

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

Incident Investigation Report

**Report Date:** 02/15/2021

**Incident Number:** G 20210109-3164

**Utility:** Southern California Gas      SoCalGas

**Date and Time of the Incident:** 1/9/2021, 10:45:00 AM

**Location of the Incident:** Alameda St and Temple St  
Los Angeles ,CA  
County: Los Angeles

**Summary of Incident:**

A third-party contractor, Skanska – Traylor – Shea a joint venture contractor consisting of Skanska USA Civil West California District, Inc., Traylor Brothers Inc., and J.F. Shea Construction, Inc.) was augering for the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority’s (LACMTA) Gold Line (drilling to install a 44-foot-deep pile foundation) at the northeasterly intersection of Alameda Street and Temple Street, in the City of Los Angeles when the auger bit damaged a SoCalGas 6-inch High Pressure Distribution Steel Main (HPDSM) resulting in gas released into the atmosphere. The area was blocked off and traffic was rerouted. There were no injuries, fatalities, or fires reported as the result of this incident. SED investigation found SoCalGas employee failed to follow SoCalGas’ Gas Standard while performing his stand-by duty to prevent damage to SoCalGas’ HPDSM and thus violated General Order 112-F, Reference Title 49 CFR, Part 192, §192.605(a).

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

**Property Damage:** \$68,575.00

**Utility Facilities involved:**

Pipe Material = Steel, Pipe Size = 6 (inches), MAOP = 204 (psi), Operating Pressure = 196 (psi)

**Witnesses:**

	<i>Name</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Phone</i>
1	Mahmoud Intably	CPUC Investigator	N/A
2	██████████	SoCalGas - PSCA	██████████
3	██████████	SoCalGas - PSCA	██████████
4	██████████	Skanska USA Civil West	██████████
5	██████████	SoCalGas - Stand-by	██████████

**Evidence:**

	<i>Source</i>	<i>Description</i>
1	SoCalGas ██████████ ██████████	Initial Report on 1/9/2021
2	PHMSA	emails
3	SoCalGas	Response to SED data request 1/10/2021
4	Skanska USA Civil West	Response to SED Data request dated 1/11/2021

**Observations and Findings:**

On January 9, 2021, a third-party contractor, Skanska – Traylor – Shea was augering for LACMTA Gold Line (drilling to install a 44-foot-deep pile foundation) at the northeasterly intersection of Alameda Street and Temple Street, in the City of Los Angeles when the auger bit damaged a SoCalGas 6-inch HPDSM resulting in gas released into the atmosphere. The area was blocked off and traffic was rerouted. There were no injuries, fatalities, or fires reported as the result of this incident. The incident was reported to both DOT/ CPUC due to gas release and potential cost of repairs exceeding \$50,000. Gas service to 181 customers was affected (21 were commercial / industrial customers and 160 residential customers) for approximately 25 hours.

SoCalGas' crew arrived on the scene at 0930 hours, isolated the damaged section by closing one main line valve and three (3) fire valves (at the regulating stations) to stop the flow of gas and at 1433 hours the gas flow was under control. SoCalGas' crew exposed the damaged section of the HPDSM and found a mechanical puncture measuring 4-inch in the axial direction and 1-inch in the circumferential

direction. The crew followed SoCalGas' Gas Standards to make a permanent repair by installing canopy pipe (Dresser Reinforcing Sleeves).

On January 10, 2021, at 0958 hours, SoCalGas' crew completed the repair and the HPDSM was back in service by opening the fire valves and the main line isolation valve. SoCalGas' crew performed a post incident leakage survey and found zero gas indications. A total of three SoCalGas' employees started the service restoration to the affected customers and at 1615 hours the residential services were restored. SoCalGas' crew continued to work with the commercial / industrial customers to restore their service.

Skanska –Traylor – Shea had a valid USA ticket number A201560744-14A renewed on January 7, 2021, and the area was delineated with white paint. SoCalGas' facilities were marked out correctly. According to [REDACTED], Skanska – Traylor – Shea' Supervisor, SoCalGas' HPDSM was exposed on December 16, 2020, located by installing an above ground marker, and covered the HPDSM with slurry. At the time of the incident the HPDSM was covered with the slurry.

According to [REDACTED], Skanska USA Civil West's Regional Connector Constructors, the crew was augering to install piles for new cut and cover section for the Regional Connector for LACMTA's light rail line. [REDACTED] stated that SoCalGas' HPDSM was marked out on the surface with yellow paint, "HP 6". [REDACTED] stated that the HPDSM was potholed on December 10, 2020, by Northwest Excavation, the HPDSM was exposed on December 11, 2020 by a subcontractor (Bali), Regional Connector's employee's potholed, surveyed the HPDSM, and slurry backfilled on December 17, 2020, to prevent cave in potential, having equipment near the trench, not leaving the trench open over the holiday weekends in a high traffic area. In addition, [REDACTED] stated that SoCalGas' Stand-by was present at every activity near the HPDSM and at the time of the incident, [REDACTED], a SoCalGas' Stand-by was present at the time of the incident. Furthermore, [REDACTED] stated that [REDACTED] did not make any statement/comment to [REDACTED], his superintendent or [REDACTED], the drill rig operator on January 9, 2021 (day of the incident) that the line (HPDSM) needed to be exposed before drilling operations started.

SED took photos of the site including the temporary markings of HPDSM, the damaged section, and the Dresser Reinforcing Sleeves. Depth of cover of HPDSM at the time of the incident was 12 feet. In addition, SED reviewed the Operator Qualification (OQ) for the welders ([REDACTED] and [REDACTED]) and found both OQs valid to perform arc welding on the HPDSM.

SED reviewed the stand-by log for [REDACTED] and found that [REDACTED] was present during the incident and during other excavation activities near the HPDSM. In addition, [REDACTED] was tested under the post-incident drug and alcohol testing requirements of DOT's Drug and Alcohol testing requirements and the test result was negative (pass).

The HPDSM was installed in 2006, at depth of 12 feet, specification - API5L, wall thickness - 0.218 inches, MAOP – 204 psig, MOP – 196 psig, located in Class 3 location, and with corrosion control using Appendix D, Section I, A, 1, negative voltage at least 0.85 volts criteria).

The estimated cost of the property damage and the emergency response was \$55,000, while the estimated cost of gas released was \$13,575.

On Jan 27, 2021, at 0900 hours, SED interviewed SoCalGas' stand-by employee [REDACTED] (ID#134174). During the interview, [REDACTED] recalled that he arrived at the site around 0700 hours, observed three (3) conduits (one of them was inserted in the ground near the HPDSM to prevent caving of soil while operating the auger machine), informed the excavator to be careful, and felt comfortable with the conduit protecting the HPDSM while augering. In addition, [REDACTED] verified the marking of the HPDSM, did not report any issues with the excavation to the on-site supervisor /superintendent. Furthermore, [REDACTED] did not advise the contractor to cease / stop the augering within 10 feet / tolerance zone of the HPDSM, to expose the HPDSM, and to use reasonable care while augering to prevent damage to the HPDSM.

General Order (G.O.) 112-F, Reference Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 192, §192.605(a) General states:

“Each operator shall prepare and follow for each pipeline, a manual of written procedures for conducting operations and maintenance activities and for emergency response. For transmission lines, the manual must also include procedures for handling abnormal operations. This manual must be reviewed and updated by the operator at intervals not exceeding 15 months, but at least one each calendar year. This manual must be prepared before operations of a pipeline system commence. Appropriate parts of the manual must be kept at locations where operations and maintenance activities are conducted.”

SoCalGas Gas Standard 184.09 – Prevention of excavation damage to company subsurface installations, §6.1.8 states in part:

“Ensure and verify only hand tools are used to pothole high priority subsurface installations.”

SoCalGas did not ensure and verify that only hand tools were used to pothole its high priority subsurface installation. The SoCalGas employee conducting stand by duties did not stop the work when he observed Skanska – Traylor – Shea's employee using an augering machine near the pipeline. Therefore, SoCalGas did not follow Gas Standard 184.09 for failing to ensure and verify only hand tools were used to pothole the HPDSM, and is therefore in violation of §192.605(a) which requires them to follow their own procedures.

California Government Code (CGC), §4216.4(a)(1) states in part:

“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.”

SED investigation found that the HPDSM was potholed on 12/10/2020, exposed on 12/11/2020, and slurry backfilled on 12/17/2020 to prevent cave in potential, due to having equipment near the trench, and not leaving the trench open over the holiday weekends in a high traffic area. In addition, during the field investigation, SED observed the third-party contractor, was augering within the tolerance zone of the SoCalGas HPDSM and the HPDSM was covered with slurry with a wood post extended four feet up to identify the location of the HPDSM. SED finds Skanska –Traylor – Shea in violation of CGC 4216.4(a)(1) for failing to use hand tools to determine the exact location of the SoCalGas’ HPDSM.

**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(a)
2 None	CGC 4216

**Conclusion:**

SED investigation found SoCalGas employee failed to follow SoCalGas’ Gas Standard while performing his stand-by duties to prevent damage to SoCalGas’ HPDSM and thus violated General Order 112-F, Reference Title 49 CFR, Part 192, §192.605(a). In addition, SED found Skanska – Traylor – Shea in violation of CGC 4216.4(a)(1) for failing to use hand tools to determine the exact location of the SoCalGas’ HPDSM.