

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

505 VAN NESS AVENUE
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298



May 6, 2011

CA2011-005

Ms. Gail Long
Manager, State Government Affairs
TDS Telecom
PO Box 1566
Oregon City, OR 97045-1566

Subject: Hornitos Telephone Company d/b/a TDS Telecom Electrical Audit

Dear Ms. Long:

On behalf of the Utilities Safety and Reliability Branch of the California Public Utilities Commission, Ryan Yamamoto and I conducted an April 26, 2011 audit of Hornitos Telephone Company d/b/a TDS Telecom's (Hornitos') General Order 95 and 128 compliance program. The audit included a review of Hornitos' maintenance records and inspections of Hornitos' outside plant facilities.

During our audit, we identified violations of one or more General Orders. I have enclosed an audit summary itemizing those violations. By June 5, 2011, Hornitos must send me a written response detailing, with estimated completion dates, its plans to address each of the violations listed in the audit summary. Hornitos may email an electronic copy of the response to kh2@cpuc.ca.gov, or send a printed copy to:

Attn: Kenneth How
California Public Utilities Commission
505 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102-3298

Should you have any questions concerning this letter, I can be reached at by phone at (415) 703-2875 or by email at kh2@cpuc.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kenneth How".

Kenneth How
Utilities Engineer
Utilities Safety and Reliability Branch
Consumer Protection and Safety Division
California Public Utilities Commission

Enclosures: CPUC Audit Summary; General Order 95 Rule 18

CC: Raymond Fugere, Program and Project Supervisor, CPUC
Alok Kumar, Senior Utilities Engineer (Supervisor), CPUC
Ryan Yamamoto, Utilities Engineer, CPUC

Robert L. Perkins, Regional Manager, Field Services, TDS Telecom
Randy Bruner, Manager, Field Services, TDS Telecom
Heath Brower, Customer Service Technician, Network, TDS Telecom

AUDIT SUMMARY

I. Programmatic Violations

This section discusses the General Order (GO) violations that we found while reviewing of Hornitos Telephone Company d/b/a TDS Telecom's (Hornitos') inspection and maintenance procedures.

1) Incomplete and undefined frequency of inspections

GO 95 Rule 31.2: Inspection of Lines States in Part:

Lines shall be inspected frequently and thoroughly for the purpose of insuring that they are in good condition so as to conform with these rules. Lines temporarily out of service shall be inspected and maintained in such condition as not to create a hazard.

And GO 128 Rule 17.2: Inspection of Lines States in Part:

Systems shall be inspected by the operator frequently and thoroughly for the purpose of insuring that they are in good condition and in conformance with all applicable requirements of these rules.

During the audit, we found that Hornitos had an inspection program focused primarily on facilities that it considered problematic. Those inspections, and the maintenance that was performed as a result of those inspections, were documented within Hornitos' work tracking system.

Hornitos' focus on inspecting problem areas does not constitute a "thorough" inspection program per GOs 95 and 128. In order for its inspections to be considered thorough, Hornitos must be able to show that its entire system, not just problem areas, is inspected on a regular and frequent basis.

At the time of the audit, Hornitos also did not define the frequency of its inspections. Hornitos must define regular intervals at which it will inspect its entire system in order for its inspection program to be considered "frequent" per GOs 95 and 128.

2) Insufficient Procedures for Documenting 3rd Party Safety Hazard Notifications

GO 95 Rule 18 B: Notification of Safety Hazards states in part:

If a company, while inspecting its facilities, discovers a safety hazard on or near a communications facility, electric transmission or distribution facility involving another company, the inspecting company shall notify the other company and/or facility owner of such safety hazard no later than 10 business days after the discovery... The notification shall be in writing and must be preserved by all parties for at least five years

During our audit, Hornitos could not show that they required documentation of safety hazard notifications sent by and received from third party entities. Hornitos must be able to show that they require documentation of these notifications in order to be compliant with GO 95 Rule 18.

II. Field Violations

During this audit, we inspected a random sampling of Hornitos' facilities. We focused on facilities in the Catheys Valley, Mt. Bullion and Hornitos area. Our findings are below.

1.	Location:	Span along Hwy 140 N/E of Indian Gulch Rd, Catheys Valley, CA
	Previous Hornitos Visit Details:	N/A
	Date of CPUC Inspection:	4/27/11
Explanation of Violation(s):		
<p><u>Missing Guy Markers (Guy Guards)</u></p> <p>GO 95 Rule 86.9:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>A substantial marker of suitable material, including but not limited to metal or plastic, not less than 8 feet in length, shall be securely attached to all anchor guys. Where more than one guy is attached to an anchor rod, only the outermost guy is required to have a marker.</i></p> <p>We noted four anchor guys on this span that lacked guy guards.</p>		
2.	Location:	4980 Princeton Way, Mt. Bullion, CA
	Previous Hornitos Visit Details:	N/A
	Date of CPUC Inspection:	4/27/11
Explanation of Violation(s):		
<p><u>Communication Cable Touching PG&E Anchor Guy</u></p> <p>GO 95 Table 2 Case 19C requires a 3 inch clearance between guys and communication conductors.</p> <p>At this location, a primary anchor guy was touching a communication conductor.</p>		

3.	Location:	4962 Princeton Way, Mt. Bullion, CA
	Previous Hornitos Visit Details:	N/A
	Date of CPUC Inspection:	4/27/11
Explanation of Violation(s):		
<u>Pole Transfer Issue</u>		
GO 95 Rule 31.1:		
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Electrical supply and communication systems shall be designed, constructed, and maintained for their intended use, regard being given to the conditions under which they are to be operated, to enable the furnishing of safe, proper, and adequate service.</i></p>		
<p>At this location, PG&E installed and transferred their facilities onto a new pole and stubbed the older pole. Hornitos still had facilities attached to that older pole. While at the site, there were questions about the safety of this pole. Hornitos must either show this pole is safe or transfer their facilities to a sounder pole.</p>		

4.	Location:	6075 School Lane, Mt. Bullion, CA
	Previous Hornitos Visit Details:	N/A
	Date of CPUC Inspection:	4/27/11
Explanation of Violation(s):		
<u>Uncovered Risers</u>		
GO 95 Rule 87.7:		
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Risers shall be protected from the ground level to a level not less than 8 feet above the ground.</i></p>		
<p>At this location, there was an uncovered Hornitos riser.</p>		

5.	Location:	4992 Old Toll Rd, Mt. Bullion, CA
	Previous Hornitos Visit Details:	N/A
	Date of CPUC Inspection:	4/27/11
Explanation of Violation(s):		
<p data-bbox="201 558 509 590"><u>Strain on Service Drops</u></p> <p data-bbox="201 632 428 663">GO 95 Rule 31.1:</p> <p data-bbox="282 705 1425 915"><i>When a utility has actual knowledge, obtained either through normal operating practices or notification to the utility, that any circuit energized at 750 volts or less shows strain or evidences abrasion from vegetation contact, the condition shall be corrected by reducing conductor tension rearranging or replacing the conductor, pruning the vegetation or placing mechanical protection on the conductor(s)...Strain on a conductor is present when deflection causes additional tension beyond the allowable tension of the span.</i></p> <p data-bbox="201 957 1235 989">At this location, a tree trunk was causing strain on two Hornitos telephone drops.</p>		

6.	Location:	6075 School Lane, Mt. Bullion, CA
	Previous Hornitos Visit Details:	N/A
	Date of CPUC Inspection:	4/27/11
Explanation of Violation(s):		
<p data-bbox="201 1430 428 1461"><u>Uncovered Risers</u></p> <p data-bbox="201 1503 428 1535">GO 95 Rule 87.7:</p> <p data-bbox="282 1577 1390 1650"><i>Risers shall be protected from the ground level to a level not less than 8 feet above the ground.</i></p> <p data-bbox="201 1692 902 1724">There was an uncovered Hornitos riser at this location.</p>		

7.	Location:	Span from 7280 Hwy 49 N to the intersection at Bear Valley Rd., Bear Valley, CA
Previous Hornitos Visit Details:		N/A
Date of CPUC Inspection:		4/27/11
Explanation of Violation(s):		
<p><u>Uncovered Risers</u></p> <p>GO 95 Rule 87.7:</p> <p><i>Risers shall be protected from the ground level to a level not less than 8 feet above the ground.</i></p> <p>While inspecting a span of poles at this location, we noted 4 poles that had uncovered or insufficiently covered risers.</p>		
<p><u>Unsecured Vertical Service Runs</u></p> <p>GO 95 Rule 31.1:</p> <p><i>Electrical supply and communication systems shall be designed, constructed, and maintained for their intended use, regard being given to the conditions under which they are to be operated, to enable the furnishing of safe, proper, and adequate service.</i></p> <p>We noted 3 poles on this span where services running vertically up those poles were not securely attached.</p>		

8.	Location:	3004 Bear Valley Rd, Hornitos, CA
	Previous Hornitos Visit Details:	N/A
	Date of CPUC Inspection:	4/27/11
Explanation of Violation(s):		
<p data-bbox="199 583 667 615"><u>Missing Guy Markers (Guy Guards)</u></p> <p data-bbox="199 657 428 688">GO 95 Rule 86.9:</p> <p data-bbox="280 730 1403 869"><i>A substantial marker of suitable material, including but not limited to metal or plastic, not less than 8 feet in length, shall be securely attached to all anchor guys. Where more than one guy is attached to an anchor rod, only the outermost guy is required to have a marker.</i></p> <p data-bbox="199 915 1045 947">The Hornitos anchor guy at this location was missing a guy guard.</p>		