

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

RESPONSE OF COLUMBIA GAS OF MASSACHUSETTS TO THE
FIRST SET OF INFORMATION REQUESTS FROM THE D.P.U.
PIPELINE ENGINEERING AND SAFETY DIVISION

D.P.U. 19-PL-07 – Merrimack Valley Incident (9/13/18)

Date: September 25, 2019

Responsible: Kathy Silver, Manager Operations Compliance

IR-PL-1-20: Please provide the following regarding the communication and coordination of emergency response to the incident:

- a) Steps taken to develop a system of communication and coordination of response upon initial notification of incident;
- b) A detailed list of the liaisons implemented during the emergency response, including the agency and CMA contact for each;
- c) Detailed timeline including but not limited to:
 - i) Personnel notification times (specific to each individual);
 - ii) Personnel movement and actions taken (specific to each individual);
 - iii) Times of all events taking place (as detailed as possible);
 - iv) Times of notification calls to additional personnel;
 - v) Emergency response development and implementation;
 - vi) Times and actions taken at the scene of the incident and at operations center; and
- d) Detailed statement of what occurred on September 13, 2018, from each person referred to in IR-PL 1-15(e).

Response:

- a) Steps taken to develop a system of communication and coordination of response upon initial notification of incident;**
- b) A detailed list of the liaisons implemented during the emergency response, including the agency and CMA contact for each;**
- c) Detailed timeline**

Response (a), (b), (c): Gas Systems Control in Columbus, Ohio (which provides remote monitoring service to CMA) received two high-pressure alarms – one at 4:04 p.m. and the other at 4:05 p.m. – from the low-pressure distribution system's Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system, a remote monitoring system that uses telemetry readings to monitor overall system pressure. At 4:06 p.m., Gas Systems Control called the on-call technician for M&R in Lawrence about the alarms. The Lawrence technician immediately notified all Lawrence M&R technicians, who then immediately moved to perform field checks on the affected distribution system's 14 regulator stations to identify and shut down any

station that was continuing to feed the system. CMA shut down the Winthrop regulator station by about 4:30 p.m., within 25 minutes of being notified.

In addition, construction personnel at the Salem Street tie-in site recognized the over-pressure situation and contacted the Lawrence Operations Center. The Manager of the Lawrence Operations Center and the Field Operations Leader immediately headed to the tie-in site. Upon their arrival at the tie-in site, the Manager of the Lawrence Operations Center and the Field Operations Leader worked with the construction crew to assess the situation and decided (in consultation with the CMA General Manager of Operations and the CMA Manager of Field Engineering) to isolate and shut down the affected low-pressure distribution system. The Manager of the Lawrence Operations Center appointed the Field Operations Leader to serve as the NiSource Incident Commander and remained at the tie-in site to assist the Incident Commander.

Operating from the tie-in site, the Incident Commander directed the Company's efforts to isolate and shut down the system. The Incident Commander worked with Engineering to identify the valves that would need to be closed to isolate the system. The Incident Commander then dispatched all available Lawrence Distribution crews to close those valves. The Manager of the Lawrence Operations Center conferred with the Lawrence deputy fire chief who was at the tie-in site about the system shutdown. These efforts led to the shutdown of the entire low-pressure distribution system by 7:17 p.m. The Company also worked quickly to shut meters at businesses and residences, assisted emergency responders with evacuations, and initiated venting of the system to reduce system pressure.

Beginning at 8:39 p.m., the Incident Commander sent pipefitters to the extremities of the system to ensure that the gas was not back fed and that the low-pressure system was fully shut down. In addition, during the night, the M&R group worked at the Incident Commander's direction to lock in all 14 regulator stations in the affected distribution system, as an extra measure to confirm that the system was shut down. A small amount of pressure was detected in the system. Because a crew had had difficulty closing a valve at the Massachusetts Avenue LP regulator station, the Incident Commander dispatched a crew, which completed the closure of that valve at 6:26 a.m. At 6:27 a.m., all 14 regulator stations were locked in and the low-pressure system was confirmed shut down for the Lawrence area.

The NiSource CEO and the CMA President were notified of the incident by 4:40 p.m.

The CMA Director of Government Affairs served as the Company's principal liaison with senior public emergency management officials. Traveling from Boston amid the heavy traffic resulting from the incident, he arrived between 6:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. at the Lawrence Emergency Operations Center (EOC), where a unified command had been established by the State Fire Marshal and the Director of the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA). While en route, he was in contact with government officials, emergency responders, and the Manager of the Lawrence Operations Center by phone. Once he arrived, he remained at the

EOC, facilitating communications between the Company and public officials. Later in the evening, the Manager of the Lawrence Operations Center went to the EOC, where he spoke to the Governor. Other senior Company representatives also arrived at the EOC during the evening of September 13, including the CMA President, the NiSource Executive Vice President for Gas Segment, the CMA Director of Communications and Community Relations, the CMA General Manager of Operations, the NiSource Manager of the Integration Center, and the NiSource Director of Corporate Communications.

Beginning on the night of September 13, the CMA Manager of Regulatory Affairs interacted with several pipeline inspectors from the Department and worked with Engineering to identify affected customers. For more information about the Company's interaction with the Department and the National Response Center, see the Company's response to IR-PL-1-18.

For additional information, see a timeline of the incident enclosed as Attachment IR-PL-1-20.

d) Detailed statement of what occurred on September 13, 2018, from each person referred to in IR-PL 1-15(e).

Certain individuals involved in the response to the over-pressurization were interviewed by the NTSB. Those interview transcripts are available to DPU as a party to the NTSB investigation.