

CALIFORNIA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
Safety and Enforcement Division
Gas Safety and Reliability Branch
Gas Engineering and Compliance Section

Incident Investigation Report

Report Date: 08/07/2020

Incident Number: G 20200520-3057

Utility: Southern California Gas SoCalGas

Date and Time of the Incident: 5/20/2020, 5:35:00 PM

Location of the Incident: [REDACTED]
Los Angeles ,CA
County: Los Angeles

Summary of Incident:

On May 20,2020, at 1211 hours, an employee of Walsh-Shea Corridor Constructors (WSCC) was operating a backhoe fitted with a hydraulic pavement breaker accidentally hit and damaged a SoCalGas' steel casing that housed a 12-inch steel High-Pressure Distribution Gas Main (HPDGM). WSCC's crew contacted [REDACTED], a SoCalGas' Energy Technician Distribution (ETD) who was performing a "stand-by" on another project not far from the accident site. Mr. [REDACTED] requested WSCC's crew to halt the construction activities, contacted his supervisor and SoCalGas' Call Center to report the incident. There were no injuries, fatalities, or fire reported as the result of this incident. In addition, there was no service interruption to SoCalGas' customers. This incident was reported to both the DOT and CPUC due to gas release and projected damages that may exceed \$50,000. Based on SED investigation, SED finds WSCC in violation of CGC 4216, Sections 4216.2(c), 4216.4(a)(1), 4216.10(c)(1), and 4216.10(c)(3). Therefore, SED did not find any General Order 112-F, Reference Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 192 violations by SoCalGas.

Casualties: *Fatalities:* 0 *Injuries:* 0

Property Damage: \$26,264.18

Utility Facilities involved:

Pipe Material = Steel, Pipe Size = 12 (inches), MAOP = 140 (psi), Operating Pressure = 135 (psi)

Witnesses:

	<i>Name</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Phone</i>
1	Mahmoud Intably	CPUC Investigator	N/A
2	██████████	PS&C	██████████
3	██████████	PS&C	██████████
4	██████████	WSCC	██████████
5	██████	McDermott	██████████
6	Desmond Lew	CPUC Investigator	(213) 576-7020

Evidence:

	<i>Source</i>	<i>Description</i>
1	SoCalGas	Initial Report
2	SoCalGas	CPUC 420 Initial Report
3	SoCalGas	SoCalGas' response SED data requests
4	SoCalGas	Gas Standard 184.0200

Observations and Findings:

On May 20,2020, at 1211 hours, an employee of Walsh-Shea Corridor Constructors (WSCC) was operating a backhoe fitted with a hydraulic pavement breaker to break and remove concrete curbs and gutters 1200 feet north of 111th Street on Aviation Blvd in preparation to install a new street rain drainer. The backhoe operator accidentally hit and damaged a SoCalGas' steel casing that housed a 12-inch steel High-Pressure Distribution Gas Main (HPDGM). This caused damage to the seam of the HPDGM and resulted in a minor leak "small fizz". Immediately, WSCC's crew contacted ██████████, a SoCalGas' Energy Technician Distribution (ETD) who was performing a "stand-by" on another project not far from the accident site. Mr. ██████ requested WSCC's crew to halt the construction activities, contacted his supervisor and SoCalGas' Call Center to report the incident. There were no injuries, fatalities, or fire reported as the result of this incident. In addition, there was no service interruption to SoCalGas' customers. This incident was reported to both the DOT and CPUC due to gas release and projected damages that may exceed \$50,000

SoCalGas' crew arrived on the scene, excavated the site, cut out a 2-foot section of the casing to assess the damage to the HPDGM, and at 1700 hours the crew completed the installation of a temporary clamp to stop the leak.

SoCalGas' Engineering Department assessed the damage to the pipe seam and concluded it was necessary to cut out the damaged section and install a new 10-foot section.

SoCalGas' crew installed pressure control fittings to isolate the damaged section and installed the new 10-foot section of 12-inch steel pipe.

The HPDGM is a two-way feed, installed in 1951 at a depth of 36-inches with cathodic protection.

WSCC had a valid USA ticket #A191051250 at the time of the incident. In addition, WSCC did not contact SoCalGas and request a stand-by person.

SED took photos of the site including the temporary markings of the 12-inch steel gas main. The markings and the 12-inch steel main lined up perfectly.

According to SoCalGas, Mr. [REDACTED] was performing "Stand-by" for a separate USA Ticket # B200020285 (525 feet northerly and southerly of the intersection, 111th St. and Aviation Blvd) and the damage location was 1200 feet northerly of 111th St. In addition, Mr. [REDACTED] visited the site where the incident occurred on two different occasions and informed the contractors that they are required to have a SoCalGas' Stand-by person because they were excavating, cutting, demolishing, and breaking the concrete curbs and gutters within 10-feet of SoCalGas' HPDGM.

On May 21, 2020, SoCalGas sent an email to both CPUC and DOT stating that the incident did not meet GO 112-F or 49 CFR, Part 191 reporting requirements. Therefore, SoCalGas will not send form CPUC-420 or PHMSA F7100.1 and will close its reportability file for this incident.

On August 12, 2020, SoCalGas sent an email stating that the total cost for this incident was \$26,264.18.

California Government Code 4216.2(c) states:

"When the excavation is proposed within 10 feet of a high priority subsurface installation, the operator of the high priority subsurface installation shall notify the excavator of the existence of the high priority subsurface installation to set up an onsite meeting prior to the legal excavation start date and time or at a mutually agreed upon time to determine actions or activities required to verify the location and prevent damage to the high priority subsurface installation. As part of the meeting, the excavator shall discuss with the operator the method and tools that will

be used during the excavation and the information the operator will provide to assist in verifying the location of the subsurface installation. The excavator shall not begin excavating until after the completion of the onsite meeting.”

SoCalGas Gas Standard 184.0200, Section 7.7 states:

“If the excavator is onsite, ensure and verify job limits, excavation locations, work sequence, and times. Discuss, coordinate, and schedule any stand-by that is required during excavation and backfill within ten (10) feet of high priority subsurface installations. See Gas Standard 184.09, Prevention of Excavation Damage to Company Subsurface Installations. If the excavator is not onsite, contact the excavator to schedule activities requiring stand-by, prior to start of excavation.”

WSCC has been working on this project for over two years and they requested many USA tickets. SoCalGas met with WSCC on several occasions throughout the project and are aware of the high-pressure pipeline. WSCC requested a stand-by person on several occasions including USA Ticket # B200020285 (525 feet northerly and southerly of the intersection, 111th St. and Aviation Blvd).

California government Code 4216.4(a)(1) states:

“Except as provided in paragraph (2), if an excavation is within the tolerance zone of a subsurface installation, the excavator shall determine the exact location of the subsurface installations in conflict with the excavation using hand tools before using any power-driven excavation or boring equipment within the tolerance zone of the subsurface installations. In all cases the excavator shall use reasonable care to prevent damaging subsurface installations.”

WSCC failed to use hand tools to determine the exact location of the HPDGM before using power-driven tools (Backhoe) within the tolerance zone. In addition, WSCC failed to use reasonable care to prevent damaging SoCalGas’ HPDGM.

California government Code 4216.10(c)(1) states:

“The excavator shall not begin excavating until after the completion of the onsite meeting and information has been provided describing the activities that can be safely conducted to prevent damage to the high priority subsurface installation.”

WSCC met with SoCalGas several times on different parts of this project but not for this particular location. In addition, WSCC was aware of the existence of the HPDGM because this issue was addressed on different parts of the project. In addition, SoCalGas marked its facilities and wrote “high pressure pipeline” on the sidewalk and pavement where the incident occurred. Furthermore, Mr. [REDACTED] informed WSCC’s representative more than one time to call SoCalGas and request a stand-by person if they are excavating within 10 feet of the HPDM.

California government Code 4216.10(c)(3) states:

“The excavator and operator shall maintain records regarding the plan of excavation, any locate and field mark and standby activities, and any other information deemed necessary by the excavator and operator. Excavation activities outside the scope of the plan shall be undertaken subsequent to notification pursuant to Section 4216.2.”□

SoCalGas has been in communication with WSCC several times regarding this ongoing project.

SED finds WSCC in violation of CGC 4216, Sections 4216.2(c), 4216.4(a)(1), 4216.10(c)(1), and 4216.10(c)(3). Therefore, SED did not find any General Order 112-F, Reference Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 192 violations by SoCalGas.

Preliminary Statement of Pertinent General Order, Public Utilities Code Requirements, and/or Federal Requirements:

<i>General Order</i>	<i>GO Rule</i>
1 GO112F	Title 49 CFR, Part 192, Section 192.605
2	CGC 4216

Conclusion:

Based on SED investigation, SED finds WSCC in violation of CGC 4216, Sections 4216.2(c), 4216.4(a)(1), 4216.10(c)(1), and 4216.10(c)(3). Therefore, SED did not find any General Order 112-F, Reference Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 192 violations by SoCalGas.