

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

Incident Investigation Report

**Report Date:**

**Incident Number:** G 20210416-3211

**Utility:** Pacific Gas and Electric PG&E

**Date and Time of the Incident:** 4/16/2021, 10:30:00 AM

**Location of the Incident:** Lat/Long: [REDACTED]  
Isleton ,CA  
County: Sacramento

**Summary of Incident:**

On April 16, 2021, a third-party contractor struck a PG&E 4" steel transmission line with a finishing chisel (pulled behind a tractor) resulting in an unintentional release of gas and damages exceeding \$50,000. The contractor did not have a valid USA ticket. PG&E's Dig-in Reduction Team (DiRT) investigation found that the excavator did not raise his finishing chisel before crossing the transmission line and punctured it. Fire department was reported on-site. There were no injuries, fatalities or ignitions associated with this event.

Based on the information gathered, the incident was caused by the third-party contractor excavating without a USA ticket. SED did not find any violations of GO 112-F by PG&E

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

**Property Damage:** \$122,000.00

**Utility Facilities involved:**

Pipe Material = Steel, Pipe Size = 4 (inches), MAOP = 795 (psi), Operating Pressure = 603 (psi)

**Witnesses:**

	<i>Name</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Phone</i>
1	Anthony Phu	CPUC Investigator	N/A
2	██████████	PG&E M&L Employee	
3	██████████	Part-owner of neighboring fa	
4	██████████████████	Owner/operator of excavator	
5	Jason McMillan	CPUC Investigator	

**Evidence:**

	<i>Source</i>	<i>Description</i>
1	PG&E	DiRT Investigation Narrative
2	PG&E	Initial & Final 420 reports

**Observations and Findings:**

On 4/16/21 at approximately 1015 hours, an equipment operator with Greenfield Turf Inc. was prepping an agricultural field for planting, using a tractor to pull a finishing chisel, when they pierced a 4" steel transmission line (L168-1-3 MP 1.35) running through the field at a depth of approximately 7 inches, causing a release of gas. PG&E was on-site at 1208 hours, isolating the damaged line and controlling flow of gas at approximately 1220 hours. One PG&E customer was affected by an outage resulting from isolation.

PG&E DiRT's interview with the operator stated that they were aware of the presence, location, and path of the underground facility. The operator stated that they passed over the transmission line on their first crossing, lifting the tractor equipment as instructed by their supervisor but failed to do so during the second pass. PG&E line markers were visible in line-of-sight from the damage location. The contractor did not submit a USA ticket for the excavation. PG&E educated the contractor and equipment operator on USA tickets.

As of 4/17/21 at approximately 1107 hours, PG&E had done the following:

- Purged the transmission line section
- Uncovered an 8" casing around the shallow-buried portion of L168-1-3 with significant damage, including a full break at a girth weld
- Cut and removed 3 feet of 4" transmission line around the puncture and 8 feet of

8" casing south of the puncture

- Discovered significant mechanical damage (from previous unreported dig-ins) on the line
- Observed multiple punctures and a gouge on the cased section of carrier pipe. PG&E is expanding excavation to determine the extent of the full casing area and to assess pipeline condition.

PG&E is exploring options to prevent future dig-ins at this site, such as retiring this line or relocating the shallow sections. The PG&E Mark & Locate group determined that the line was between 3'9" and 4'9" depth of cover throughout the field, but only between 6" and 7" where it crosses the nearby access road, where the line strike occurred.

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

None

**Conclusion:**

Based on the information gathered, the incident was caused by the third-party contractor excavating without a USA ticket. SED did not find any violations of GO 112-F by PG&E