

October
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.

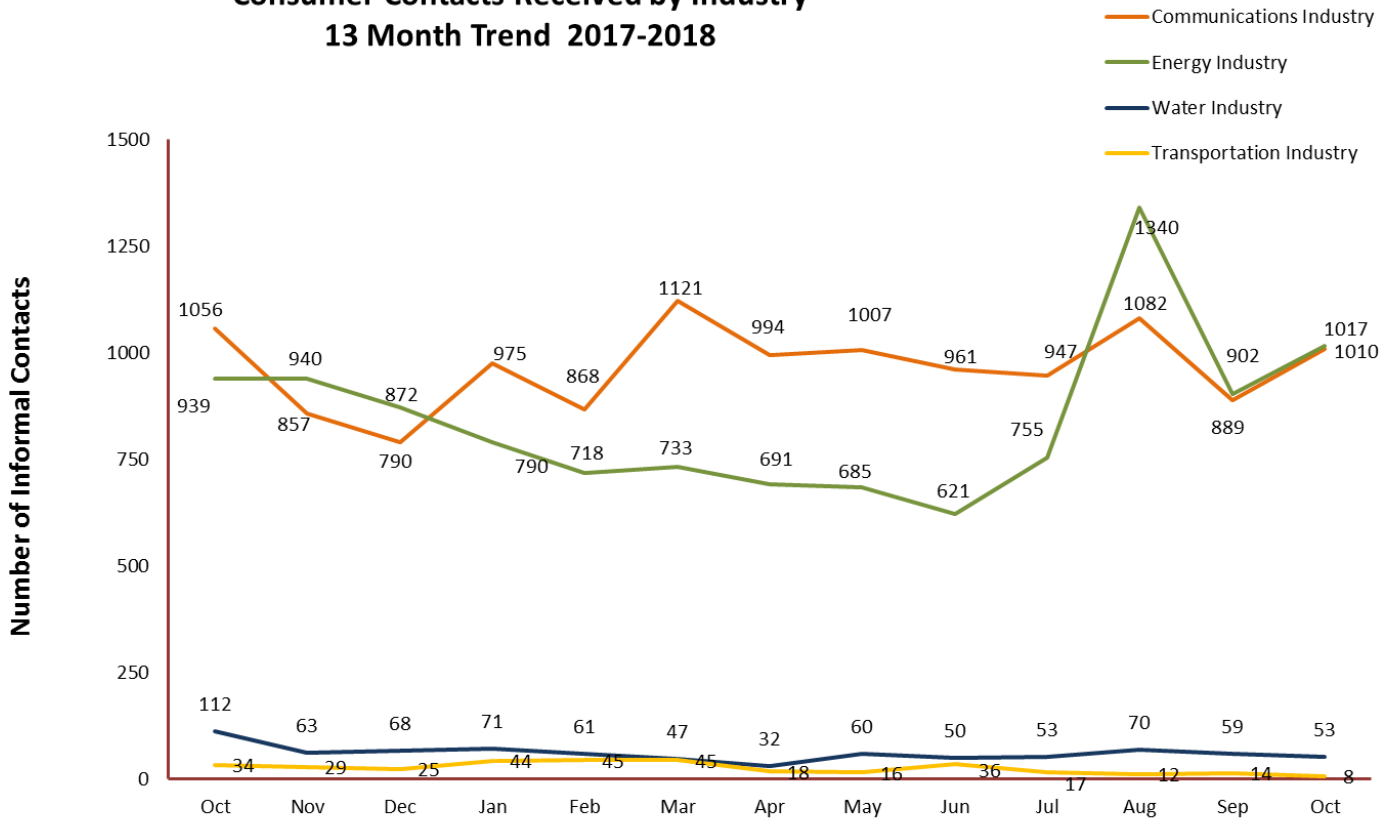
This report is based on contacts (informal complaints and questions) received by the Consumer Affairs Branch (CAB) and the Transportation Enforcement Branch (TEB) within CPED, and presents both annual and monthly data for the communications, energy, water, and transportation industries. Page 2 presents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

2,088 CONTACTS (October 2018)

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



Overall, 2,088 total informal consumer contacts were received during October 2018 across the four regulated industries. October shows an increase of approximately 12.0% from the 1,864 informal contacts received during September 2018; and an 11.0% increase from the prior 12-month average of 1,885.

Communications: 1,010 categorized informal contacts related to Communications were received during October 2018, which is an increase of 13.6% from the 889 contacts received during September 2018. The contacts received during October shows to be 5.0% lower than the prior 12-month average of 962.

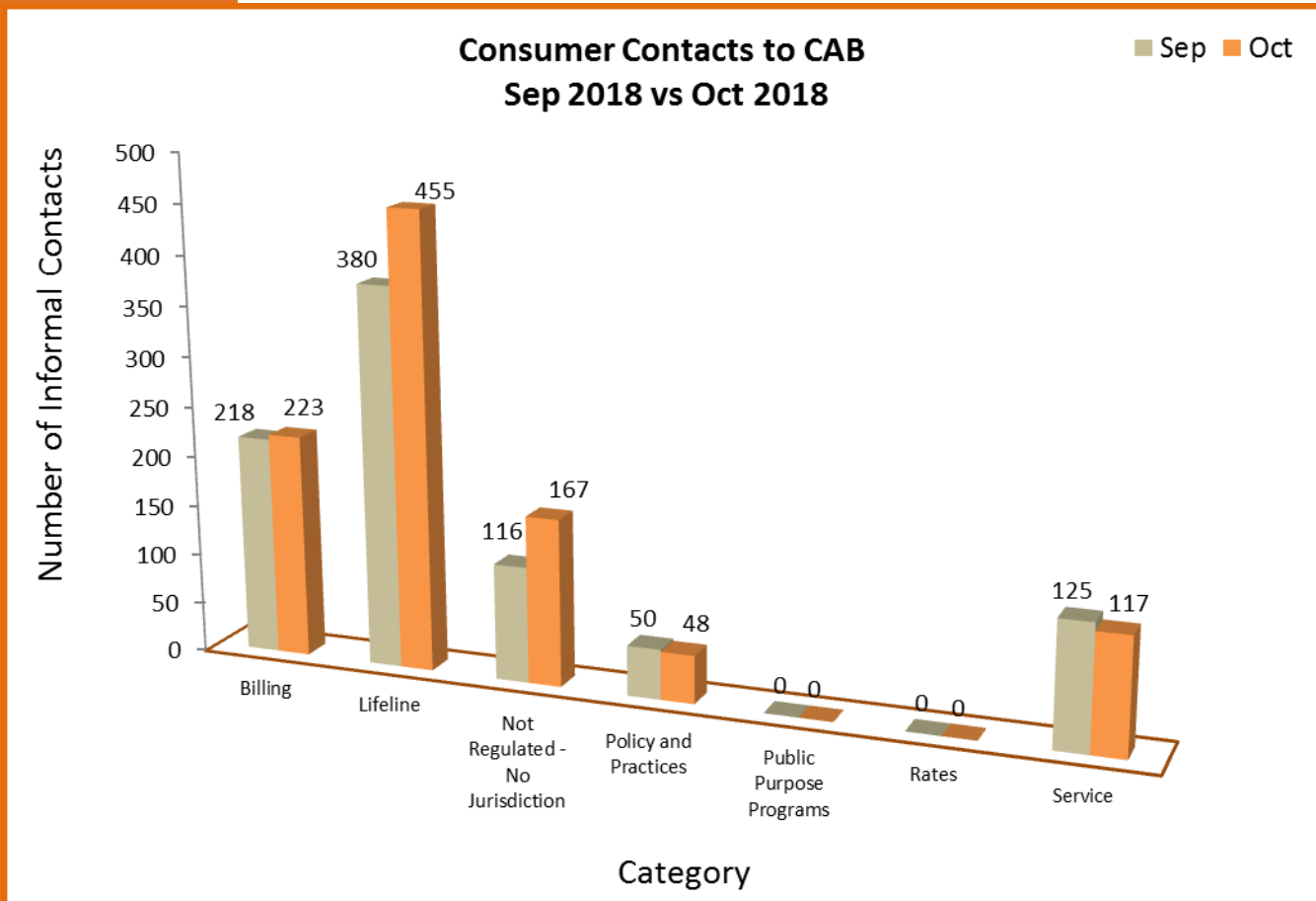
Energy: 1,017 categorized informal contacts related to Energy were received during October 2018, which is an increase of 12.7% from 902 contacts received during September 2018. Contacts received in October 2018 are 22.2% higher than the prior 12-month average of 832.

Water: 53 categorized informal contacts related to Water were received during October 2018. This is a 10.2% decrease from the 59 contacts received in September 2018. Water contacts remain below average, with October 2018 being 15% lower than the prior 12-month average of 62.

Transportation: 8 categorized contacts related to Transportation were received during October 2018. October 2018 Transportation contacts are 42.9% lower than the 14 contacts in September 2018 and 71.3% lower than the prior 12-month average of 28. (Note: Transportation is no longer processing Household Good Carriers and Private Carrier complaints as of July 1st 2018, pursuant Senate Bill 19 Hill-2017.)

Communications

1,010 CONTACTS (October 2018)



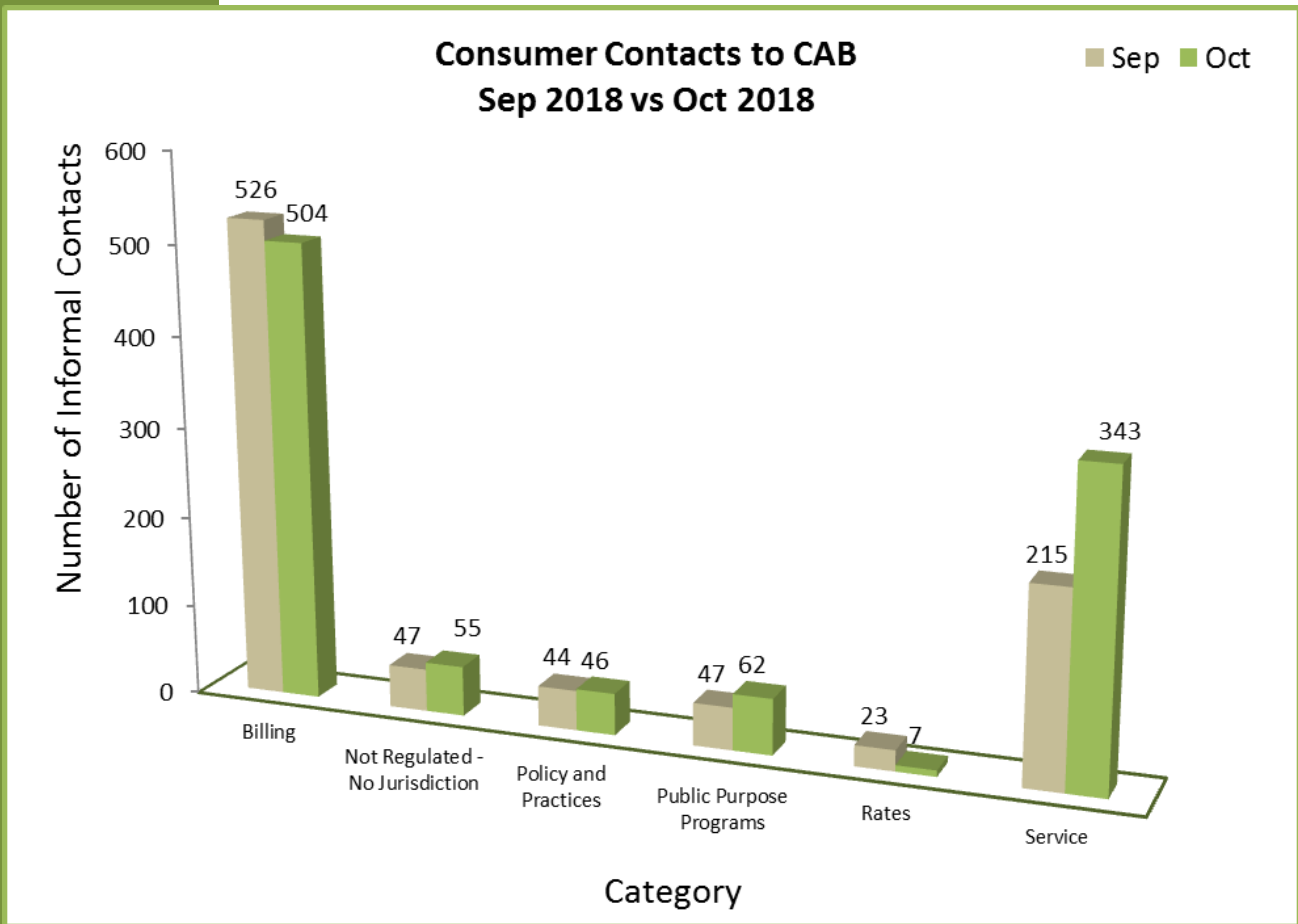
During October 2018, CAB received 1,010 Communications-related informal contacts, allocated into one of the defined categories of Billing, LifeLine, Not Regulated-No Jurisdiction, Policy and Practices, Public Purpose Programs, Rates, or Service.

Lifeline contacts increased 19.7% in October. While the increase is mainly due to the rise in identity verification contacts, overall LifeLine contacts for October are within the range for these contacts for the prior nine months.

In addition to the 1,010 categorized contacts, CAB received 146 uncategorized (pending processing and misdirected) contacts.

Energy

1,017 CONTACTS (October 2018)



In October 2018, CAB received 1,017 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 4.2% decrease from September to October. September is still tapering off from the high bill/ high usage charge complaints with San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) last August. Although in decline, High Bill related cases are equally distributed amongst SCE, SDG&E, and PG&E.

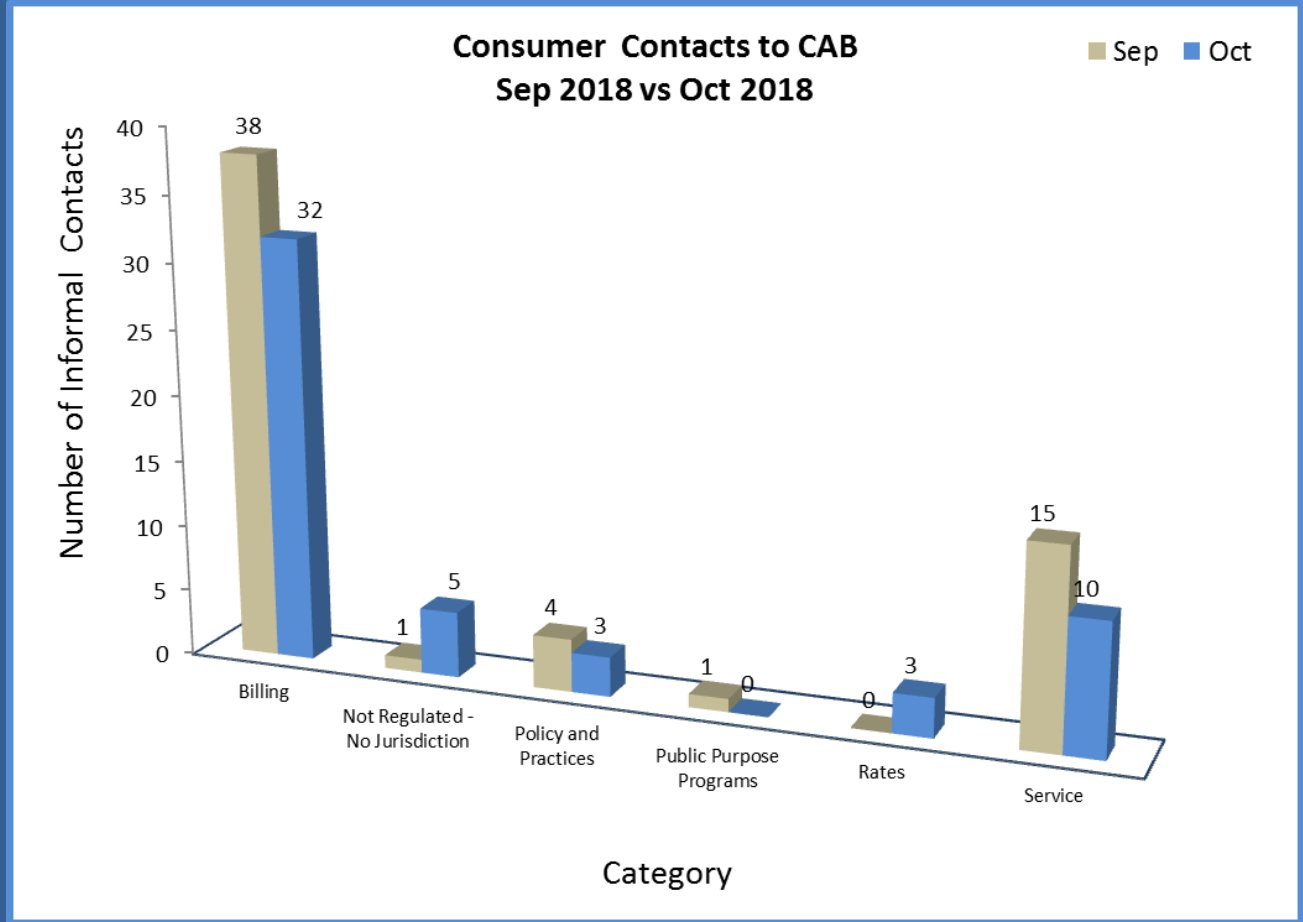
Service-related contacts increased by 59.5% from September to October. Complaints with PG&E and SCE related to de-energization were key contributors to the increase.

In addition to the 1,017 categorized contacts, CAB also received 66 uncategorized (pending processing and misdirected) contacts.



Water

53 CONTACTS (October 2018)



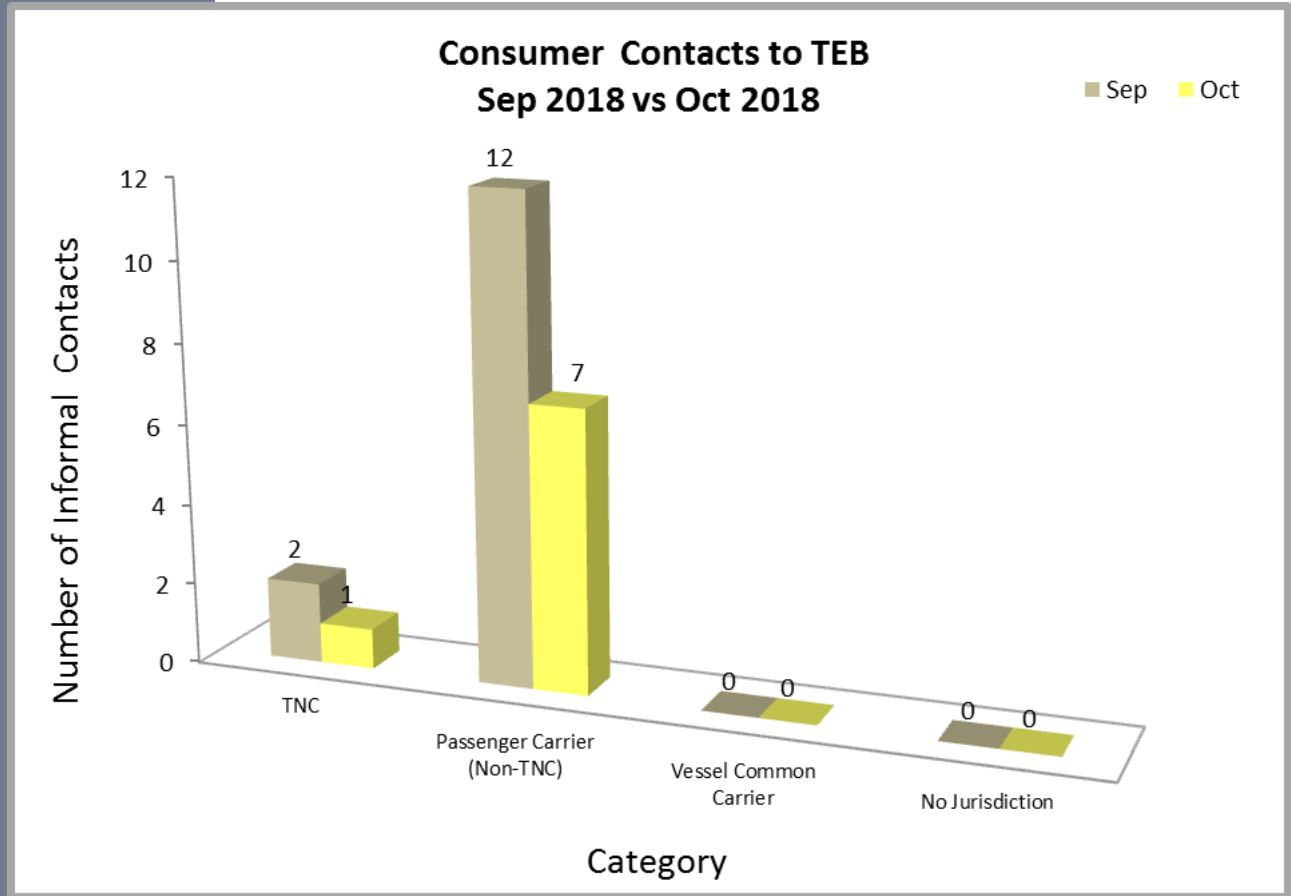
CAB received 53 Water-related informal contacts in October 2018, allocated into one of the six defined categories of Billing, Not Regulated-No Jurisdiction, Policy and Practices, Public Purpose Programs, Rates, or Service.

The data shows a small change from September to October with slight decrease in contacts for Billing and Service contacts in that time period.

In addition to the 53 categorized contacts, CAB also received 18 uncategorized (pending processing and misdirected) contacts.

Transportation

8 CONTACTS (October 2018)



In October 2018, TEB received 8 written complaints versus 14 for the month of September, a decrease of 6 complaints. Complaints received included (4) for operating or advertising without an active permit, (2) for overcharge, (1) for uninsured vehicles, and (1) for abusive behavior by the driver.

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 October 2018, CPED received **60** 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. (*We observed an increased safety concern from consumers related to De-Energization captured in “Energy – Company Practice”*).

Communications	11
Emergency Services/Health Concerns	2
Property Restoration	2
Utility Infrastructure	7

Energy	43
Company Practice	15
Emergency Services	6
Gas Leak	4
Property Restoration	6
Utility Infrastructure	12

Water	2
Property Restoration	1
Utility Infrastructure	1

Transportation	4
Operating Without Active Authority	4

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.