

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
WASHINGTON, D.C.

ISSUED: July 6, 1978

Forwarded to:

Mr. J. T. LaBoon
President
Atlanta Gas Light Company
235 Peachtree Street, N.E.
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

SAFETY RECOMMENDATION(S)

P-78-21 and 22

At 1 p.m., e.s.t., on December 1, 1977, a 12-inch, cast-iron high-pressure gas main owned by the Atlanta Gas Light Company (AGL) was ruptured by an 8-inch steel I-beam pile, which was driven through the pipe at a construction site in downtown Atlanta, Georgia. 1/

Within minutes, natural gas at 10-psig pressure migrated through the ground, entered sewer lines and electric conduit systems, and spread into nearby buildings. The gas did not ignite, but thousands of people were evacuated from nearby office buildings. A valve was closed at 2:45 p.m. to shut off the flow of gas to the ruptured main, and the area was declared safe at 4 p.m.

In this accident, the construction contractor had called the Utilities Protection Center (UPC), a local one-call notification system, to notify AGL of proposed excavation work at the site. The UPC instructed AGL to meet with the contractor at the construction site. When the representative from AGL arrived at the site, he did not meet with the contractor and located and marked only the existing service and main that supplied gas to the building being demolished at the site. The instructions given by the UPC to AGL were not fulfilled, and the complete information needed by the contractor was not given.

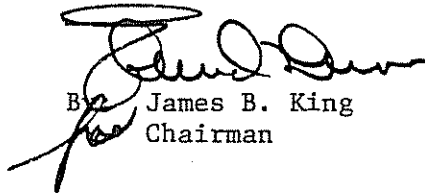
As a result of its investigation of this accident, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the Atlanta Gas Light Company:

1/ For more detailed information read "Pipeline Accident Report -- Atlanta Gas Light Company, High-Pressure Gas Main Rupture, Atlanta, Georgia, December 1, 1977" (NTSB-PAR-78-3)

Instruct its employees to respond precisely to notices of planned excavations provided by one-call notification systems. (Class II, Priority Action) (P-78-21)

Develop a sectionalizing program of its high-pressure distribution system so that the location of designated valves will reduce the size of an affected area during an emergency. (Class II, Priority Action) (P-78-22)

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



By James B. King
Chairman