

Castroville Incident Investigation Report

SAFETY AND ENFORCEMENT DIVISION
GAS SAFETY AND RELIABILITY BRANCH

June 5, 2025
Final Report

Report Date:	June 5, 2025
Investigators:	Aleksandr Fastovich
Date incident reported to CPUC	August 15, 2024
Utility:	Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E)
Date and Time of the Incident:	August 15, 2024 @ 13: 25 Hours
Location of the Incident:	Castroville, CA, Monterey County



California Public
Utilities Commission

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Executive Summary

Summary of Incident

On Thursday August 15, 2024, at approximately 1:27pm PG&E was informed by the local fire department that a PG&E transmission pipeline, L-301F was struck near 50 Espinosa Road, Castroville and blowing gas. A ranch worker struck the pipeline while digging with a mechanical reaper. Emergency services responded and reported no injuries or fatalities. PG&E shut down a nearby electrical line to prevent ignition and then shut down the blowing line after it was tied into another line up-stream. After two field visits and reviewing USA tickets, photos, and interviews, SED did not find any violations.

Incident Investigation

Summary of Incident and Investigation

On August 15, 2024, PG&E personnel confirmed a DOT reportable incident that occurred at L-301F in the city of Castroville, Monterey County, California. The incident occurred when a ranch worker struck the pipe with a mechanical ripper as they were tending to a field. Emergency services responded and secured the area. No injuries or fatalities were reported. There was no customer impact.

Fatalities / Injuries

No fatalities and no injuries were reported.

Property Damage

\$3,397,328 in property damage

Utility Facilities Involved

L-301F; 16 inch transmission line in Castroville, CA

Investigators

	Name	Title
<i>1.</i>	Aleksandr Fastovich	SED, Utilities Engineer

Documents Reviewed

See Appendix B.

SED Investigation Process

Reporting Requirements

General Order (G.O.) 112-F Section 122.2 requires that each operator report to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) of each incident that meets the criteria as outlined in Section 122.2(a). Since this incident involves a release of gas from a pipeline and resulted in an estimated property damage of \$50,000 or more, PG&E reported the incident to Safety and Enforcement Division (SED) on August 15, 2024. PG&E also reported this incident to the Department of Transportation (DOT) since G.O. 112-F Section 122.1 requires that each operator complies with the requirements of 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 191 for the reporting of incidents. Because of the property damage, this incident meets the definition of an incident as written in Part 191.3(1)(ii).

SED Investigation

The Gas Safety and Reliability Branch (GSRB) of SED began the investigation of this pipeline incident on August 15, 2024. A Utilities Engineer (UE) was assigned the role of lead investigator.

SED's investigation of this incident involved two field inspections, review of USA tickets prior to the incident, and review of operator qualifications.

The purpose of this investigation was to determine whether there were probable violations of G.O. 112-F Reference Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 192, that may have caused or contributed to the incident.

Incident Description

PG&E's data request responses included the last active USA ticket (ticket #2024050700416). The USA ticket expired on June 4th, 2024.

Espinosa Rd

Field Meet Scheduled
05/10/24 08:00

Response
COMPLETE_FIELD_MEET

Status
CLOSED

PARENT TICKET:2024050700416-00-PGESAL-2024-05-07

PGESAL 00142452060 USA NORTH 811 05/07/24 08:14:17 2024050700416-00 NEW NORM
Ticket: 2024050700416 Rev: 00 Created: 05/07/24 08:14:17 User: Albert Godoy Chan: CSR
Work Start: 05/10/24 08:00:00 Legal Start: 05/10/24 08:00:00 Expires: 06/04/24 23:59:59
Response required: Y
Previous Ticket Number: N/A
Previous Revision: N/A
Excavator Information
Company: --Property Owner/Resident--
Co Addr: PO BOX 2266
City : Salinas State: CA Zip: 93902
Created By: Albert Godoy Language: N/A
Office Phone: 831-737-3897 SMS/Cell: N/A
Office Email: albert@hitchcockfarms.com
Site Contact: CALLER
Site Phone: 831-737-3897 Site SMS/Cell: N/A
Site Email: N/A
Excavation Area
State: CA County: Monterey County Place: Salinas /U
Zip: 93907
Location: Address/Street: [REDACTED] Espinosa Rd
: X/ST1: CA-183
: WORKING THE ESPINOSA RD SIDE OF PROPERTY (W OF THE HOUSE) (ALL INFO -PER CALLER)
Delineated Method: White Paint
Work Type: Plowing/Tilling
Work For: Homeowner/Property Owner/Tenant/HOA
Permit: N/A Job/Work order: N/A
1 Year: N Boring: N Street/Sidewalk: N Vacuum: N Explosives: N
Lat/Long
Center Generated (NAD83): [REDACTED]

Figure 1. Screen shot of last USA Ticket for the area with dates and location

Rancher personnel were operating without USA utilities marking, relying on distant pipeline markers, making them susceptible to hitting underground utilities.



Figure 2. Photo from the incident location, following the line to a valve station. Note the pipeline marker, and missing USA markings on the ground.



Figure 3. Photo of the ripper that struck the pipe.



Figure 4. Photo of the impact site after the pipe was removed

Chronology of Incident Investigation Activities

This section provides a chronology of the investigative activities undertaken after the incident occurred on 8/15/2024 and reported to CPUC on the same date.

August 15, 2024

On August 15, 2024, at around 13:25 hours, a rancher's ripper struck L-301F. The fire department was called out. No injuries or fatalities because of the incident.

August 16, 2024

Utilities Engineer (UE) Aleksandr Fastovich was assigned to the incident and dispatched to the site. UE photographed all that was possible. UE interviewed responding fire department.

August 24, 2024

UE visited the site again. Observed damaged pipe removed from ground. Took photos of damaged sections and surveyed the location where the incident happened.

September 18, 2024

SED received data request including the latest USA dig ticket and final operator report for the incident

Findings and Corrective Actions

After reviewing photos, documents, and interviews, SED found no violations pertaining to 49 CFR Part 192 and California Government Order 112-F.

SED's Findings

None

SED's Recommendations

None

SED's Observations

SED observed operator responding to the incident appropriately, with prompt report to SED and dispatching field crews to the incident

Conclusion

Based on the data found during the investigation, SED does not find PG&E in violation of General Order 112-F or Title 49 CFR Part 192.

Appendices

Appendix A: Glossary of common terms

ACRONYM/ABBREVIATION	DEFINITION
CFR	Code of Federal Regulation
GO	General Order
GSRB	Gas Safety and Reliability Branch
OQ	Operator Qualification
PG&E	Pacific Gas and Electric Company
PHMSA	Pipeline & Hazardous Materials Safety Administration
SED	Safety and Enforcement Division
USA	Underground Service Alert

Appendix B: Documents Reviewed

1.	USA Ticket 2024050700416
2.	Field Investigation Photos
3.	Monterey County Dig-In Incident Photos

Appendix C: Interviews

On August 16, 2024, during an interview with SED, Fire Chief Joel Mendoza from the local fire department confirmed initial onsite details. A ranch worker struck a gas line, resulting in a large release of gas, and no injuries or fatalities. SED was unable to get an official statement from the county fire officials.

SED was unable to talk to any workers from the nearby ranch.