



Idaho Public Utilities Commission

P.O. Box 83720, Boise, ID 83720-0074

Brad Little, Governor

Eric Anderson, President
John R. Hammond, Jr., Commissioner
Edward Lodge, Commissioner

May 25, 2023

Report # I202303

Pat Darras – Vice President of Engineering & Operations Services
Intermountain Gas Company
400 N 4th St.
Bismarck, ND 58501

Dear Mr. Darras:

On May 17, 2023, the Idaho Public Utilities Commission (“Commission”), Pipeline Safety Division (“Staff”), conducted a Construction inspection on service lines 317-24833 & 317-50850 of Intermountain Gas Company (“IGC”) pursuant to Chapter 601 of Title 49, United States Code.

Staff observed that some of the Idaho natural gas distribution system owned and operated by IGC was out of compliance on item(s). This results in probable violations of the pipeline safety regulations Title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 192. The probable violations are as follows:

PROBABLE VIOLATION(S)

1. 49 CFR §192.605 Procedural manual for operations, maintenance, and emergencies.

- (a) *General.* 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. This manual must be reviewed and updated by the operator at intervals not exceeding 15 months, but at least once each calendar year. This manual must be prepared before operations of a pipeline system commence. Appropriate parts of the manual must be kept at locations where operations and maintenance activities are conducted.

IGC -Squeeze-Off of Plastic Pipe – OPS 309

2.2 Ground the squeeze-off tool with a static electric grounding device before placing the squeeze-off tool on the pipe, apply a soapy water solution and wet non synthetic cloth (such as cotton or burlap material) upstream of squeeze location, or commercially available electrostatic discharge fluid to the pipe surface on the squeeze location to provide for dissipation of static charge to the ground.

IGC -Equipment Calibration, Maintenance, and Testing – OPS 501

1.1. Company personnel and contractors are responsible for the calibration, maintenance, and testing of instruments used on company facilities, and to keep appropriate records of the date and type of calibration, maintenance, or testing performed.

6.1. Contractors completing work for MDUG shall calibrate/maintain their equipment per the frequencies and instructions provided in the MDUG Instrument Calibration Requirements List.

6.2. Equipment calibration expiration dates of instruments and equipment used on MDUG gas facilities shall be identified by a tag (e.g., sticker).

Finding(s):

During construction inspection on Service Line # 317-24833 & 317-50850 at 11170 & 11182 Newton St. Caldwell, Idaho, a contractor representing IGC squeezed a service line without using a soapy water solution and wet non synthetic cloth (such as cotton or burlap material) upstream of squeeze location, or commercially available electrostatic discharge fluid. Additionally, crew members were in the process of using expired calibration fusing equipment, Cradle (1/12/23), Plate Heater (3/31/23) and Facer (1/12/23) until IPUC inspector discovered the expiration tags. Pictures available upon request of expired calibration tags.

REQUESTED ACTIONS

A reply to this correspondence is required no later than **45 days** from the date of this letter. Please submit a written reply providing a statement of all relevant facts including a complete description of the corrective action(s) taken with respect to the above referenced probable violations, and all actions to be taken to prevent future failures in these areas of concern. This written reply must be signed by an IGC official with authority to bind the company.

Please send all documents to our office at 11331 W. Chinden Blvd, Boise, Idaho 83714-1021. Be advised that all material you submit in response to this enforcement action may be a public record and subject to disclosure under Idaho's Public Records Law. *See* Idaho Code §§74-101 et seq.

If you wish to dispute any of the above referenced potential violations, you have the right to appear before the Pipeline Safety Division in an informal conference before July 9, 2023, at the above address. You have the right to present relevant documents and evidence to the Pipeline Safety Division at that conference. The Pipeline Safety Division will make available to you any evidence which indicates that you may have violated the law, and you will have the opportunity to rebut this evidence. *See* Commission Orders 35095 and 35334, which can be found at <https://puc.idaho.gov/>. If you intend to request an informal conference, please contact the Pipeline Safety Division no later than June 24, 2023.

If you wish to dispute any of the allegations in this Notice, but do not want an informal conference, you may send the Pipeline Safety Division a written reply to this Notice. This written reply must be filed with the Commission on or before July 9, 2023, and must be signed by an IGC official with authority to bind the company. The reply must include a complete statement of all relevant facts, and all documentation, evidence, and argument IGC submits to refute any of the above referenced probable violations.

If you do not respond to this notice by July 9, 2023, you may be subject to any Commission enforcement action as allowed under Idaho law, including but not limited to, potential civil penalties of up to two hundred thousand (\$200,000). *See* Idaho Code §61-712A.

If you have any questions concerning this Notice, please contact me at (208) 334-0333. All written responses should be addressed to me at the above address, or you may fax your response to (208) 334-3762.

We appreciate your attention to this matter and your effort to promote pipeline safety.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Brooks", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Jeff Brooks
Pipeline Safety, Program Manager
Idaho Public Utility Commission