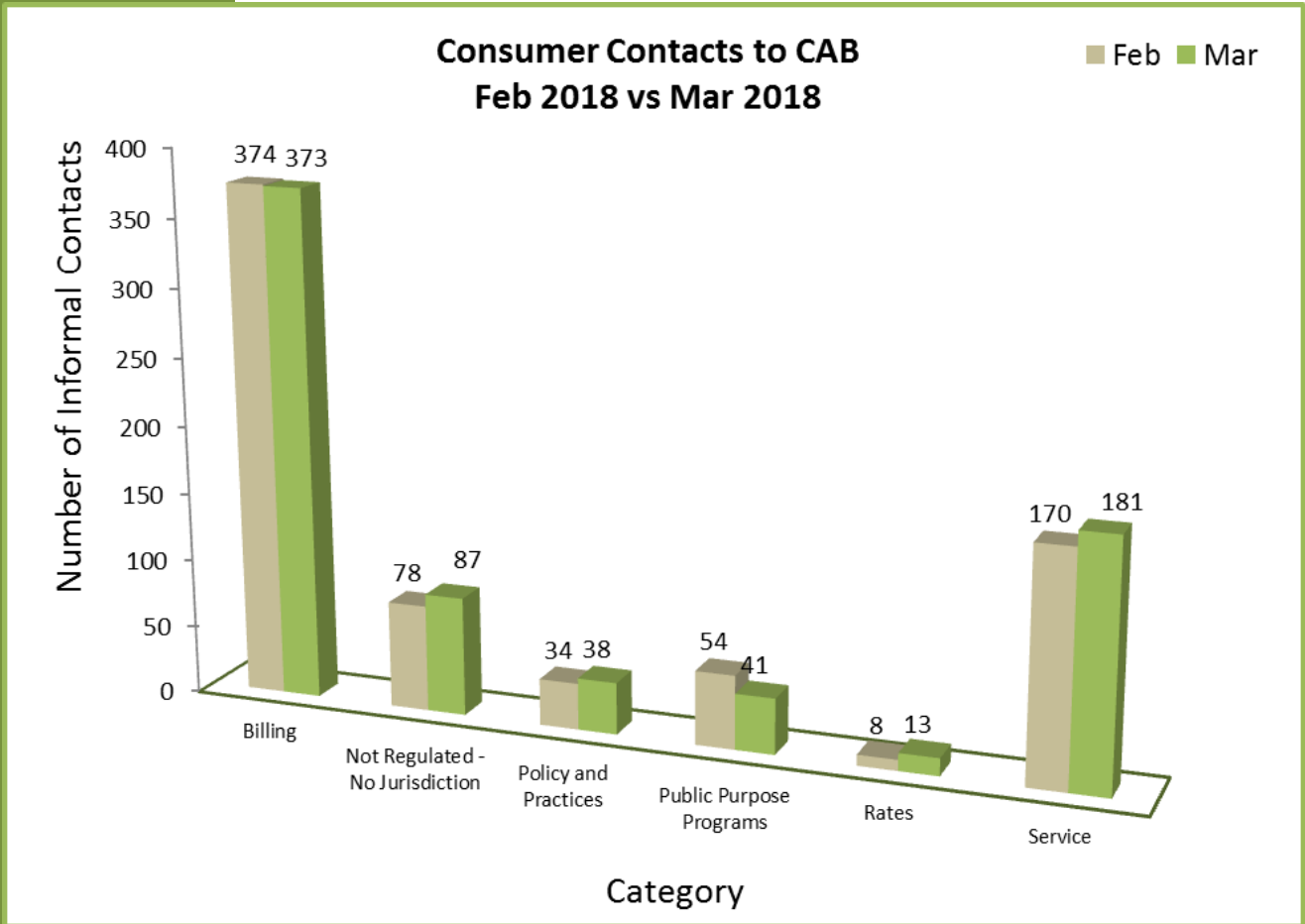
Abusive Marketing related complaints were a key factor in the nearly 35% increase in Service-related contacts in March, but no pattern is discernable at the company level as the contacts were attributed to 11 entities.

Service-related contacts increased due to Outage complaints with AT&T however no discernable geographic pattern was detected to explain the increase.

In addition to the 1,121 categorized contacts, CAB received 171 uncategorized (pending processing and misdirected) contacts.

# Energy

733 CONTACTS (March 2018)



In March 2018, CAB received 733 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.

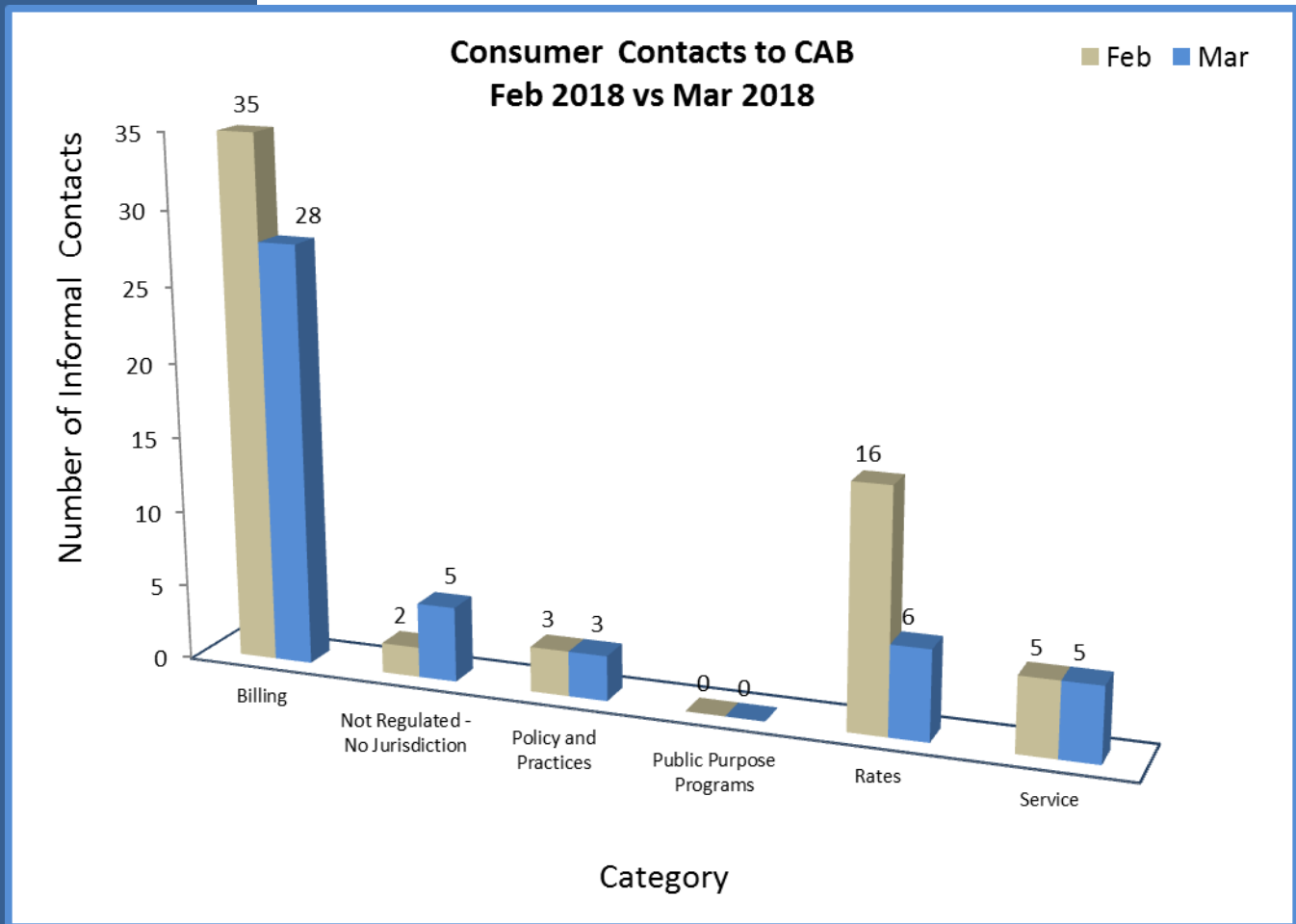
While all Energy related contacts only changed by 2% between February and March 2018, those related to Energy Service increased by about 6.5% in that time period due to modest increases contacts about disconnections and outages. There is a decline in Net-Energy Metering and CARE recertification contacts from February which contributed to the decrease in Public Purpose Program related contacts.

In addition to the 733 categorized contacts, CAB also received 49 uncategorized (pending processing and misdirected) contacts.



# Water

47 CONTACTS (March 2018)



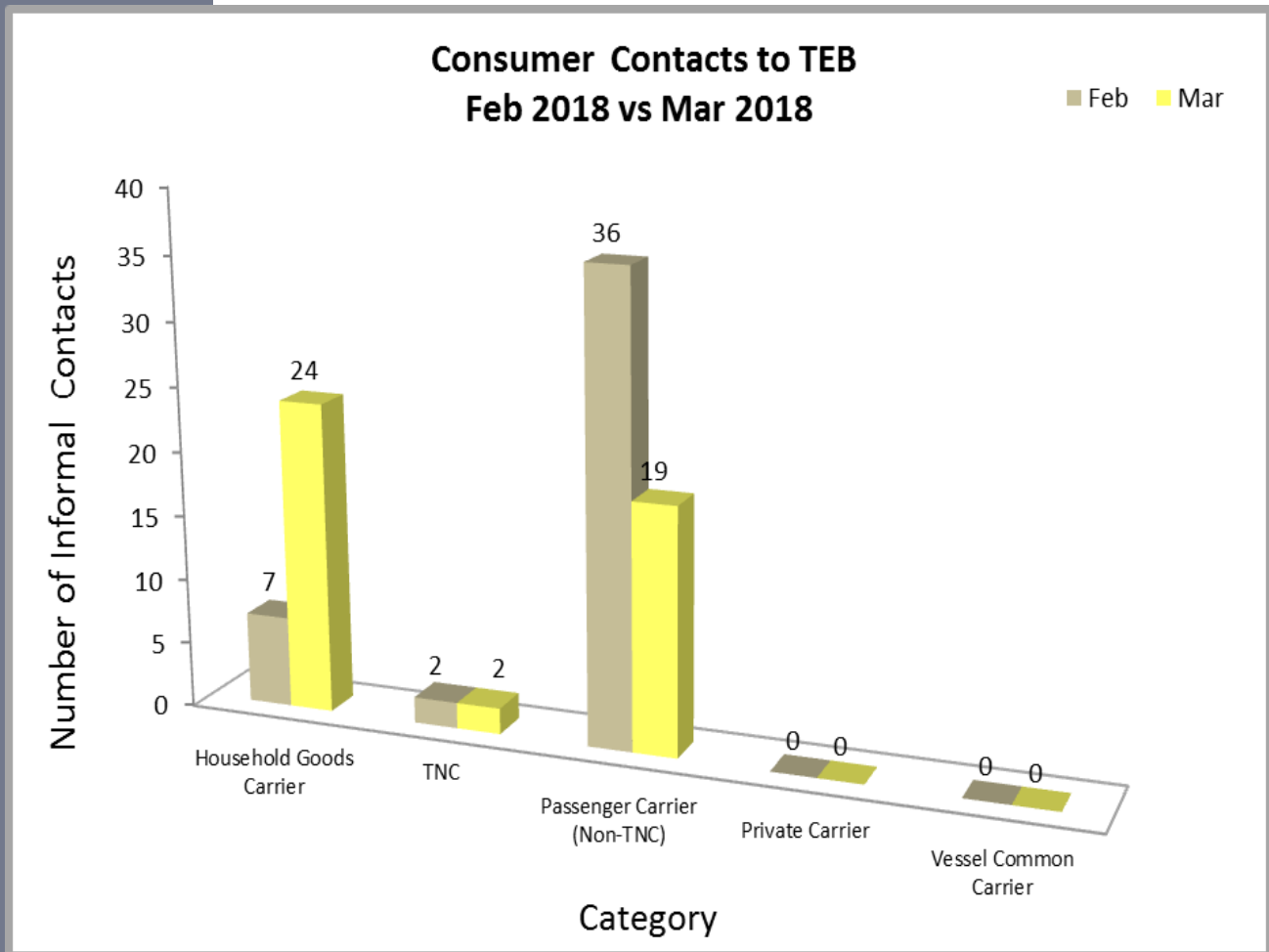
CAB received 47 Water-related informal contacts in March 2018, allocated into one of the six defined categories of Billing, Not Regulated-No Jurisdiction, Policy and Practices, Public Purpose Programs, Rates, or Service.

The decrease in rate protest contacts resulted in less rates-related contacts in March. February had experienced an increase in rates complaints due to Golden State Water Company rate protests.

In addition to the 47 categorized contacts, CAB received 24 uncategorized (pending processing and misdirected) contacts.

# Transportation

45 CONTACTS (March 2018)



TEB received a total of 45 transportation complaints in March 2018, allocated into one of the five defined categories of Household Goods Carrier, TNC, Passenger Carrier (Non-TNC), Private Carrier, or Vessel Common Carrier.

The noticeable change in Household Goods contacts is attributed to the normal spring moving season. March 2018 data for Household Goods Carriers is consistent with March 2017 data. Similarly, the drop in contacts related to Passenger Carriers is consistent with data from March 2017.

# Safety Concerns Across Industries

During March 2018, CPED received **55** 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>16</b>
Company Practice	3
Emergency Services/Health Concerns	10
Property Restoration	2
Utility Infrastructure	1

<b>Energy</b>	<b>18</b>
Company Practice	2
Consumer Property	1
Emergency Services/Health Concerns	2
EMF/Power Surges/Voltage Fluctuations	2
Gas Leak	1
Property Restoration	3
Utility Infrastructure	7

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

<b>Transportation</b>	<b>21</b>
Operating Without Active Authority	21

## 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.