

PG&E - Marketing & Communications | Reimagining Inspections to Save Money and Reduce Risk

Since 2019, when we started the Wildfire Safety Inspection Program, we've been identifying a lot of risk on the system. But we wanted to really evaluate how good are we at actually preventing assets from failing in the field, in service, before we can replace them.

For a long time, we've done ground inspections where we have an inspector walking from pole to pole and looking at the pole, but there might be better opportunities to rethink how we do inspections.

You have virtually every functional area in electric working together, growing to the same rhythm.

Rather than working in silos, we look at processes from end to end.

How do we address our inspections' efficiencies so that we don't drive inefficiencies in our maintenance program at the same time?

We're able to provide better information and better data to ensure that we are solving the right problems with the right solutions.

The biggest advantage to drone technology in our inspection program is really being able to see things that we could never see from the ground. We're able to identify really high-risk conditions that are at or near failure and mitigate those in immediate fashion. With the drones, now you can get span-to-span looks at all your conductor, your splices, and we're able to pinpoint things like strands that are separating on the conductor.

We're able to see where the tie wires are separating. On dead-end structures, we can see where the cotter pins have come loose. We now have data to support whether or not a pole truly needs to be replaced or not.

We are learning so many key things that are applicable not just here in the work we're doing but can be applied to all over our company. We have proven over the past year that if we come together and we include our leadership, we include the frontline, and we think about our customers and everything that we do, anything is possible, and we can achieve breakthrough outcomes.

I've never seen us, as a company and as a PG&E family, work more interdependently than I have in the last 12 months. We're avoiding replacing poles that, frankly, didn't need to be replaced, but from a visual inspection, they looked like there was a potential risk. That alone allows us significant savings that we can put back into the business to further mitigate risk.

This year, we're forecasted to save over \$106 million in O&M.