



CPUC Public Agenda 3284
Thursday, November 10, 2011, 9:00 a.m.
505 Van Ness Ave, San Francisco



Commissioners:
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Risk Assessment



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California Public Utilities Commission

November 10, 2011





Presentation Overview

- Formation of the Risk Assessment Unit
- Risk Assessment Unit Staff
- Risk Assessment General Methodology
- First Tasks
- Approach to Identifying Hazards
- Questions or Comments?





Formation of the Risk Assessment Unit

In the area of utility safety, the Commission historically has focused its resources on inspections and accident investigations. These programs mostly look back at past events or conditions. In light of the San Bruno tragedy, we identified a clear need to improve our skills necessary for risk identification, analysis and management. This concept was supported by the Legislature, and also in the final report of the Independent Review Panel which recommended that “the CPUC should significantly upgrade its expertise in the analytical skills necessary for state-of-the-art quality risk management work”.





The Risk Assessment Unit Staff

Last Spring, we requested and received approval for an additional nine positions for our utility safety team. Of these new positions, four were specifically identified to be members of a newly established Risk Assessment Unit. We completed staffing appointments to the Risk team in September.

The first four members of the team are all Utilities Engineer Specialists. They are Joyce Steingass, Claudia Lam, Steve Haine and Chuck Magee.





Risk Assessment General Methodology

1. Identify hazards to public safety.
2. Assess the risks associated with the hazards by examining the frequency and consequence of the hazard.
3. Using safety as the top priority, examine and decide on the most cost-effective method to mitigate the hazards and prevent accidents.





Risk Assessment Unit First Tasks

The first priority for the RA Unit will be to assess hazards to the gas system. Assessment of other types of utility hazards will follow. The Risk Assessment Unit is already at work on the following tasks:

1. Establishing contacts and working relationships with federal and state agencies, gas regulatory agencies, utilities, divisions and branches within the CPUC and others.
2. Identifying hazards to the gas system.
3. Training





Approach to Identifying Hazards

- Conducting surveys and interviews of regulatory agency representatives from other states, experts in gas safety, critics of gas safety, academics, gas utility employees, utility worker unions, USRB, first responders and others.
- Compiling hazards identified by the NTSB accident report, the Independent Panel Report on the San Bruno explosion, the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) database, the USRB database, and various inspection, accident and risk reports worldwide as they are identified.
- Inspections of gas transmission and distribution infrastructure.

