

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
WASHINGTON, D.C.

ISSUED: July 6, 1978

Forwarded to:

Mr. A. J. Clark
President
George Hyman Construction Company
4930 Del Ray Avenue
Bethesda, Maryland 20014

SAFETY RECOMMENDATION(S)

P-78-18 and 19

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.

The George Hyman Construction Company was the contractor at the construction site and 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. The UPC asked the contractor to call back if an AGL representative did not see him at the construction site. The contractor did not meet with a representative from AGL and did not call UPC to verify another meeting.

The AGL did send a "locator" man to the site; however, he did not meet with the contractor and did not locate and mark all of the gas lines around the site. Because there were markings showing the locations of part of the underground gas facilities, the contractor did not determine before excavation work began that the gas facilities were completely located for this project.

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).

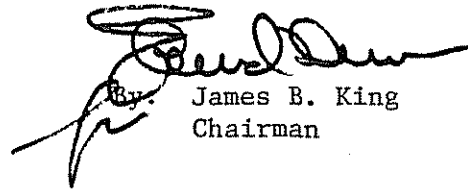
Although AGL did not mark the locations of all their underground facilities, the contractor did have plans showing the location of the gas line along the southwest side of the project. The contractor should have heeded this information.

As a result of its investigation of this accident, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the George Hyman Construction Company:

Require its employees to follow completely the instructions given by one-call notification systems. (Class II, Priority Action)(P-78-18)

Instruct its employees to ascertain by all possible means the locations of underground facilities before excavating at a construction site. (Class II, Priority Action)(P-78-19)

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


By. James B. King
Chairman