

Fire Victims Sue San Diego Gas & Electric Company

(AP) SAN DIEGO

Two families who lost their homes during last month's wildfires have filed lawsuits against San Diego Gas & Electric Co. accusing the utility of negligence for failing to clear vegetation around its power lines.



Fire officials believe the Witch Creek blaze, which scorched more than 197,000 acres and destroyed 1,125 homes, was sparked by arcing power lines.
Sandy Huffaker/Getty Images

The lawsuits filed Tuesday in Superior Court seek to have the cases certified as class-action on behalf of any residents who were killed, injured or had their property damaged or destroyed in the Witch Creek and Rice Canyon fires.

Fire officials have said the Rice Canyon Fire was caused by a downed power line. It destroyed 206 homes and burned 9,500 acres. They also believe the Witch Creek blaze, which scorched more than 197,000 acres and destroyed 1,125 homes, was sparked by arcing power lines.

Plaintiffs' attorney Todd Macaluso said the fires were the result of the utility's negligence and failure to keep the area around the power lines clear.

SDG&E said in a statement it followed state and federal regulations governing how its power-line system should be maintained and added it can't control severe weather conditions.

CBS 2 News http://cbs2.com/local/local_story_318101629.html