

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

Incident Investigation Report

Report Date: 01/11/2024

Incident Number: G 20231013-3613

Utility: Southern California Gas SoCalGas

Date and Time of the Incident: 10/13/2023, 7:55:00 PM

Location of the Incident: ■■■ Valley Blvd, Walnut
Walnut ,CA
County: Los Angeles

Summary of Incident:

On October 13, 2023, at around 1144 hours, a third part excavator struck a SoCalGas 8-inch steel main, releasing gas into the atmosphere. SED investigation found that the incident was caused by the third-party excavator's failure to follow CGC, §4216.4(a)(1) to use hand tools within the tolerance zone to determine the exact location of the 8-inch steel gas main before using any power-driven tools and use care when using power driven tools to prevent damage to the subsurface installations within the tolerance zone. Therefore, SED did not find any GO 112-F, Reference Title 49 CFR Parts 191 & 192 violations by SoCalGas.

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

Property Damage: \$56,984.00

Utility Facilities involved:

Pipe Material = Steel, Pipe Size = 8 (inches), MAOP = 52 (psi), Operating Pressure = 47 (psi)

Witnesses:

	<i>Name</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Phone</i>
1	Gordon Kuo	CPUC Investigator	N/A
2	██████████	Pipeline Safety and Complai	(978) 719-3485
3	██████████████████	Pipeline Safety and Complai	(310) 970-4854
4	████████████████████	T-9 Enterprises Project Man	(840) 205-2456
5	██████████	T-9 Enterprises	(909) 392-0880

Evidence:

	<i>Source</i>	<i>Description</i>
1	██████████████████	Initial Form 420 on 10/14/23
2	██████████████████	Form 7100 Final 11/15/23
3	██████████████████	Data Response on 10/17/23
4	██████████████████	Data Response on 12/21/23
5	██████████████████	Koterra Ticket B230670145G4QB
6	██████████████████	Photos of the site
7	██████████	Data Response on 10/14/23
8	██████████	USA Ticket B230670145-00B
9	██████████████████	DataResponse on 11/8/23
10	██████████████████	DataResponse on 11/8/23
11	██████████████████	DataResponse on 1/8/24

Observations and Findings:

On October 13, 2023, at around 1144 hours, T-9 Enterprises, a third-party excavator, struck a SoCalGas 8-inch steel gas main within the vicinity of ██████████ Valley Blvd, Walnut. This resulted in damage to the 8-inch steel gas main and a release of natural gas into the atmosphere. There were no fatalities, injuries, or fire reported as the result of this incident. The incident was reported to CPUC and DOT due to due to a gas release exceeding 3,000,000 cubic feet. The DOT incident reporting number is 1381706.

On October 16, 2023, CPUC representative visited the site and observed the damage done to the pipe. The pipe was found to have 15 inches of cover. The line was properly marked, and photos were taken showing the depth of the pipe and SoCalGas marking including the surrounding area.

On October 17, 2023, SoCalGas completed a permanent repair by cutting out the

damaged section and installing a new pipe. The total amount of gas released was 3664 MCF and it took approximately 7 hours to get the gas under control. The as-built drawing (dated 1990) was provided and showing that the 8-inch steel gas main was installed with 36 inches of cover. SoCalGas procedure requires 32 inches of cover for pipes that are 4 inches or greater in diameter.

On October 17, 2023, SED received a data response from SoCalGas representative [REDACTED]. The pipe has cathodic protection under a rectifier. Also provided was the Koterra Ticket, B230670145, showing the ticket was called in on October 11, 2023, at 8:12 AM, and was due October 13, 2023 at 5:00 PM. The State of California requires two working days to respond to a re-mark, which does not include the request date. The incident also occurred before the due date on the Koterra ticket.

On November 8, 2023, SED received a data response from [REDACTED] from T-9 Enterprises, the excavator. [REDACTED] stated that they were removing asphalt near the gas line to have SoCalGas re-mark the site on the soil so they could pothole it correctly. During the asphalt removal, a CAT 973k track loader caused the pipe to rupture.

On December 27, 2023, SED received two tickets from DigAlert, around [REDACTED] Valley Blvd from the contractor T-9 Enterprises. Ticket B230310600 requested markings and was created on 1/31/23 and expired on 2/28/23. Ticket B230670145 was created on 3/27/23 and continuously renewed. There were requests for re-marks on this ticket on 7/19/23 and 10/11/23.

California Government Code (CGC) 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.”

SED investigation found that the incident was caused by the third-party excavator’s failure to follow CGC, §4216.4(a)(1) to use hand tools within the tolerance zone to determine the exact location of the 8-inch steel gas main before using any power-driven tools and use care when using power driven tools to prevent damage to the subsurface installations within the tolerance zone. Therefore, SED did not find any GO 112-F, Reference Title 49 CFR Parts 191 & 192 violations by SoCalGas.

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

None

Conclusion:

SED investigation found that the incident was caused by the third-party excavator's failure to follow CGC, §4216.4(a)(1) to use hand tools within the tolerance zone to determine the exact location of the 8-inch steel gas main before using any power-driven tools and use care when using power driven tools to prevent damage to the subsurface installations within the tolerance zone. Therefore, SED did not find any GO 112-F, Reference Title 49 CFR Parts 191 & 192 violations by SoCalGas.