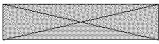


From: Doll, Laura
Sent: 5/5/2014 5:59:03 PM
To: Terrie D.' Prosper (terrie.prosper@cpuc.ca.gov) (terrie.prosper@cpuc.ca.gov)
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Subject: FW: Carmel incident piece - SNL

FYI

Monday, May 05, 2014 3:10 PM ET 

PG&E pipe records, procedures found lacking in analysis of March house explosion

Article

By [Sarah Smith](#)

[Pacific Gas and Electric Co.](#)'s record-keeping inaccuracies and inadequate employee procedures led to a house explosion earlier in 2014, according to a failure analysis report prepared for the utility.

In early March, a PG&E welding crew performing work in Carmel, Calif., punctured a 1.25-inch plastic pipe inside a two-inch steel line, the report found. Roughly 15 to 30 minutes later, an explosion occurred at an adjacent unoccupied house, blowing out all of the exterior first-floor walls and scattering pieces of the roof in the surrounding area.

PG&E's records did not show the internal plastic line and indicated only that the pipe was made of steel, according to the report, prepared by the engineering consultant company Exponent Inc.

"The most fundamental learning that came out of the Carmel incident is that our gas workers must always take steps to validate that what's in the ground matches our records," PG&E spokesman Nick Stimmel said in a recent email. "We've also improved emergency response capabilities through more training, and we added additional layers of quality assurance to verify that the new work methods and tools are being used."

The punctured line allowed gas to escape and migrate through the soil, enter the nearby sewer system and exit through locations inside and outside the first floor of the residence. Seals in the

unoccupied house's plumbing were reportedly ineffective, providing a probable direct connection between the sewer system and the living space, the report said. Exponent identified a number of possible ignition sources but concluded that a kitchen stove's continuous pilot flame was most likely to have caused the gas to explode.

"It is a miracle that nobody was hurt, but this is a very serious incident," Carmel Mayor Jason Burnett said in a statement. "We all want to see our homes and yards as safe, and it is very troubling when something like this calls that safety into question."

Exponent recommended a number of corrective actions, advising that PG&E develop or revise its procedures to require positive verification of the expected system characteristics when working on a pipeline. The report also said the company should develop and implement a process for a more detailed pre-job briefing, including a discussion of what can go wrong, who is responsible for taking what actions and ensuring that the appropriate equipment is available to handle potential emergencies.

In response to the incident, PG&E said it has laid out a more detailed step-by-step process for employees working on lines.

"We embrace the report findings and know that these improvements make us a safer gas company," Stimmel said. "We took this incident seriously and are committed to taking every action possible to make sure that it's not repeated. From the time of the incident, we have implemented changes to the field processes addressed by the report's findings. We were proactive and didn't wait for the report to take action."

Pacific Gas and Electric is a subsidiary of [PG&E Corp.](#)