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Georgia Public Service Commission

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244 Washington Street, SW
Atlanta, GA 30334-5701

FAX: (404) 463-6532
psc.ga.gov

Docket No. 37024

DOCKET# 37024
DOCUMENT# 226315

AGL - Operations and Engineering
Ten Peachtree Place, NE Suite 1000
Location 1365
Atlanta, GA 30309

REF: Incident Inspection # JH25-008

☐ Certified Mail ☐ Regular Mail

Attention: Walt Farrell

On January 2, 2025, a representative of the Georgia Public Service Commission Pipeline/Facilities Safety Office conducted an investigation of a reported incident involving your natural gas system. The enclosed inspection report numbered JH25-008 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 note that unless specifically addressed in the attached report, any previously existing probable violations were not addressed during this investigation, and no response is required for those items.

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. 37024 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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JASON SHAW, Chairman
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REPORT OF NATURAL GAS SAFETY

INSPECTION NO: JH25-008

OPERATOR: AGL - Gwinnett

INVESTIGATOR: Jack Hewitt

INSPECTION DATE: January 2, 2025 REPORT MAILED DATE: April 15, 2026

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

1. PURPOSE OF INSPECTION

To perform an investigation of a reported incident.

2. CONTINUING VIOLATIONS

Violation	Description	Inspection#	Date
192.605(a)	Each operator shall prepare and follow for each pipeline, a manual of written procedures for...	AT15-029	6/25/2015
192.605(a)	Each operator shall prepare and follow for each pipeline, a manual of written procedures for...	JH22-007	2/28/2022
192.615(c)	Each operator shall establish and maintain liaison with appropriate fire, police, and other...	JH22-007	2/28/2022

3. CLEARED VIOLATIONS

4. NEW VIOLATIONS

5. OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS/COMMENTS

SEE ATTACHED INSPECTION REPORT

From November 14, 2024 through July 9. 2025 Pipeline Safety Staff performed an investigation of a reported incident at Highway 78, from N Crestview Drive SW to Summit Chase Drive SW near Grayson, GA in Gwinnett County.

During this investigation the Operator was represented by Ralph McCollum, Senior Compliance Engineer.

Commission Staff was represented by:
Jack Hewitt - Lead Inspector
Jeff Baggett – Supervisor, Facilities Protection Unit

STAFFS INVESTIGATION

On November 12, 2024, AGL contractor employees (SEC) were working to isolate and retire approximately 1,340 feet of 4-inch steel main along Highway 78, from N Crestview Drive SW to Summit Chase Drive SW near Grayson, GA in Gwinnett County. The operation involved a cross-compression activity to remove the natural gas from the isolated section of the main and inject it back into the active system. After completing this cross-compression activity, a venturi was set up to remove any remaining residual gas from the retired section of the main before sealing and capping the ends, during this process it was determined that a miscommunication among the contractor employees regarding the removal of the residual gas making it safe for the welder and welder helper to enter the trench to install a weld-over to complete the project. Approximately five minutes into the welding process of installing the weld-over on the control fitting, a flash fire ignited due to the remaining residual gas in the retired section of the main. Both contractor employees were wearing their personal protective equipment (PPE); however, the helper had removed his gloves and helmet to drink some water when the flash fire occurred, resulting in burns to his face and hands. Both contractor employees were taken to separate hospitals. One contractor employee was treated and released, while the other was admitted to the hospital the following morning. At that point, AGL notified the National Response Center (NRC) under NRC Report Number 1416254. An additional NRC Report Number 1416456 was created for the same event following a supplemental call to the NRC to update the initial telephonic notice.

Staff concluded that both the Operator and their contractor had qualified individuals working at the excavation, or supervising the operation, which were trained and qualified to perform the covered tasks that were being performed.

NOTICE OF PROBABLE VIOLATION

As a result of this investigation Staff found that Atlanta Gas Light Company was in probable violation of the minimum federal safety standards; specifically:

49 CFR §192.605 Procedural manual for operations, maintenance, and emergencies
(a) Each operator shall prepare and follow for each pipeline, a manual of written procedures for conducting operations and maintenance activities and for emergency response. For transmission lines, the manual must also include procedures for handling abnormal operations.

STAFFS COMMENTS: The Operator's Procedures Manual in Division 2 Section 19.2.2 states

"Preventing Accidental Ignition – Safety Precautions

All sources of ignition will be prohibited in or around regulator, building or vaults, border stations, large volume metering installations, or other locations where volumes of gas may be vented to the atmosphere or combustible mixtures may be present. Only after suitable precautions have been taken to determine that combustible mixtures or a hazardous atmosphere are not present will routine maintenance, repairs or construction work begin; for example, welding, cutting or other hot work in regulator vaults or other confined spaces (See Division II, Section "19.3 Working in Confined Spaces" on page 5). Suitable precautions may include but are not limited to sniffing the air to determine if gas is present, listening for the sound of gas blowing, checking the atmosphere with a Combustible Gas Indicator (CGI), etc. Welding or the use of a cutting torch will not be permitted on piping or piping components containing a combustible mixture of gas and air in the area of work."

PROBABLE VIOLATION: This investigation concluded that the Operator's Qualified Personnel as well as the Contractor's Supervisory Personnel failed to follow their company approved procedures when they failed to insure that the work space was safe and a combustible atmosphere did not exist prior to allowing the welder and welder helper to enter the work space. The failure to follow the company approved procedure led to the injuries suffered by the welder and the welder helper.

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: ATLANTA GAS LIGHT COMPANY

Informal Conference Requested: Yes ☐ No ☐

Docket Number: 37024

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	$_____
☐ Notice of Amendment (NOA)	☐ Yes ☐ No	Proposed Penalty for this violation
☐ 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:	)	
	)	
Atlanta Gas Light Company	)	**DOCKET NO. 37024**
	)	
	)	
	)	

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

* Walt Farrell, President and CEO
Southern Company Gas
Ten Peachtree Place, NE,
Atlanta, GA 30309
wffarell@southernco.com

*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