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Georgia Public Service Commission

(404) 463-6526
(800) 282-5813

244 Washington Street, SW
Atlanta, GA 30334-5701

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DOCKET# 37035
DOCUMENT# 226313

Docket No. 37035

City of Claxton Gas Department
P. O. Box 829
204 West Railroad Street
Claxton, GA 30417

REF: DIMP Inspection # JS25-033

☐ Certified Mail ☐ Regular Mail ☒ Email

Attention: Terry Branch

On September 2, 2025, a representative of the Georgia Public Service Commission Pipeline/Facilities Safety Office conducted an inspection of your gas system. The enclosed inspection report numbered JS25-033 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. 37035 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: JS25-033

OPERATOR: City of Claxton Gas Department

INVESTIGATOR: Jason Smith

INSPECTION DATE: September 2, 2025 REPORT MAILED DATE: April 20, 2026

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

1. PURPOSE OF INSPECTION

To conduct an inspection of the Operator's Distribution Integrity Management Program (DIMP) for compliance with the minimum federal standards in 49CFR Part 192, SubPart P.

2. CONTINUING VIOLATIONS

Violation	Description	Inspection#	Date
192.1007(d)	Identify and implement measures to address risks.	AT22-009	2/21/2022
192.1011	What records must an operator keep?	AT22-009	2/21/2022
192.473(a)	Each operator whose pipeline system is subjected to stray currents shall have in effect a...	JH23-009	6/20/2023
Consent Agreement Pending	Operator is negotiating Consent Agreement with the FPU Director	DL24-017	6/1/2024

3. CLEARED VIOLATIONS

4. NEW VIOLATIONS

Violation	Description	Inspection#	Date
192.1007(a)(5)	Provide for the capture and retention of data on any new pipeline installed.	JS25-033	9/2/2025
192.1007(d)	Identify and implement measures to address risks.	JS25-033	9/2/2025

5. OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS/COMMENTS

SEE ATTACHED INSPECTION REPORT

On September 2, 2025, Pipeline Safety Staff began reviewing the City of Claxton Gas Department's annual 7100 reports, Operator Dashboard information from the PHMSA portal page and their DIMP (ver. 8.1).

On September 9, 2025, Staff reported to the city of Claxton to perform an inspection of the gas department's Distribution Integrity Management Plan (DIMP) for compliance with the minimum federal standards in 49CFR Part 192, SubPart P.

During this inspection the Operator was represented by:
Danny Hughes - Claxton Gas Superintendent
Bishop Bullard - Gas Department Foreman
Chris Cawley - MGAG/SRCS (consultant)

Commission Staff was represented by:
Jason Smith - Lead Inspector
Glen Murphy - Pipeline Safety Inspector
Brian Withrow- Pipeline Safety Inspector

At the time of this inspection the City of Claxton Gas Department was under three (3) previously existing probable violations and had a pending consent agreement. These violations are addressed under Follow-Up Inspection #JS25-032.

NOTICE OF PROBABLE VIOLATION

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

1. 49CFR §192.1007 - What are the required elements of an integrity management plan?
   (a) Knowledge. An operator must demonstrate an understanding of its gas distribution system developed from reasonably available information.
   (5) Provide for the capture and retention of data on any new pipeline installed. The data must include, at a minimum, the location where the new pipeline is installed and the material of which it is constructed.

   PHMSA's Gas Distribution Integrity Management (DIMP) inspection form - question #6.
   System Knowledge - New Pipe Data
   Does the data required for capture and retention include, at a minimum, the location where the new pipeline is installed and the material from which it is constructed?

   COMMENTS: While reviewing work orders to ensure the Claxton Gas Department personnel are capturing data on new pipeline and material being installed, Staff came across the following:

   - a work order for the installation of a new service at 300 N Ralph Street on 3/18/2024. They failed to capture the manufacturer serial/lot number info for the excess flow valve (EFV) and couplings.

   - a work order for the installation of a new gas line and meter installed at 17 S Peter Street on 8/10/2023. They failed to capture the manufacturer serial/lot number info for the weld tapping tee and couplings.

   PROBABLE VIOLATION: The Claxton Gas Department failed to capture and retain data of newly installed pipelines and the material of which it is constructed.

2. 49CFR §192.1007 - What are the required elements of an integrity management plan?
(d) Identify and implement measures to address risks. Determine and implement measures designed to reduce the risks from failure of its gas distribution pipeline. These measures must include an effective leak management program (unless all leaks are repaired when found).

PHMSA's Gas Distribution Integrity Management (DIMP) inspection form question #4.
Measures to Reduce Risk – Implementation
Do records demonstrate implementation of the measures, required by Part 192 Subpart P, to reduce risk?

COMMENTS: Claxton's DIMP version 8.1 (2025-07-30) under Section 6.2 'Risk Based Additional Actions' threat #3 'Excavation – Third Party Damage' it says Claxton acknowledges this threat but believes that the low relative risk posed by this threat on this section of the system is adequately addressed by its O&M plan and procedures.

Claxton's DIMP version 8.1 (2025-07-30) under "Section 11.1 Implementation Plan", Item b – Number of excavation damages states: "The City of Claxton Gas Superintendent or his designee investigates and documents excavation damages and collects this information and reports the damages online with Georgia Public Service Commission GUFPA database and files the required Gas Distribution System Annual Report Form (PHMSA F 7100.1-1) and GPSC Annual report as required. Copies of these reports are retained at the natural gas system offices."

While reviewing Claxton's annual 7100 reports Staff found that the Operator reported five (5) excavation damages, Four (4) of them were related to no notification to GA811 and the one (1) remaining related to locator error. Since their DIMP risk based additional action for calls for the 'Excavation – Third Party Damage' threat to be addressed by Claxton's current procedures, Staff asked the Operator if they could show that they have reported these third-party excavation damages to the GUFPA database. The Gas Superintendent attempted to retrieve the record of submission but was unsuccessful. Staff then searched the GUFPA database but were unable to find where Claxton Gas Department submitted reports for the 2024 excavation damages.

PROBABLE VIOLATION: Claxton Gas Department failed to implement the measures designed to reduce the risks.

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 Claxton

Informal Conference Requested: Yes ☐ No ☐

Docket Number: 37035

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 Claxton Gas Department	)	**DOCKET NO. 37035**
	)	
	)	
	)	

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

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

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

*The Honorable Terry Branch, Mayor
City of Claxton Gas Department
P.O. Box 829
204 West Railroad Street
Claxton, GA 30417
mayor@cityofclaxton.net

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

Respectfully Submitted this 23rd day of April 2026:

Cathy Nesbitt

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