

# 12 Northern California wildfires sparked by PG&E power lines, investigators say

By **Kurtis Alexander** Updated 10:45 am PDT, Saturday, June 9, 2018



IMAGE 1 OF 50

Flames consume a main building at the Signorello Vineyards in Napa on Oct. 9, 2017.

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At least **a dozen wildfires** that ripped through Northern California last October, including the deadly Atlas and Nuns fires in the North Bay, were caused by Pacific Gas and Electric Co. power lines, state officials said Friday.

The findings by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection are the first to lay out an official source of ignition for any of the Wine Country blazes, which killed 41 people and destroyed nearly 9,000 homes in a wind-driven inferno. The most destructive of the burns, **the Tubbs Fire** that hit Santa Rosa, remains under investigation.

The completed investigations show that downed electric lines or trees and branches coming into contact with power equipment sparked eight fires in Sonoma and Napa counties, which resulted in eight

fatalities, as well as Mendocino County's Redwood Fire, which left nine dead. Three smaller blazes, in Lake, Humboldt and Butte counties, were also ignited by PG&E equipment, according to Cal Fire.

The finding of responsibility "is great news," said Clifford Rainey, a glass sculptor who lost his life's work in Napa County's Atlas Fire and is among many victims suing PG&E for damages. "It's definitely worth a glass of wine tonight."

In eight of the 12 fires, Cal Fire officials said PG&E violated state law, though investigators did not specify which laws were broken.