

CALIFORNIA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Safety and Enforcement Division Gas Safety and Reliability Branch

Incident Investigation Report

Report Date: 08/25/2021

Investigator: Kai Cheung

Incident Number: G 20210825-3258

Utility: Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E)

Date and Time of the Incident: 08/25/2021, 0955 hours

Location of the Incident: Race Street & Park Avenue, San Jose
County: Santa Clara

Summary of Incident:

On August 25, 2021, at 0955 hours, Lightwave Construction, a third-party excavator, accidentally struck a 3-inch dead-end steel gas main with a horizontal boring machine, resulting in a release of gas. The excavator possessed a valid Underground Service Alert (USA) ticket (X118101646). However, Pacific Gas and Electric Co. (PG&E) admitted that they did not locate and mark their facilities properly. Based on the information gathered, SED found PG&E in violation of Title 49 CFR §192.605(b)(3) for not making accurate maps available to operating personnel and §192.614(c)(5) and California Government Code 4216.3(a)(1)(A)(i) for failing to provide accurate temporary markings of buried pipelines in the area of excavation activity before the activity began.

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

Property Damage: \$0.00

Utility Facilities involved:

Pipe Material = Steel Pipe Size = 3 (inches)
MAOP = 60 (psi) Operating Pressure = 50 (psi)

Witnesses:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Phone</i>
1 Kai Cheung	CPUC Investigator	(415) 703-3450
2 [REDACTED]	Regulatory Compliance, PG&E	[REDACTED]

Evidence:

<i>Source</i>	<i>Description</i>
1 PG&E	420 Report - Initial and Final
2 PG&E	PHMSA Incident Report Form 7100.1
3 PG&E	Locate and Mark Photos
4 PG&E	USA Tickets
5 PG&E	Locate and Mark Mapping
6 PG&E	Locate and Mark OQ Records
7 PG&E	Investigation Narrative
8 PG&E	Leak Repair Report (PG&E A-Form)
9 PG&E	Post-Incident Photos
10 SED	Post-Incident Photos

Gas Engineering and Compliance Section

Observations and Findings:

On August 25, 2021 at 0955 hours, Pacific Gas and Electric Co. (PG&E) was notified of a third-party dig-in incident at the intersection of Race Street & Park Avenue, San Jose. Lightwave Construction, the third-party excavator, accidentally struck a 3-inch steel gas main with a horizontal boring machine during installation of a telecommunication conduit, resulting in an unintentional release of gas. There were no injuries, fatalities, or ignition associated with this incident. At 1007 hours, PG&E's crew arrived on site. The San Jose Police Department, Fire Department, and local news media were already on site. Due to possible gas migration to nearby storm drains and other below-ground utility vaults, the Fire Department evacuated the surrounding area. On August 26 at 1805 hours, PG&E stopped the flow of gas. On August 27 at 1718 hours, PG&E restored customers' gas service. Forty-Three (43) customers were affected.

On August 25 at 1515 hours, SED investigator Kai Cheung arrived and met on scene with [REDACTED], PG&E's Regulatory Compliance representative. The boring machine was still at the scene, but workers of Lightwave Construction were already left. Gas leaking from the bell hole was visible. PG&E local division general construction crew was in the process of controlling the leak with six emergency isolation points. Kai observed some yellow markings around the bell hole, but he was unable to get closer and determine if any one of the markings were associated with the damaged main due to the active leak. At 1745 hours, Kai left the scene.

SED reviewed PG&E's data request response, the 30-day letter, final 420 report, PHMSA Incident Report Form 7100.1, Underground Service Alert (USA) tickets, pre-incident photographs, system (Plat) map used to locate and mark, operator qualification (OQ) record of the locate-and-mark personnel, PG&E's internal investigation report, post-incident photographs, and repair record. PG&E admitted in their investigation report that they did not mark the damaged main and the nearest yellow marking (of another gas main) was 40 inches away from the point of damage, which was 15 inches outside the 24-inch tolerance zone. The damaged line was a 3-inch dead-end main which did not show on the PG&E's Plat map. PG&E believes that this is a possible reason the locate-and-mark personnel missed the main. The locate-and-mark personnel's OQ and the USA tickets are valid. PG&E repaired the damage by capping and abandoning 20 feet of the 3-inch dead-end main.

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

None

Conclusion:

SED's investigation found that the gas release was caused by a third-party excavator

who struck an unmarked 3-inch steel main line. Based on the information gathered, SED found PG&E in violation of Title 49 CFR §192.605(b)(3) for not making accurate maps available to operating personnel and §192.614(c)(5) and California Government Code 4216.3(a)(1)(A)(i) for failing to provide accurate temporary markings of buried pipelines in the area of excavation activity before the activity began.