

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

Incident Investigation Report

Report Date: 11/19/2021

Incident Number: G 20210316-3187

Utility: Southern California Gas SoCalGas

Date and Time of the Incident: 3/16/2021, 4:05:00 PM

Location of the Incident: [REDACTED] Laurel Canyon Blvd Studio City , Los Angeles
Studio City ,CA
County: Los Angeles

Summary of Incident:

On March 16, 2021, at approximately 1605 hours, a third-party excavator, Design Concepts, damaged a SoCalGas 22-inch steel transmission line with an auger. SED's investigation found that the incident was caused by the third-party contractor failing to renew their USA ticket and request new markings for the underground facilities prior to the incident. Therefore, SED did not find any General Order (GO) 112-F, Reference Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 192 violations by SoCalGas.

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

Property Damage: \$1,206,109.0

Utility Facilities involved:

Pipe Material = Steel, Pipe Size = 22 (inches), MAOP = 204 (psi), Operating Pressure = 190 (psi)

Witnesses:

Name

Title

Phone

1	Gordon Kuo	CPUC Investigator	N/A
2	██████████	Pipeline Safety and Complia	██████████
3	Mahmoud Intably	CPUC Investigator	(213) 576-7016
4	██████████	DigAlert Safety Director	██████████
5	██████████████████	Property Owner	██████████
6	██████████	Design Concepts	██████████

Evidence:

<i>Source</i>	<i>Description</i>
1 ██████████	Data Response and photos on 3/25/21
2 Mahmoud Intably	Field notes and photos on 3/17/21
3 Gordon Kuo	Field notes and photos on 3/17/21
4 ██████████	USA ticket and Data Response on 3/18/21
5 ██████████	Initial Form 420 on 3/17/21
6 ██████████	Form 7100 on 4/14/21
7 ██████████	Data Response on 3/30/21
8 ██████████	GIS map/OQ/USA ticket on 3/30/21
9 ██████████	Photos and Leak Repair order on 4/14/21

Observations and Findings:

On March 16, 2021, at approximately 1605 hours, a third-party excavator, Design Concepts, damaged a SoCalGas 22-inch steel transmission line with an auger in the vicinity of ██████ Laurel Canyon Blvd, Studio City. This resulted in damage to the transmission line and a release of gas into the atmosphere. There were no injuries, fatalities, fire, third-party property damage or service interruption reported.

SoCalGas' personnel arrived on the scene at 1630 hours on March 16, 2021 and stopped the gas flow at 0031 hours on March 17, 2021. This incident was reported to the CPUC and DOT due to the gas release, cost of damages exceeding \$122k and media coverage. The DOT number for this report is 1300507.

On March 17, 2021, two SED investigators conducted a field investigation at the incident site. The dig-in location was on a dirt slope approximately 14 feet away from the roadway. SoCalGas had stopped the gas flow to the damaged section by shutting in three (3) valves, though gas was still slowly venting out from the pipe. The path of the gas pipe comes from the street, then goes into the dirt slope and parallel to the street for about 150 feet before going back into the street. SED was

able to find some old and faded markings on the street for the gas pipe involved, but these markings discontinued on the dirt slope. SED also found new markings on the dirt slope which were made by SoCalGas after the incident. In addition, SED was able to find a SoCalGas flag placed in the dirt approximately 50 feet away from the damaged gas pipe.

SED interviewed the third-party contractor employee [REDACTED], and the owner of the property, [REDACTED]. They provided an old USA ticket, numbered B203440032, that showed [REDACTED] as the requestor and an expiration date of January 6, 2021. According to [REDACTED], the original markings on the dirt slope showed the gas pipe location being a few feet away from the curb of the street and aligned with the SoCalGas flag and a nearby telephone pole. Due to the proximity of the gas pipe, [REDACTED] had to resubmit the plan to the city for his driveway construction. [REDACTED] stated that he did not call for a SoCalGas standby because he was told by the SoCalGas line locator, [REDACTED], that there was no need for a standby if the excavation location was more than 10 feet away from the marked location of the pipe, and his proposed excavation location was 15 feet away. Since the original markings could not be found during the field investigation, SED could not determine the accuracy of the SoCalGas' old USA markings for the gas pipe involved. However, [REDACTED] confirmed that the remaining flag was placed on the dirt slope by SoCalGas in December 2020 as an USA marking for its transmission line under his USA ticket B20340032. SED also interviewed SoCalGas representatives, [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], who stated that a standby by SoCalGas is required if the excavation is within 10 feet from the pipeline markings. They stated that the segment which was punctured by the auger would not be exposed after the incident. Instead, it would be abandoned, and the entire pipe would be relocated onto the street.

On March 18, 2021, SED received a data response from [REDACTED] of DigAlert, confirming that USA ticket B203440032 was created by [REDACTED] on 12/9/20 and expired on 1/6/21. This ticket had not been renewed and was the only ticket found for this location up until the timeframe of the incident in March.

On March 25, 2021, SED received a data response from [REDACTED], a representative of Design Concepts who spoke on behalf of the owner, [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] stated that he was hired by [REDACTED] to build a driveway at the property. The construction required a pile foundation. [REDACTED] stated that [REDACTED] had requested a USA ticket, numbered B20340032, on December 11, 2020 and SoCalGas marked its facilities with paint on the paved surfaces in December 2020. As for the dirt slope, SoCalGas marked its facilities with flags. He was also told by SoCalGas that if drilling was at least 10 feet away, it would not be necessary to call the SoCalGas representative back. Due to this information, the piles were redesigned to be 10-12 feet away from the gas line location. [REDACTED] stated that the line involved was not properly marked, and it curved as it entered the lot. He also stated that the gas line was marked 10-12 feet from where the incident occurred. Potholing was not performed before the incident. [REDACTED] did not

provide additional evidence to show the old USA markings other than a photo showing the SoCalGas' flag discovered during SED's field investigation. This flag is located approximately 50 feet away from the damaged pipe location.

On March 30, 2021, SED received a data response from SoCalGas representative [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] stated that the pipe is a 22-inch steel with a MAOP of 204 psig and an operating pressure of 190 psig. [REDACTED] also attached the GIS map, the Koterra Ticket, and the operator qualification for [REDACTED]. The tools used to mark and locate the pipe is an RD 8100 with an ID of 113886, and GIS maps. SED checked the GIS map, which showed the transmission line following the same general path seen out during SED's field investigation. [REDACTED] also stated that the transmission had been in operation since 1993 and it was installed at 3 feet below grade. SoCalGas' plan now is to relocate the transmission pipe to the street and away from the property due to the landscape layout. The new location of the pipe will require an extension of 20 feet on both the north and south ends.

On April 14, 2021, SED received another data response from [REDACTED]. The data response included the completed final 7100 report form, SoCalGas leak repair order and photos taken by SoCalGas after the incident.

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

None

Conclusion:

Based on the investigation, SED found that the incident was caused by the third-party contractor failing to renew their ticket and request new USA markings prior to the incident. Therefore, SED did not find any GO 112-F, Reference Title 49 CFR, Part 192 violations by SoCalGas.