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Georgia Public Service Commission

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Atlanta, GA 30334-5701

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psc.ga.gov

Docket No. 37062

DOCKET# 37062
DOCUMENT# 223152

City of LaGrange Gas Department
200 Ridley Avenue
LaGrange, GA 30240

REF: Comprehensive Inspection # JS24-012

☐ Certified Mail ☐ Regular Mail ☒ Email

Attention: Mr. Patrick Bowie

On April 15, 2024, a representative of the Georgia Public Service Commission Pipeline/Facilities Safety Office conducted an inspection of your gas system. The enclosed inspection report numbered JS24-012 is provided for your information and file.

In conjunction with this inspection report, Staff has recommended the following enforcement(s):

Enforcement Action:

- ☒ Notice of Probable Violation
- ☐ Notice of Probable Violation with Proposed Civil Penalty
- ☒ Notice of Amendment

Enforcement Letter:

- ☐ Warning Letter
- ☐ Letter of Concern

Enforcement Notification:

- ☒ Observed Issue
- ☐ No Violation

Please review and respond to this report in accordance with the attached Instructions for Responding to Enforcement Actions, Enforcement Letters, and Notifications Issued by the Georgia Public Service Commission. Please refer to Docket No. 37062 in your response.

Please let me know if there are any questions concerning this report at (404) 985-4271 or mthebert@psc.ga.gov. Thank you for your continuing contribution toward increased pipeline safety.

Sincerely,

Michelle Thebert

Michelle L. Thebert
Director, Office of Pipeline Safety/Facilities Protection

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REPORT OF NATURAL GAS SAFETY

INSPECTION NO: JS24-012

OPERATOR: City of LaGrange Gas Department

INVESTIGATOR: Jason Smith

INSPECTION DATE: April 15, 2024 REPORT MAILED DATE: June 26, 2025

Any questions concerning this report may be directed to the above address or by telephoning (404) 463-6526.

1. PURPOSE OF INSPECTION

To conduct a comprehensive inspection of the Operators plans, programs, procedures, pipeline, and pipeline facilities for compliance with the minimum federal safety standards in 49CFR Parts 191 and 192.

2. CONTINUING VIOLATIONS

3. CLEARED VIOLATIONS

4. NEW VIOLATIONS

Violation	Description	Inspection#	Date
192.614	Damage prevention program.	JS24-012	4/15/2024
192.739	Pressure limiting and regulating stations: Inspection and testing.	JS24-012	4/15/2024
192.743(a)	Pressure relief devices at pressure limiting stations and pressure regulating stations must have...	JS24-012	4/15/2024

5. OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS/COMMENTS

SEE ATTACHED INSPECTION REPORT

From April 15-18, 2024, Pipeline Safety Staff reported to the City of LaGrange Gas Department to perform a comprehensive inspection of the Operator's plans, programs and pipeline facilities.

During this inspection, the Operator was represented by:
Alan Arrington - Gas Superintendent
Jeremy 'JP' Patrick - Assistant Gas Superintendent / Regulation Compliance
Gene Taylor - MGAG/SRCS (Consultant)

Commission Staff was represented by:
Jason Smith - Lead Inspector
Jack Hewitt - Pipeline Safety Inspector
Glen Murphy - Pipeline Safety Inspector

At the time of this inspection the City of LaGrange Gas Department had no previously existing probable violations.

NOTICE OF PROBABLE VIOLATION

As a result of this inspection Staff found that the City of LaGrange Gas Department was in probable violation of the minimum federal safety standards; specifically:

1. 49CFR §192.739 - Pressure limiting and regulating stations: Inspection and testing.
   (a) Each pressure limiting station, relief device (except rupture discs), and pressure regulating station and its equipment must be subjected at intervals not exceeding 15 months, but at least once each calendar year, to inspections and tests to determine that it is—
   (1) In good mechanical condition;
   (2) Adequate from the standpoint of capacity and reliability of operation for the service in which it is employed;
   (3) Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, set to control or relieve at the correct pressure consistent with the pressure limits of § 192.201(a); and
   (4) Properly installed and protected from dirt, liquids, or other conditions that might prevent proper operation.

   STAFFS COMMENTS: While reviewing regulator station inspection records, Staff found that the LaGrange Gas Department normally performed the inspections around September. On March 10, 2020, the Operator was performing maintenance on the Kia Distribution reg station and the Kia Main Plant reg station. Since they were already there, they decided to also conduct an entire inspection of both stations at the time.

   Sometime after this, the party responsible for performing regulator station inspections changed, and the normal September inspections of the two Kia reg stations did not take place in 2020. The next time both regulator stations were inspected was on September 30, 2021; more than 18 months later.

   PROBABLE VIOLATION: The City of LaGrange Gas Department failed to conduct inspections on each pressure regulating station and its equipment at intervals not exceeding 15 months, but at least once each calendar year.

2. 49CFR §192.743 - Pressure limiting and regulating stations: Capacity of relief devices.

(a) Pressure relief devices at pressure limiting stations and pressure regulating stations must have sufficient capacity to protect the facilities to which they are connected. Except as provided in § 192.739(b), the capacity must be consistent with the pressure limits of § 192.201(a). This capacity must be determined at intervals not exceeding 15 months, but at least once each calendar year, by testing the devices in place or by review and calculations.

STAFFS COMMENTS: While reviewing regulator station/relief valve inspection records, Staff found that the LaGrange Gas Department normally performed the inspections around September. On March 10, 2020, the Operator was performing maintenance on the Kia Distribution regulating station and the Kia Main Plant regulating station. Since they were already there, they decided to also conduct an entire inspection of both stations at the time.

Sometime after this, the party responsible for performing regulator station inspections changed, and the normal September inspections of the two Kia regulating stations did not take place in September 2020. The next time both regulator stations were inspected was on September 30, 2021; more than 18 months later. This means the capacity of the pressure relief devices on these two stations were not tested in place or reviewed at an interval not exceeding 15 months.

PROBABLE VIOLATION: The City of LaGrange Gas Department failed to ensure pressure relief devices have sufficient capacity to protect the facilities they are connected to by testing in place or by review and calculations at intervals not exceeding 15 months, but at least once each calendar year.

NOTICE OF AMENDMENT

49CFR §192.614 - Damage prevention program.
(c) The damage prevention program required by paragraph (a) of this section must, at a minimum:
(1) Include the identity, on a current basis, of persons who normally engage in excavation activities in the area in which the pipeline is located.

STAFFS COMMENTS: PHMSA comprehensive Inspection Form Question 4 states: Does the process specify how reports of Third-Party Activity and names of associated contractors or excavators are input back into the mail-outs and communications with excavators along the system?

LaGrange's O&M manual, section 12-M 'Damage Prevention Program' under (b)(1) states: LaGrange's damage prevention program identifies persons who normally engage in excavation activities in areas their pipeline is located by obtaining their names from the Georgia Utilities Protection Center.

The Operator's Public Awareness Program, section V.4.1 'Excavator Method(s) of Identification' states: Excavators in the area served are identified and obtained: "Via the applicable Utilities Protection Center (UPC) – the UPC maintains its database and queries can be made and reports generated that detail the name and addresses of excavator in our area. Typically, this report is generated once a year upon request of City of LaGrange". The City of Lagrange Gas Department uses the Georgia Utilities Protection Center (GA 811) excavator awareness program for their excavator messaging delivery.

Staff questioned how the City of LaGrange ensures parties that may not be identified by Georgia 811 because the excavator failed to request locate tickets are included in excavator public awareness mail-outs and communications. Staff reviewed excavators who were named in 3rd-party damages and found that some were not included in the Operators' mail outs.

The City of LaGrange Gas Department's current plan/procedures for compliance with §192.614(c)(1) fails to provide a means to identify all persons who engage in excavation activities in the areas where their pipeline is located. The Operator's plans/procedures should include a process on how excavators that are not identified by GA 811 for the mail-out list, either because they have not requested a locate ticket, or are involved with damage, are to be identified for excavator public awareness mail-outs and communications.

REQUIRED AMENDMENT: The City of LaGrange must amend their procedure for identifying, on a current basis, the people who normally engage in excavation activities in the area in which their pipelines are located who fail to request a locate ticket or who are involved in a pipeline damage.

OBSERVED ISSUE

§192.465 External corrosion control: Monitoring and remediation.
(d) Each operator must promptly correct any deficiencies indicated by the inspection and testing required by paragraphs (a) through (c) of this section. For onshore gas transmission pipelines, each operator must develop a remedial action plan and apply for any necessary permits within 6 months of completing the inspection or testing that identified the deficiency. Remedial action must be completed promptly, but no later than the earliest of the following: prior to the next inspection or test interval required by this section; within 1 year, not to exceed 15 months, of the inspection or test that identified the deficiency; or as soon as practicable, not to exceed 6 months, after obtaining any necessary permits.

STAFFS OBSERVED ISSUE: During this inspection Staff noted that the Operator had recorded low CP readings at their Grantville station in CY's 2020, 2021, and 2022. In CY 2023 the readings were recorded as being above the Operator's established -.850 criteria. While the Operator's records did indicate that they had low readings in successive years at the Grantville Station, they also indicated that the Operator was working on remediating the issue.

Please review and respond to this report in accordance with the attached Instructions for Responding to Enforcement Letters Issued by the Georgia Public Service Commission.

OPERATOR RESPONSE FORM

Operator Name: City of LaGrange

Informal Conference Requested: Yes ☐ No ☐

Docket Number: 37062

Responses required within **30 days of electronic mail.** Provide the following information for this report:

Response to Inspection Number:_____

Type of Enforcement Action(s) cited in report:			Informal Conference Requested	
☐ Notice of Probable Violation (NOPV)	☐ New	☐Continuing	☐ Yes	☐ No
☐ Notice of Amendment (NOA)	☐ New	☐Continuing	☐ Yes	☐ No
☐ Warning Letter	☐ New	☐Continuing	☐ Yes	☐ No
☐ Letter of Concern	☐ New	☐Continuing	☐ Yes	☐ No
☐ Observed Issue	☐ New	☐Continuing	☐ Yes	☐ No
☐ Proposed Civil Penalty	$ _____ PCP $ Amount (Total for report)			

Indicate below (A-E) based on the type of Enforcement Actions in this report: (Check all that apply)
Complete a separate copy of Page 2, Operator Response to Enforcement Action, for each cited item.

A. Response for **Notice of Probable Violation** (with and without proposed civil penalty):
   1. ☐ Written statement indicating that corrective measures have achieved Compliance or
   2. ☐ Written plan of action outlining the corrective measures that will be taken to achieve compliance and when compliance is anticipated.

B. Response for **NOA**:
   1. ☐ Contested: Attach written explanation, information, or other material in answer to the allegations in the Notice of Amendment stating your reasons for objecting to the NOA, in whole or in part; or
   2. ☐ Not Contested: Explanation, information, or other material believed to warrant modification of the NOA in whole or in part; or
   3. ☐ Written request for clarification. (Attached)

C. Response for **Continuing** and/or **Existing** violations:
   Current status, updates, expected completion dates, proposed modifications, etc., of the continuing and/or existing violations, even if this information was previously provided. Referencing a previously filed response letter, as status, updates, etc. alone is not sufficient for this response. Failure to provide this information may result in formal interrogatories from the Director through data requests.

D. Response for ☐ **Letter of Concern** / ☐ **Warning Letter**
   I acknowledge receipt of the Letter of Concern/Warning Letter:_____
   SIGNATURE / TITLE

   Additional Comments: (Optional)_____

E. Response for **Observed Issue** and **No Violation**: (Optional Response)
   Staff requests that the Operator acknowledge receipt of the Observed Issue/No Violation in writing, or by submitting an email to the FPU Director

Operator Response to Enforcement Action

Enforcement Action for:_____ ☐ New Violation ☐ Continuing Violation
Enter Code / Commission Rule (Complete a separate attachment for each enforcement action)

Enforcement Action(s) cited in report:	Conference Requested:	
☐ Notice of Probable Violation (NOPV)	☐ Yes ☐ No	$_____ Proposed Penalty for this violation
☐ Notice of Amendment (NOA)	☐ Yes ☐ No	
☐ Warning Letter	☐ Yes ☐ No	
☐ Letter of Concern	☐ Yes ☐ No	
☐ Observed Issue	☐ Yes ☐ No	
☐ Proposed Civil Penalty	☐ Yes ☐ No	

OPERATORS RESPONSE: _____

Response Provided by: _____ Date:_____
Name / Title

Internal use only:

Lead Inspector: _____ Date Response Reviewed:_____

Actions Acceptable: ☐ Yes ☐No Re-inspection Needed:☐ Yes ☐ No Clear Violation:☐ Yes ☐ No

Supervisor Review by:_____ Date Reviewed:_____

Additional Enforcement Recommended: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Director Review

Approved: ☐ Yes ☐No Schedule Special Follow-up Inspection: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Cleared Violation: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Comments:_____

Filings:
For all written responses or any other official correspondence, the Operator shall file the response at the following address:

Ms. Sallie Tanner, Executive Secretary
Georgia Public Service Commission
244 Washington Street, SW
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

The Operator must file **five (5)** copies of any response and/or official correspondence, as well as a CD with an electronic version of the response in Microsoft Word and/or a PDF, if applicable.

Informal Conference:
Any Operator who chooses to request an informal conference shall request such a conference through emailing the Director (michellet@psc.state.ga.us), calling the Director (404-463-2765), or selecting the "Request Conference" choice.

Civil Penalty Payments:
Certified check for the full amount of the recommended civil penalty or consent agreement amount made payable to the Georgia Public Service Commission. The Operator's name, applicable Docket No., and Inspection Report No. must be included on the certified check. Mail payment to:

Ms. Michelle Thebert, Director, Facilities Protection Unit
Georgia Public Service Commission
244 Washington Street
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

Hearing Requests:
The Operator has the right to request a hearing before the full Commission to contest the alleged probable violations, recommended civil penalties, and all other proposed actions of enforcement. A request for a hearing must be submitted in writing and in accordance with Commission Rule 515-2-1-.04. The Operator must include a statement of the issues that you intend to raise at the hearing. The issues may relate to the allegations, new information, proposed compliance order, proposed civil penalty, or any other recommendation for enforcement action. Please refer to Commission Rule 515-9-3-.11 and O.C.G.A. § 46-2-91 for assessment considerations upon which civil penalties are based. An operator's failure to specify an issue may result in a waiver of the right to raise that issue at hearing. The request must also indicate whether or not the Operator will be represented by counsel at the hearing.

Open Records and Trade Secret Filings:
The Operator is advised that any material provided to the Commission, and all materials prepared by the Commission, including the Notice of Probable Violations and any Orders issued in this case, may be considered public information and subject to disclosure under the Georgia Open Records Act (O.C.G.A. § 50-18-70 et seq.). If you believe that any portion of your response material is security sensitive, privileged, confidential or may cause your company competitive disadvantages and would qualify for protection under the Commission's "Trade Secret Rule" (Commission Rule 515-3-1-.11), you must, along with the complete original document clearly marked "TRADE SECRET" on each page, provide a second copy of the document with the portions you believe qualify for trade secret treatment redacted, and an explanation of why you believe the redacted information qualifies for such trade secret treatment. Should the Commission receive a request for disclosure of any "TRADE SECRET" material, you will be notified, if after review, the materials and your provided justification are deemed not to meet any exemptions provided in the Georgia Open Records Act. You may appeal the Commission's decision to release material at that time. Your appeal will stay the release of those materials until a final decision is made.

BEFORE THE GEORGIA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
STATE OF GEORGIA

IN THE MATTER OF:	)	
	)	
City of LaGrange Gas Department	)	**DOCKET NO. 37062**
	)	
	)	
	)	

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, hereby certify that I have this day served a copy of the within and foregoing document on the following persons via email and/or United States Mail as follows:

*Sallie Tanner, Executive Secretary
Georgia Public Service Commission
244 Washington Street, SW
Atlanta, GA 30334

*Patrick Bowie, City Manager
City of LaGrange
200 Ridley Avenue
LaGrange, GA 30241

*Michelle Thebert, Facilities Protection Unit Director
Georgia Public Service Commission
244 Washington Street, SW
Atlanta, GA 30334

Respectfully Submitted this 1st day of July 2025:

Cathy Nesbitt

Cathy Nesbitt, Administrative Assistant
Georgia Public Service Commission
Facilities Protection Unit
244 Washington Street, SW
Atlanta, GA 30334