

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

Incident Investigation Report

Report Date: 01/30/2023

Incident Number: G 20220902-3423

Utility: Southern California Gas SoCalGas

Date and Time of the Incident: 9/2/2022, 5:45:00 AM

Location of the Incident: Lake Hughes Road Castaic, Los Angeles
Castaic ,CA
County: Los Angeles

Summary of Incident:

On September 2, 2022, at approximately 0018 hours, Los Angeles County Fire Department (LACFD) notified SoCalGas of the sound of gas velocity coming from a SoCalGas steel transmission pipeline, Line 85 (L-85) spanning across a hillside ravine. There were no injuries, fatalities, or service interruptions reported as result of this incident. This incident has been reported to the DOT and CPUC due to an unintentional natural gas release and damages that may exceed \$129,300. The Safety and Enforcement Division (SED) investigation found that the extensive heat from the wildfire caused the span joints at the edge flange to separate resulting in a gas leak. In addition, SED may re-open its investigation after reviewing SoCalGas' direct examination report of the girth weld. Therefore, SED did not find any GO 112-F, Reference Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 192 violation by SoCalGas.

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

Property Damage: \$1,500,000.

Utility Facilities involved:

Pipe Material = Steel, Pipe Size = 24 (inches), MAOP = 0 (psi), Operating Pressure = 0 (psi)

Witnesses:

	<i>Name</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Phone</i>
1	Randy Holter	CPUC Investigator	N/A
2	Randy Holter	SUE-Spl. CPUC Investigator	(818) 821-4309
3	██████████	SoCalGas PS-Compliance	(213) 407-0168
4	██████████	SoCalGas Trans-FOS	(213) 407-0168

Evidence:

	<i>Source</i>	<i>Description</i>
1	██████████	SoCalGas USRB Gas Incident Report
2	██████████	SoCalGas CPUC RGLI-420 Final Filing
3	██████████	SoCalGas Pre-set Data Response
4	██████████	SoCalGas DR02-3 Responses
5	██████████	

Observations and Findings:

On September 2, 2022, at approximately 0018 hours, LACFD notified SoCalGas of gas velocity sounds coming from SoCalGas' 26-inch steel transmission pipeline, L-85. A wildfire occurred around the area of L-85 and LACFD wildfire cleanup patrol crews identified the sound of gas velocity coming from an 80-foot span of the L-85 pipe (span) crossing a hillside ravine. At approximately 0029 hours, SoCalGas Pipeline Technician (PT) crews met LACFD at the L-85 span and confirmed a leak at mile post (MP)141.57 girth weld joint, approximately two miles northeast of 32300 Castaic Road, Castaic, CA, between the Interstate 5 northbound and southbound travel ways. SoCalGas estimated the volume of unintentionally released natural gas commodity is 4,152 thousand standard cubic feet (MCF) (\$24,912). This incident was reported to the DOT (Report # 1346206) and CPUC due to gas release and damages amount may exceed \$129,300.

On September 2, 2022, at approximately 1300, SED Senior Utilities Engineer - Specialist, Randy Holter conducted a field investigation, took pictures of the span, and interviewed SoCalGas personnel. According to ██████████, SoCalGas Transmission Field Operations Supervisor, field response crews and welding crews were on site and awaiting on the environment assessment report, to green-light

constructing scaffolding to access to the L-85 span girth weld incident site. The plan was to directly examine the leak location, assess the girth weld condition and for SoCalGas' engineers to provide the welding procedures to make repairs. In addition, Mr. ██████ stated that, SoCalGas' field operations crews had identified the L-85 leak location at MP141.57 and that SoCalGas' PT personnel observed a weld-separation in the bottom 1/3-welded surface of at the edge flange girth joint weld (circa 1960), in the middle of the span. Furthermore, Mr. ██████ stated that, on September 2, 2022, at approximately 0630 hours, SoCalGas district operations crews isolated the L-85 span by closing two valves, one at valve V85-137.99-0 (north of the span) and another one at valve V143.45 (south of the span at a regulator station) and lowered 81,892-feet of pipeline pressure from 107-psig to 8.63-psig.

According to SoCalGas records, L-85 is a 26-inch steel transmission line, installed in 1931 in a Class 1 location, with a Maximum Allowable Operating Pressure (MAOP) of 550-psig and Maximum Operating Pressures (MOP) of 480-psig, and with cathodic protection. In 2012, SoCalGas de-rated the L-85's MAOP to 120-psig and the MOP to 120-psig due to significant positive grade differences in the line segment and a low downstream demand of a customer at Paradise Ranch Community on Templin Highway. On November 26, 2018, SoCalGas calculated the MAOP using Title 49 CFR, Part 192, § 192.619(a)(1) to establish the MAOP. On March 18 and August 31, 2022, SoCalGas conducted leak surveys on L-85 and found zero gas leak indications.

On December 21, 2022, SoCalGas stated that L-85 segment between MP137.99 to MP143.58 continues to be isolated while the span leak site at MP141.57 is in contractor bidding and work scope.

On January 25, 2023, SoCalGas stated to SED in a phone call that the project repair team is awaiting further analysis and jurisdictional permitting to be completed before the repair can be initiated. SoCalGas plans to directly examine the condition of the existing edge flange weld and SoCalGas engineers are developing project plans, specifications, and welding procedures for complete damaged asset repair. SoCalGas is also accepting contractor bids and scope of work plans to perform the repair work. SoCalGas' current estimate for asset replacement and repair is \$1,500,000 based on drafted plans, specifications, and estimates. The SoCalGas project team estimates this work to be completed by middle of 2023.

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

General Order

1 GO112F

GO Rule

49 CFR Part 192, Section 192.619(a)(1)

Conclusion:

Based on SED investigation, SED found that the extensive heat from the wildfire caused the span joints at the edge flange to separate resulting in a gas leak. In addition, SED may re-open its investigation after reviewing SoCalGas' direct examination report of the girth weld. Therefore, SED did not find any GO 112-F, Reference Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 192 violation by SoCalGas.