



ISSUING DEPARTMENT: **CS Planning & Support**

EFFECTIVE DATE: **8-00**

UO SPONSOR: **VP - CS**

REVIEW DATE: **8-02**

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**TITLE: Gas Leak and Odor Response**

**Purpose**

This Utility Operations (UO) standard defines the operational and procedural requirements for investigating, detecting and resolving suspect and reported gas leak and odor complaints at a customer's premises or in the immediate vicinity. This mandated practice applies to all customer premises as described in UO standard S6436, *Gas and Electric Field Service and Dispatch Operating Practices*.

The primary audiences for this UO standard are the Call Center director, Field Service & Dispatch director, Call Center managers, Service Dispatch managers, Field Service supervisors and Field Service employees.

This UO standard supersedes DCS standard C-S0434, dated 5/8/98.

**Safety**

When employees are responding to any gas leak and/or odor request, all applicable precautions and requirements listed in USP 22, Safety and Health Program, the Code of Safe Practices, Pacific Gas and Electric Company gas standards and Customer Service Support (CSS) procedures shall be followed to ensure safety.

**Business Benefits**

There is a need to clearly outline the required framework and uniform steps for managing natural gas leak and odor response in accordance with safety, health laws and regulations, specifically, General Order 58A, *Standards for Gas Service in the State of California*, effective 4/12/89; and General Order 112E, *Rules Governing Design, Construction, Testing, Maintenance and Operation of Utility Gas Gathering, Transmission and Distribution Piping Systems*, effective 9/11/95. This UO standard is the appropriate communication vehicle for ensuring consistency and systemwide compliance.

This UO standard *supports* the following *policies*:

**Utility**

*Safety and Health Program*

*Legal Compliance and Representation*

*Emergency Planning and Response*

*Customer and Public Communications*

**Utility Operations**

*Customer Service*

*Gas and Electric Maintenance and Operation*

*Reconstruction of Gas and Electric Facilities*

*Compliance Program*

**Standard Sponsor** The vice president of Customer Service is responsible for reviewing, authorizing and issuing this UO standard.

**Contact** The manager of Customer Service Planning & Support

**Implementation Responsibilities** The Call Center director and Field Service & Dispatch director are responsible for ensuring communication and proper implementation of this UO standard in their respective areas.

The Field Service managers and Field Service supervisors are responsible for ensuring that Field Service employees are trained and knowledgeable on this UO standard and all appropriate work procedures.

Depending on the responding Field Service employee’s capabilities and field experience, Field Service supervisors may limit the usage of the “modified gas leak” procedure.

Field Service employees responding to gas leak and/or odor complaints are responsible for knowing, thoroughly understanding and complying with this UO standard and appropriate CSS Field Service procedures. The Field Service employee on the scene is responsible for determining what procedure shall be followed to ensure customer and public safety.

If a difference in work or rule application described in a CSS Field Service procedure arises, the Field Service supervisor shall make the decision based on good judgment.

Field Service employees shall notify their supervisor of any additional training, equipment or resources needed to perform their assigned duties safely. Field Service employees shall only perform tasks for which they are qualified or trained to do as outlined in their job definition.

**Compliance** The Field Service & Dispatch director or their delegate(s) shall monitor UO standard compliance using the Customer Service Planning & Support Operational Compliance Plan which includes Compliance Control Checklists and Training and Operations Reviews. Corrective action shall be taken to resolve non-compliance issues.

Field Service supervisors and Field Service employees shall comply with this UO standard.

**Procedure** The detailed work methods associated with gas leak and odor response are issued in the form of a CSS Field Service procedure. Field Service employees shall comply with the appropriate sections of the following supplemental documents:

- *CSS Universal Responsibilities*
- *CSS Gas Service Valves Procedure*
- *CSS Gas Regulator Servicing Procedure*
- *CSS Gas Pressure Determination Procedure*
- *CSS Gas Leak & Odor Investigation Procedure*
- *CSS Establishing Gas Service Procedure*
- *CSS Discontinuing Gas Service Procedure*

**Business/Legal Requirements**      **Service Obligation**

Pacific Gas and Electric Company has a service obligation to respond to customer requests when general safety requires, as outlined in CPUC/Pacific Gas and Electric Company Gas Rule 11, *Discontinuance and Restoration of Service*.

**Service Discontinuance and Restoration**

Field Service employees may refuse to serve or discontinue gas service to a customer if:

- (1) any part of the facilities, appliances or other equipment for receiving or using service or the use of that service is deemed unsafe;
- (2) any condition existing at a customer's premises is determined to endanger Pacific Gas and Electric Company's gas service facilities;
- (3) the customer threatens to create a hazardous condition; or
- (4) Pacific Gas and Electric Company receives advance written notice from a governmental agency that the customer's facilities and/or use of natural gas is unsafe or not in compliance with applicable laws, ordinances or statutes.

Except in emergency situations, Pacific Gas and Electric Company's law department or other designated department shall approve in advance governmental agency ordered terminations.

Field Service employees shall not restore gas service until it is determined that the situation has been made safe. If service was discontinued pursuant to an order of termination issued by a governmental agency, Pacific Gas and Electric Company will not establish or restore service until restoration has been authorized by the appropriate agency.

Authorization for termination pursuant to a governmental agency must be in writing, but the Tariff does not require written notification for a request of restoration of service. However, Pacific Gas and Electric Company should request that any such authorization be in writing. If authorization for restoration is verbal, Pacific Gas and Electric Company shall follow up with a letter to the requesting governmental agency identifying the individual authorizing the restoration and detailing the situation surrounding the termination and restoration of service.

Similarly, Pacific Gas and Electric Company is not liable or responsible for any plumbing, appliances, facilities, or apparatus beyond the point of delivery which Pacific Gas and Electric Company does not own or maintain.

### **Gas Leak Investigations**

Any service order notations or customer comment that indicates a potential gas leak shall be considered a "gas leak complaint" order.

To ensure customer and public safety, Field Service employees shall thoroughly investigate, control and eliminate (make safe) all gas leakage or "odor" complaints, either reported or encountered while performing field service work, in accordance with the *CSS Gas Leak and Odor Investigation Procedure*.

Field Service employees shall consider the following potential leak sources when conducting a leak investigation on a customer's gas houseline and/or appliance:

- Pacific Gas and Electric Company meter assemblies, services and mains
- mains and service facilities of other utilities within Pacific Gas and Electric Company's service area
- meters, mains and service facilities of customer-owned distribution systems.

**Gas Leak Detection Equipment (Assigned Measurement Instruments)**

Gas leak detection equipment shall be maintained, including continual routine calibration, in accordance with manufacturer's specifications. Field Service supervisors shall be responsible for maintaining all gas leak detection equipment inspection and calibration maintenance records.

**Plastic Gas Service Lines**

Field Service employees may squeeze off (pinch off) ruptured plastic gas service lines which are visible (and can be accessed safely) to protect life and property. Field Service employees may affix dead end fittings, as outlined in their job definition. Refer to the Gas Information Bulletin #130 for grounding plastic pipe requirements.

**Gas Pressure Determination**

Gas pressures shall be determined on high and low pressure systems for all gas leak and odor complaints in accordance with the *CSS Gas Pressure Determination Procedure*.

**Customer-Owned Gas Burning Appliance/Equipment Inspection and Adjustment**

Recognizing that some customers mistake maladjusted gas appliances and incomplete combustion products (aldehydes) for gas leakage, Field Service employees shall safely access, inspect and correct faulty adjustments on a customer's gas burning appliance and/or equipment, in accordance with the *CSS Gas Burning Appliance and Equipment Inspection/Service Procedure*.

If appliance inspection/service cannot be performed, the Field Service employee must notify their supervisor to resolve the issue.

**Definition of Terms**

**California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC):** The state agency that regulates the rates and services of privately owned utilities and exercises both legislative and judicial powers.

**California Public Utilities Code:** A California statutory law that governs the regulation of public utilities.

**Customer:** The person, group of persons, firm, corporation, institution, municipality, or other civic body, in whose name service is rendered, as evidenced by the signature on the application, contract, or agreement for that service or, in the absence of a signed instrument, by the receipt and payment of bills regularly issued in that name, regardless of the identity of the actual user of the service.

**CSS Field Service Procedure:** Mandated work method(s) for implementing a UO standard. A CSS Field Service procedure includes maintenance and/or operating procedures and practices that represent a standardized method of complying with a utility policy and/or standard. CSS Field Service procedures are mandatory, unless experience, good judgment or specific conditions direct otherwise. Deviations from a CSS Field Service procedure must not create safety, legal, financial or operational concerns. The manager of Customer Service Planning & Support authorizes CSS Field Service procedures.

**Faulty Adjustments:** Gas appliance pilot or main burner settings that produce poor flame characteristics.

**Field Service Employees:** For the purposes of this document, service mechanic, gas service representative and any other classifications that are appropriately qualified to perform this work.

**Gas:** Any combustible gas or vapor, or combustible mixture of gaseous constituents used to produce heat by burning.

**Gas Leak:** Unintentional escape of natural gas from containment.

**Gas Leak Detection Equipment:** Inspection tool used to identify the presence of gas leakage and/or locate the source of gas leakage.

**Gas Leak/Odor Investigation:** Careful search for possible gas leakage in any area where gas facilities or gas appliances exist, or where a gas leak or odor is reported or suspected.

**Gas Service Line:** Pacific Gas and Electric Company owned piping, usually on a customer's premises, which connects the gas meter to the gas service main.

**General Order (G.O.):** Is often the form in which the CPUC issues a decision based on an Order Instituting Rulemaking (OIR) proceedings. Compliance with a General Order is mandatory.

**Mandate:** Authoritative command or requirement.

**Odor:** The smell of gas.

**Rules:** Tariff sheets which cover the application of all rates, charges, and services, when such applicability is not set forth in and as a part of the rate schedules.

**Service Obligation:** Responding to a customer request when general safety requires Pacific Gas and Electric Company to investigate, repair or make safe the use of gas as described in CPUC/Pacific Gas and Electric Company Gas Rule 11.

**Utility Operations Standard:** Documents that mandate (require) specific actions, work processes, or provide specification. Standards are directives of specific mandates for compliance with safe work practice, company/union agreement, company policy or government laws/regulations. It is the obligation of all impacted departments to ensure all employees are in compliance with all standards.

**Utility Policy:** Defines how Pacific Gas and Electric Company operates to achieve its goals and objectives. Utility policy statements deal with areas where a uniform policy is necessary or desirable on a utility-wide basis. Compliance with a utility policy is mandatory across the company.

**Date Issued/Updated**

*Effective:* August 2000

*Review Date:* August 2002

Signed,



Vice President Customer Service

**Reference Documents**

**Internal Mandate(s)**

Code of Safe Work Practices

Gas leaks in company pipelines, buried station piping, mains and services refer to:

UO Standard D-S0350, "Leak Surveys and Repair of Gas Transmission and Distribution Facilities"

UO Guideline D-G0071, "Follow-up Leak Survey Procedures for Inaccessible Locations"

UO Standard D-S0353, "Physical Inspection of Pipelines, Mains and Services"

High pressure gas supply to customers, refer to:

UO Standard D-S0449, "Supply of Gas at High Pressure to Customers"

Grounding plastic pipe requirements, refer to:

Gas Information Bulletin #130

UO Standard

August 8, 2000



**External Mandate(s)**

General Order 58A, *Standards for Gas Service in the State of California*

General Order 112E, *Rules Governing Design, Construction, Testing, Maintenance, and Operation of Utility Gas Gathering, Transmission and Distribution Piping Systems*

Gas Rule 2, "Description of Service," Section A-5, "Appliance Inspection"

Gas Rule 3, "Application of Service," - Service Obligation

Gas Rule 11, "Discontinuance and Restoration of Service," Section H-1, "Unsafe Apparatus or Condition," Section H-4

California Public Utilities Code