



UO Standard S6434

ISSUING DEPARTMENT: **CS Planning and Support**

EFFECTIVE DATE: **5-02**

UO SPONSOR: **VP - CS**

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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 suspected 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 standard are the Call Center and Field Service and Dispatch directors and managers, and the Field Service supervisors and employees.

Recession

This standard supersedes UO Standard S6434, “Gas Leak and Odor Response,” dated 8-00.

Safety

Employees shall follow all applicable precautions and requirements with regard to responding to any gas leak and/or odor request to ensure safety as detailed in Utility Standard Practice (USP) 22, “Safety and Health Program,” and the *Code of Safe Practices*.

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 112-E, “Rules Governing Design, Construction, Testing, Maintenance and Operation of Utility Gas Gathering, Transmission and Distribution Piping Systems,” effective 9-11-95. This standard is the appropriate communication vehicle for ensuring consistency and systemwide compliance.

This standard supports the following policies:

- Utility Policies: “Safety and Health Policy”
- “Compliance With Laws and Legal Representation”
- “Emergency Planning and Response Policy”

Utility Operations Policies: 3.6, "UO Customer Service Policy"
3-7, "Gas and Electric Maintenance and Operation"
3-10, "Reconstruction of Gas and Electric Facilities"
3.11, "Compliance Program"

Implementation Responsibilities

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

The Call Center and Field Service and Dispatch directors are responsible for ensuring that this standard is communicated and properly implemented in their respective areas.

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

Field Service employees responding to gas leak and/or odor complaints are responsible for knowing, thoroughly understanding, and complying with this standard and the 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.

Depending on the responding Field Service employee's capabilities and field experience, Field Service supervisors may limit the use of the "modified gas leak" procedure.

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 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 those tasks for which they are qualified or trained to do, as outlined in their job definition.

The vice president of Customer Service authorizes the senior manager of Customer Service Planning and Support to update and reissue any attachments to this standard.

Compliance

The Field Service and Dispatch director, or his or her delegates, shall monitor compliance with this standard using the Customer Service Planning and Support Operational Compliance Plan, which includes Compliance Control Checklists and Operational Reviews. Corrective action shall be taken to resolve non-compliance issues.

Field Service supervisors and employees shall comply with this 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

The Company has a service obligation to respond to customer requests when general safety requires, as outlined in the California Public Utilities Commission (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 the Company’s gas service facilities.
3. The customer threatens to create a hazardous condition.
4. The Company receives advance written notice from a governmental agency that the customer’s facilities and/or use of natural gas is unsafe or is not in compliance with applicable laws, ordinances, or statutes.

Except in emergency situations, the 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, the 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, the Company should request that any such authorization be in writing.

If authorization for restoration is verbal, the 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.

The Company is not liable or responsible for any plumbing, appliances, facilities, or apparatus beyond the service point of delivery that the Company does not own or maintain.

Definition of Terms

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

California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC): The state agency that regulates the rates and services of privately owned utilities such as Pacific Gas and Electric Company and exercises both legislative and judicial powers.

CSS Field Service Procedure: A 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 senior manager of Customer Service Planning and Support authorizes CSS Field Service procedures.

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.

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

Field Activity: A task that takes place at a service point (e.g., reconnect service, disconnect service, exchange meter).

Field Order: A group of one or more field activities that takes place at the service point of a premises (e.g., connect service, disconnect service, read meter, install meter) and will be performed at the same time by employees of the same classification.

Field Service Employees: For the purposes of this document and supplemental documents only, “Field Service employees” refers to service mechanics, gas service representatives, 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: The 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) proceeding. Compliance with a General Order is mandatory.

Mandate: Authoritative command or requirement.

Odor: The smell of gas.

Rules: Part of a tariff submitted by a utility to the CPUC. Rules govern how rates are to be applied.

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

Service Point: A specific location at a premises where the Company supplies service (e.g., electric meter, gas meter).

Utility Operations Standard: Clearly defines an operational or procedural requirement that shall be implemented consistently across UO in order to:


- Ensure safety.
- Comply with regulatory requirements.
- Conduct Company business uniformly and efficiently.
- Implement a UO policy.

Utility Policy: Describes how UO operates to achieve its goals.

Date Issued/Updated

Effective: May 2002
Review Date: May 2007

Signed,


Vice President
Customer Service

Contact

The senior manager of Customer Service Planning and Support is the contact for this standard.

Reference Documents

Internal Documents

Code of Safe Work Practices

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

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

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

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

High pressure gas supply to customers, refer to:

UO Standard S5449, "Gas Service at Elevated Pressure to Customers"

Grounding plastic pipe requirements, refer to:

Gas Distribution Information Bulletin 130, "Grounding Plastic Pipe"

Working in a hazardous/gaseous atmosphere, refer to:

UO Standard S4832, "Personal Protective Equipment for Working in a Hazardous/Gaseous Atmosphere"

UO Guideline G14832, "Personal Protective Equipment Selection for Working in Hazardous/Gaseous Atmospheres"

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External Documents

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,"

Gas Rule 3, "Application for Service"

Gas Rule 11, "Discontinuance and Restoration of Service"

California Public Utilities Code

Attachments

Attachment 1, "Gas Leak and Odor Response Procedures"

Attachment 1

Gas Leak and Odor Response Procedures

Gas Leak Investigations

Any field order notations or customer comments that indicate a potential gas leak shall be considered a “gas leak complaint” field 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 activities (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:

- The Company meter assemblies, services, and mains.
- Mains and service facilities of other utilities within the 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

Qualified Field Service employees may squeeze off (pinch off) ruptured, plastic gas-service lines that are visible (and can be accessed safely) to protect life and property. Qualified Field Service employees may affix dead-end fittings, as outlined in their job definition. All Field Service employees that are expected to do plastic service repairs, such as installing a dead-end fitting, must receive annual training.

For additional guidance, refer to the following documents:

- The Gas Distribution Information Bulletin 130, “Grounding Plastic Pipe”
- UO Standard S4832, “Personal Protective Equipment for Working in a Hazardous/Gaseous Atmosphere”
- UO Guideline G14832, “Personal Protective Equipment Selection for Working in Hazardous/Gaseous Atmospheres”

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

Some customers mistake maladjusted gas appliances and incomplete combustion products (aldehydes) for gas leakage. In such cases, Field Service employees shall safely assess, 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.