

Log P-96

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

ISSUED: April 25, 1978

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Forwarded to:

Eugene A. Tracy  
President  
Peoples Gas Light and Coke Company  
122 S. Michigan Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois 60603  
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SAFETY RECOMMENDATION(S)

P-78-15 and 16

At 1:35 p.m. on October 14, 1977, an explosion and fire destroyed a two-family house at 4930 W. Cortez Street in Chicago, Illinois. One person was killed, three persons were injured, and two adjacent houses were damaged.

Natural gas had entered the building through a broken service head adapter which was used to connect inserted plastic service lines to the riser and meter set on the inside of the building. The adapter was broken when a contractor, employed by the city to remove street curbs, pulled the 1 1/4-inch, plastic-encased service line operating at 1/4 psig.

The Peoples Gas Light and Coke Company (Peoples) received a call at 12:38 p.m. of an odor of gas at 4930 W. Cortez Street and classified it as a "bad leak" inside a building. However, Peoples did not dispatch a serviceman to investigate the report until 1:23 p.m., 45 minutes after the first report. At 1:26 p.m., Peoples was informed that there was no gas service at a house at 4924 W. Cortez Street. This report was dispatched to the same serviceman at 1:34 p.m., which was approximately his time of arrival on W. Cortez Street. Before the serviceman could get out of his truck, the house at 4930 W. Cortez Street exploded.

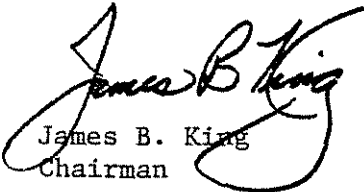
At the time Peoples initially received the call indicating an odor of gas, eight of the nine servicemen assigned to service the zone in which the accident occurred were at lunch and the other serviceman was checking out another reported leak. The report of the leak at 4930 W. Cortez Street was held until one of the servicemen returned from lunch.

Therefore, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the Peoples Gas Light and Coke Company:

Instruct its employees to respond immediately to reports of gas leaks that require prompt action to protect life and property and monitor its employees' response time to assure that these leak reports receive immediate attention. (Class I, Urgent Action)(P-78-15)

Instruct its supervisors in each zone to schedule their servicemen so that emergencies can be handled promptly at all times. (Class I, Urgent Action) (P-78-16)

KING, Chairman, McADAMS, HOGUE, and DRIVER, Members, concurred in the above recommendations.

By:   
James B. King  
Chairman