

CALIFORNIA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Safety and Enforcement Division Gas Safety and Reliability Branch

Incident Investigation Report

Report Date: 06/19/2020

Incident Number: G 20200514-3051

Utility: Southern California Gas SoCalGas

Date and Time of the Incident: 5/14/2020, 4:20:00 PM

Location of the Incident: [REDACTED]

Wasco ,CA
County: Kern

Summary of Incident:

On May 14, 2020, at approximately 1620 hours, a farmer working for Farmland Reserve Inc

was operating a front-end loader when it hit and damaged SoCalGas' 16-inch steel transmission line resulting in gas escaping into the atmosphere. There were no injuries, fatalities, or fire reported as a result of this incident. SED investigation found that the incident was caused by Farmland Reserve Inc's failure to notify "811" DigAlert and submit

a USA ticket request prior to start excavation. Therefore, SED did not find any General Order (GO) 112-F, Reference Title 49 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR), Part 192 violations by SoCalGas.

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

Property Damage: \$1,623,114.0

Utility Facilities involved:

Pipe Material = Steel, Pipe Size = 16 (inches), MAOP = 718 (psi), Operating Pressure = 664 (psi)

Witnesses:

Gas Engineering and Compliance Section		
<i>Name</i>		<i>Title</i>
<i>Phone</i>		
1 Mahmoud Intably	CPUC Investigator	N/A
2 [REDACTED]	SoCalGas - PSC	[REDACTED]
3 [REDACTED]	SoCalGas - FOS	[REDACTED]
4 [REDACTED]	SoCalGas - FOS	[REDACTED]
5 [REDACTED]	SoCalGas - FOM	[REDACTED]
6 [REDACTED]	PGE-	[REDACTED]
7 [REDACTED]	PGE-Control Room	[REDACTED]
8 [REDACTED]	Farm - Manager	[REDACTED]

Evidence:

<i>Source</i>	<i>Description</i>
1 SoCalGas	Initial report
2 SoCalGas	PHMSA Form F7100.2
3 SoCalGas	SED's Initial data request
4 SoCalGas	SED's data request

Observations and Findings:

On May 14, 2020, at approximately 1620 hours, a farmer was operating a front-end loader when it hit and damaged SoCalGas' 16-inch steel transmission line (Line 7000) resulting in gas escaping into the atmosphere. SoCalGas' crews arrived on the scene at 1745 hours and contacted Engineering to work on a plan to isolate, purge, and make repairs. There were no injuries, fatalities, or fire reported from this incident. The incident occurred in a Class 1 location (farmland) and local emergency agencies (fire and police departments) responded and blocked off the area. SoCalGas' crew purged a section of L7000 under safe and controlled conditions. This incident was reported to DOT/CPUC due to gas release and potential cost of repairs exceeding \$50,000.

Due to the gas blowing in the vicinity of PG&E's overhead powerlines and potential risk to

life and property, SoCalGas requested PG&E to de-energize its overhead facilities (transmission and distribution). This resulted in an interruption of service to approximately

3219 residential and 54 critical/essential customers for approximately 17 hours. All PG&E customers were back online at 11/15/2020 at 1159 hours.

Line 7000 supplies a distribution line downstream of the damaged area and to prevent service interruption to SoCalGas' customers, SoCalGas' crew brought in a mobile LNG facility to temporarily provide gas to customers while SoCalGas purging and making

repair to Line 7000. Therefore, 35 customers were affected by this incident.

According to SoCalGas' supervisor, [REDACTED], SoCalGas received a call on 5/14/2020 at 1700 hours of gas blowing from its facility. SoCalGas' crews were dispatched, arrived on the scene at 1745 hours, and coordinated with Gas Control to de-energize Line 7000 between mile posts [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. SoCalGas' crews isolated 7

miles, secured the site, and purged Line 7000 until internal pressure lowered to atmospheric pressure. On 5/15/2020, at 0945 hours, SoCalGas' crew excavated the site and found a $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch hole on the 3-clock position. SoCalGas' crew installed a 24-inch wedding-band at 1530 hours. A contractor working for SoCalGas, Applus, performed an X-ray examination on the weld; the examination was completed at 1630 hours with no issues found. SoCalGas' crew started energizing Line 7000 in increments of 50 to 100 lb.

while soap testing the weld until Line 7000 reached its MOP of 664 psig with no issues. Line 7000 was put back into service at 1900 hours. SoCalGas performed a post-incident leak survey and no leaks were observed.

On May 15, 2020, SED inspected Line 7000 right of way for compliance with line markers

for transmission lines and found no issues. Furthermore, SED requested SoCalGas to install additional markers in the area where the incident occurred.

The damaged section of Line 7000 (mile post [REDACTED]) is in a wash area susceptible to erosion. This resulted in depth of cover reduction to less than few inches and in some instances Line 7000 was exposed to the atmosphere. SoCalGas' Engineering department is performing a study to devise short-term and long-term solutions to Line 7000's exposure. The options include the installation of K-Rail, revetment, or concrete blanket over the pipe. Due to Line 7000's exposure to the atmosphere in Poso Creek, SoCalGas installed temporary K-rails on both sides of Line 7000 to protect it from further damage until a permanent repair is completed.

SoCalGas' Gas Standard PA-1 Public Awareness Plan (PAP) requires SoCalGas to establish a continuing public awareness program to inform and educate members of the public located along transmission line Right-of-Ways. SoCalGas' PAP requires gas safety messages to be delivered through direct mail annually to excavators that are involved in farming activities. In addition, SoCalGas maintains pipeline markers along its transmission lines in Class 1 locations as required by 49 CFR, Part 192, Section 192.707

Line markers for main and transmission lines.

Line 7000 was installed in 1964, with a depth of cover of 4 feet at the time of installation. Pipe specification—API 5L, coating-Coal Tar-L, Class 1 location, with MAOP of 718 psig, and MOP of 610 psig at the time of the incident.

According to SoCalGas, the estimated property damage - \$600,000, Emergency response - \$1,000,000, and estimated cost of gas released - \$23,114.

SoCalGas' PAP notice to the property owner/operator/farmer was mailed twice a year as "Bill Inserts". In addition, a brochure was sent in April of 2019 to [REDACTED], Wasco, CA 93280. The "Bill Inserts" and the brochure address safety practices around pipelines such as calling 811 before excavation and exercising care when working near SoCalGas' pipelines.

SED reviewed qualifications records for the contractors (Applus and Henkels & McCoy) and SoCalGas' welders; no issues were found.

SED reviewed records of pipeline patrols for the past five years (last patrol was completed on April 14, 2020) and found no major issues except with line markers (signs were changed or replaced where needed). In addition, SED reviewed the last leakage survey "aerial leak survey" completed on March 25, 2017 and no issues were found.

SED observed SoCalGas' crew followed SoCalGas' Gas Standards while performing excavation, purging, welding, leak survey, and emergency repair.

According to [REDACTED], Farmland Reserve Inc's Manager, [REDACTED], the operator of the front-end loader, was removing a pile of sand in Poso Creek (wash area) when the incident occurred. The work was a routine process, Mr. [REDACTED] was scraping the soil, and he was not excavating. Immediately after the line was hit, Mr. [REDACTED] turned off the engine, jumped off the front-end-loader, and called 911. According to Mr. [REDACTED], he was aware of SoCalGas' pipelines on Farmland's land lot. In addition, Mr. [REDACTED] stated that Mr. [REDACTED] was scraping the surface of the soil and that activity did not require a USA ticket.

California Government Code 4216, Section 4216(g) states:

“Excavation” means any operation in which earth, rock, or other material in the ground is moved, removed, or otherwise displaced by means of tools, equipment, or explosives in any of the following ways: grading, trenching, digging, ditching, drilling, augering, tunneling, scraping, cable or pipe plowing and driving, or any other way.

California Government Code 4216, Section 4216.2(d) states in part:

“Except in an emergency, every excavator covered by Section 4216.8 planning to conduct an excavation on private property that does not require an excavation permit may

contact the appropriate regional notification center if the private property is known, or reasonably should be known, to contain a subsurface installation other than the underground facility owned or operated by the excavator....”

California Government Code 4216, Section 4216.8 states:

This article does not apply to any of the following persons:

(a) An owner of real property who contracts for an excavation project on the property, not requiring a permit issued by a state or local agency, with a contractor or subcontractor licensed pursuant to Article 5 (commencing with Section 7065) of Chapter 9 of Division 3 of the Business and Professions Code.

(b) An owner of residential real property, not engaged as a contractor or subcontractor licensed pursuant to Article 5 (commencing with Section 7065) of Chapter 9 of Division 3 of the Business and Professions Code, who as part of improving his or her principal

residence or appurtenances thereto is performing or having performed excavation work not requiring a permit issued by a state or local agency.

(c) Any person or private entity that leases or rents power operated or power-driven excavating or boring equipment, regardless of whether an equipment operator is provided

for that piece of equipment or not, to a contractor or subcontractor licensed pursuant to Article 5 (commencing with Section 7065) of Chapter 9 of Division 3 of the Business and Professions Code, if the signed rental agreement between the person or private entity and the contractor or subcontractor contains the following provision:

“It is the sole responsibility of the lessee or renter to follow the requirements of the regional notification center law pursuant to Article 2 (commencing with Section 4216) of Chapter 3.1 of Division 5 of Title 1 of the Government Code. By signing this contract, the

lessee or renter accepts all liabilities and responsibilities contained in the regional notification center law.”

Based on Mr. [REDACTED]'s interview and the activities performed by the operator of the front-end

loader, SED found that the incident was caused by Farmland Reserve Inc's failure to notify/call "811" DigAlert and request for marking prior to start excavation. Therefore, SED

did not find any GO 112-F, Reference Title 49 CFR, Part 192 violations by SoCalGas.

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

<i>General Order</i>	<i>GO Rule</i>
1 GO112F	49 CFR, Part 192.629 Purging of pipelines
2 GO112F	49 CFR, Part 192.705 Transmission Lines:
3 GO112F	49 CFR, Part 192.707 Line Markers for main and
4 GO112F	49 CFR, Part 192.706 Transmission lines:

5 GO112F

49 CFR, Part 192.717 Transmission lines:

6 GO112F

49 CFR, Part 192.805 Qualification program

Conclusion:

SED investigation found that the incident was caused by Farmland Reserve Inc's failure to notify "811" DigAlert and submit a USA ticket request prior to start excavation.

Therefore, SED did not find any GO 112-F, Reference Title 49 CFR, Part 192 violations by SoCalGas