UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *
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MERRIMACK VALLEY RESIDENTIAL GAS *
FIRES AND EXPLOSIONS * Accident No.: PLD18MR003
SEPTEMBER 13, 2018 *
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Interview of: STEVE McGINNITY

Northern Essex Community College
Lawrence, Massachusetts

Friday,
September 21, 2018

APPEARANCES:

ROGER EVANS, Investigator in Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

JAMES SOUTHWORTH, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

DARREN LEMMERMAN, Investigator
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration
(PHMSA)

RICHARD WALLACE, Director, Pipeline Safety Division
Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities

ANGELA MOTLEY
Department of Public Utilities

MATT CYR
Department of Public Utilities

DAVID NELSON, Operations Manager
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SHEILA DOIRON
Columbia Gas

THOMAS TOBIN, Esq.
Wilson Elser Law Firm
(On behalf of Mr. McGinnity)

I N D E X

I N T E R V I E W

(8:50 a.m.)

MR. EVANS: We're on the record with Stephen McGinnity. Good morning. Today is September 21, 2018. It is now 8:50 a.m. in the morning. My name is Roger Evans. I'm an investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board out of Washington, D.C. We're at the Northern Essex Community College in Lawrence, Massachusetts.

This interview is being conducted as part of the investigation into the multi-resident fire explosions that occurred on September 13th, 2018. This is Case Number, for the NTSB, PLD18MR003. This interview is being recorded and may be transcribed at a later date. A copy of the transcript will be provided to the interviewee for review prior to being entered into the public docket.

Mr. McGinnity, you are permitted to have one other person present during the interview. This is a person of your choice, supervisor, friend, family member or nobody at all, or an attorney of course. Please state the spelling of your name, and who you have chosen to be present during this interview.

MR. McGINNITY: Stephen McGinnity. It's S-t-e-p-h-e-n, M-c-G-i-n-n-i-t-y.

MR. EVANS: Thank you. And who have you chosen to represent you?

MR. NELSON: Tom Tobin.

MR. McGINNITY: Tom Tobin.

MR. TOBIN: It's Tom Tobin, Steve.

MR. McGINNITY: Tom Tobin.

MR. EVANS: Okay. For the transcriber, we have a number of individuals on the phone today. And we have some people in this room as well. So I just want to make you aware of that, because it may be difficult to transcribe this one. We're going to have everyone speak up as best they can.

Mr. Tobin, can you please provide us your spelling of your name and your affiliation?

MR. TOBIN: Sure. My name is Tom Tobin, T-o-b-i-n, and I'm attorney with the Wilson Elser Law Firm.

MR. EVANS: Thank you. Now I'd like to have everyone else on the phone introduce themselves, and we'll start with Darren.

MR. LEMMERMAN: Darren, Darren Lemmerman, D-a-r-r-e-n, Lemmerman, L-e-m-m-e-r-m-a-n. I'm a PHMSA pipeline safety accident investigator.

MR. EVANS: Okay. And then, Mr. Wallace?

MR. WALLACE: Richard Wallace, R-i-c-h-a-r-d, W-a-l-l-a-c-e. I'm the director of the Pipeline Safety Division for the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities.

MR. EVANS: Okay. Now I'd like to go around the room, starting with my left, and have those present introduce themselves again with their name, spelling of the name, and affiliation.

MR. NELSON: David Nelson, D-a-v-i-d, N-e-l-s-o-n, Columbia

Gas Operations Manager.

MR. SOUTHWORTH: I'm Jim Southworth, J-i-m, S-o-u-t-h-w-o-r-t-h. I'm an accident investigator with the Railroad, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Office of the NTSB in Washington, D.C.

MR. CYR: I'm Matt Cyr, M-a-t-t, C-y-r, with the Department of Public Utilities.

MS. MOTLEY: My name is Angela Motley. I'm with the Department of Public Utilities. A-n-g-e-l-a, M-o-t-l-e-y.

MR. EVANS: Thank you. And thank you, Mr. McGinnity, for agreeing to speak with us today.

INTERVIEW OF STEPHEN McGINNITY

BY MR. EVANS:

Q. Before we get into the questioning, we'd like to get a little bit about your background. And could you tell us what your job title is, how long you've been with the firm? Maybe go back like 10 years or so, you know, if you've had different positions and things, and we'll start with that.

A. Okay. I'm an M&R tech in Lawrence Division. I've been with the company for 33 years. I've been, I was in Distribution for the first five years. And then I got a job, I took a job in a plant, it was Plant M&R at the time, so I was really in the L&G plant, propane plant, and did M&R, commercial meters, and --

Q. Okay. Okay, great. One of the things about the interview process, if you have any acronyms that you give, can you tell us what those acronyms are? M&R is meters and --

A. Regulation.
Q. And regulation, okay. I'm going to make sure of that. Do you have anyone that reports to you?
A. No.
Q. Okay. And who do you report to?
A. Jeff Croke.
Q. Okay, thanks. Now I would like to just have you go through the day of the 13th, where you were at when you heard of this incident, and just tell us what transpired.
A. It was three of us together, me, Tommy and Larry.
Q. And full names, please?
A. Larry Guy and Tom Lafoe. Larry Guy was the man on call. When Gas Control called him, we were all together, and he said, we have high pressure in two telemeter stations. So I said, two at once is an issue. One could be communication, but nonetheless. I said, we got to go and check these stations. So I sent Tommy towards Andover, Tom Lafoe. I sent -- I told Larry Guy to go back and get a company truck. We were in our personal vehicles. It was after work. It was after hours.

And I started, we started investigating the vaults that are closest to those telemeters. So I went to Boyd Street first, in Lawrence. Them I went to Amherst and Beacon Street in Lawrence. Then I went to State Street in Lawrence. Then I went to Union and Winthrop, in Lawrence, where I found the problem.
Q. Okay. And when you say you found the problem, describe the

problem for us, please.
A. When I got there, there's a ERX, which is a recording device.
Q. Right.
A. For the station. And it was reading 1.78 inches of water column on the outlet, which I knew right away was wrong, because the regulators sounded like they were full open. They were really whistling through. You could tell they were running hard.
Q. And what would you have expected to see on that ERX?
A. Ten inches of water column.
Q. Okay. And what happened next?
A. I backed the regulator out. The worker regulator, I backed it out until it locked up, and it stopped. But it was still not reading any -- I was still only reading, like one point something inches. I don't remember exactly at that time, which I knew something was still wrong, because there was no reading on that main.
Q. Okay. And in your mind, what was going through your mind as far as, you know, well I wonder what could be causing this? Did you have scenarios you had in your head that were, you know?
A. Well at first, I was, I didn't know if that was the only station that was running, because I didn't know about any work being done around the area. So we continued on, because we called Gas Control, and they said the pressure was still high in the telemeters, so it didn't drop it down. So we continued over to Andover, to Union and North Main, and checked that pressure, which

was also high. Then we went to High and Haverhill, which was high. And then we went to High and Harding, and by then, like, everybody's calling. Everybody's calling, and there's chaos everywhere. It was really difficult to get around by this time.
Q. And when you saw these, the -- kind of like the chaos that ensued, what were your thoughts as to a possible reason why this had happened?
A. I really didn't know at first, because I was -- I couldn't figure out why that was the only pit running, and I wouldn't have thought it would make it as far out in Andover as we were getting calls from.
Q. I see.
A. That's why I thought there was more involved.
Q. Right. In your career, had you seen anything similar to this?
A. No. Never nothing like this.
Q. Okay. And you said, you had Larry Guy and Tom Lafore?
A. Lafoe.
Q. L-a-f-o-e, like that?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. And both of these gentleman, what are their job titles?
A. Larry is actually the plant electrician.
Q. Okay.
A. And Tommy is my equal. He's an M&R tech, meter and

regulation.
Q. And he's been with the company a long time as well?
A. Tommy's been here for, I think like 28 years.
Q. Okay.
A. But Larry's only been there for like six years.
Q. A mere rookie.
A. Yes.
(Laughter.)
BY MR EVANS:
Q. Okay. Once the -- you know, when you started going around and looking at different regulator stations, did you have any involvement with looking at the other 13 regulators?
A. Some of them, a few of them, Tommy went to, because we were in our own personal vehicles for a little while.
Q. Right.
A. Till Larry came, caught up with me, with a company truck. And Tommy was still in his. And then I got -- we got calls that everybody was down at the tie-in hull at Salem and Park -- Salem and Union. So we all converged down there, to try to figure out what was going on.
Q. And when you went down there, did you have a hunch as to what may have caused all this once you had gone down to the Salem and Union?
A. I had an idea that something happened in that tie-in hull that caused this, because it wasn't a regulator failure, in my

eyes, because the way I backed it out, and it locked right up. So I knew something happened in that tie-in hull, but I don't know what they were doing. I didn't know what they were doing. I didn't even know they were there.

Q. Okay. But you knew at this point that it wasn't anything to do with regulators?

A. Right.

Q. Okay.

A. Failure-wise, to me, in my eyes.

Q. Okay. And the procedures that you use to back out a regulator, to lock a regulator up, is that OQ item for you?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. Do you know the procedure number?

A. Not offhand.

Q. Okay. Do you know what it's called, the name of that procedure? If you don't know, it's okay. No --

A. I don't know exactly what it's called.

Q. Okay. Okay. Appreciate that information. And I'm going to -- I have plenty more questions, but I'm just, I'm going to go to the, ask the next person, whoever has more questions. So I'm finished for right now.

MR. NELSON: Dave Nelson.

BY MR. NELSON:

Q. Do you -- when you shut the, or you backed the worker off, and stopped the flow, do you know what time that was, or?

A. I don't know exactly, but --
Q. Approximately?
A. But if I was to guess, it was probably 4:30.
Q. And when Mr. Evans asked you about the procedure and/or your operator qualifications, was it the OQ that you don't know the number on?
A. Yeah. I don't know those numbers offhand, to be honest with you.
MR. NELSON: That's all I have for now.
MR. EVANS: Okay. Anyone on the phone have any questions?
MR. WALLACE: Richard, R-i-c-h-a-r-d, Wallace, W-a-l-l-a-c-e. I have one question.
BY MR. WALLACE:
Q. Procedures, did you have access to the procedures whenever you went out to the regulator stations?
A. Yes. We have them on our MDTs in our truck.
Q. When was the last time you reviewed those procedures?
A. Just this morning.
Q. Prior to the incident.
A. Probably two days before that.
Q. Did you notice anything peculiar about those procedures?
A. No.
Q. Okay, thank you.
MR. WALLACE: That's all I have, Roger. Do you need me to stay on the call? I have another conference call. If I could

jump off and get ready for that, I would appreciate it. Angela can answer any questions and help you out. And if she has any questions, she can contact me.

MR. EVANS: That'll be fine. Thank you, Richard. Appreciate it.

MR. WALLACE: All right, thank you.

MR. EVANS: Bye.

MR. WALLACE: All right. Have a great day.

MR. EVANS: Thank you.

MR. LEMMERMAN: This is Darren Lemmerman.

BY MR. LEMMERMAN:

Q. So you had said you backed off the regulators to stop your flow so they locked up. Did you leave them in that position, or did, at any point, did you turn them back on?

A. No. I left them like that. I only touched the working, control regulator. I did not touch the monitor.

Q. Okay.

(Pause.)

MR. EVANS: Anything else, Darren?

MR. LEMMERMAN: So by only -- yeah.

BY MR. LEMMERMAN:

Q. So only locking the worker regulator up, would the monitor start operating after that?

A. No, it wouldn't.

Q. So basically you're -- the Winthrop station basically didn't

operate from that point on through, basically till present?
A. Correct.
Q. Okay. Thank you.
MR. LEMMERMAN: No further questions.
MS. MOTLEY: Angela Motley.
BY MS. MOTLEY:
Q. I'd just like to start off just by getting some basic information about the low pressure system, and the regulator stations feeding the low pressure system. And there were 14 regulator stations involved in this incident. Can you tell me the normal configuration of a regulator station, meaning, you have a wide open monitor, a worker, who --
A. Yeah. Most of ours is a wide open monitor and a working regulator.
Q. And do you have regulator stations where you have both the monitor and worker in the same pit?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. Do you happen to know, out of the 14, how many you have with that type of arrangement?
A. I think three.
Q. Regarding the regulator station at South Union, can you tell me what the normal set points are of the worker and the monitor, are?
A. The worker's usually set at 10 inches, and the monitor's set at 13 inches.

Q. Do you happen to know what the MAOP of the low pressure system distribution system is?
A. Fourteen inches water column.
Q. Can you tell me what record or documentation provides you information regarding the MAOP of the system?
A. We have inventory record cards in each station.
Q. Those cards, is that information provided for every station?
A. Yes. Well --
Q. Currently.
A. Do you mean --
Q. Is that information --
A. The information is only for that station.
Q. Right.
A. Okay.
Q. So, at every station, that information is currently available?
A. Yes.
Q. Let's see, I'd just like to speak a little bit about your -- let me go back. Out of those 14 stations, are there any regulator stations that are set at the MAOP? Which you said was --
A. Yes, 14.
Q. Fourteen inches.
A. Yes.
Q. Have there -- to your knowledge, have there been any occasions when the monitor was set above 14 inches, in the past,

or currently?
A. Yes.
Q. And how high was that, would that setting have been?
A. Within a half an inch.
Q. So 14½, you're saying --
A. 14½.
Q. -- was the max?
A. Yes.
Q. One of the questions that was asked was about procedures. And you said you reviewed them this morning. Okay. Do you recall, in the procedure, the section that speaks about the setting of the monitor?
A. Uh-huh. Yes.
Q. Does the procedure allow you to set the monitor above the MAOP?
A. It does say that.
Q. Okay. Prior to this morning, were you aware of that?
A. Yes.
Q. Did you have any concerns that the procedure stated that?
A. No.
Q. So you are aware that the MAOP of the low pressure system is 14 inches?
A. Yes.
Q. Do you -- are you aware that operators are not allowed to operate above the MAOP?

A. Right. Yes.
Q. Okay. Regarding the annual inspections that you perform, in addition -- let me back up. In addition to annual inspections, what other opportunities do you, or occasions do you visit the regulator station?
A. We go monthly to download the ERX recorders that are in them.
Q. And what do you do with the information that's provided?
A. We download it into the computer and I just put it on the M drive, and I think the engineers look at it.
Q. Okay. So you just basically download the information, you don't --
A. For them.
Q. -- review it or any of that kind of thing, right?
A. Not unless we feel like something's wrong, like the pressure's off or something.
Q. And when you say, pressures are off, off from what you originally had set it at, or what do you mean by that?
A. Yeah. Like if it's a little low or something, you know, when it starts getting colder, you might have to turn them up a little. Or if it's getting warmer, you'll have to turn them down.
Q. So do you give -- who gives you instructions on whether you lower them or raise the pressures?
A. You mean when I'm there, or?
Q. Yeah. Right.
A. No one.

Q. No one. So --
A. No. I try to keep them where they want them, where I get --
Q. And that information is --
A. Comes from Engineering. They -- you know, they set what they deem necessary for that system.
Q. Okay. And how is that information relayed to you?
A. I usually get a paper every year, what they want the summer and winter settings at.
Q. You mentioned the ERX recorder. At the 14 stations that were part of this incident, are there any stations that do not have the ERX unit?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. Do you recall how many stations do not have it?
A. Five.
Q. Okay. Do you recall any stations that had the ERX but they were removed for a reason, or some reason?
A. We did have some that used to have ERXs that went under water.
Q. Okay. So they removed due to water --
A. Yeah.
Q. -- infiltration into the vault?
A. Yeah. They got wet.
Q. Okay. So do you know if the company was, had plans to replace them, or address water issues, or anything of that nature, or no information provided to you regarding --

A. Well, a couple of them that they were trying to decide on -- the system had enough in them, by law. We were covered. So they didn't want to keep putting them back in those wet locations, because they keep going through them. They don't stand up to water.
Q. Okay.
A. So we weren't going to put them back in those ones.
Q. So how high was the water getting in those particular locations, would you say?
A. A couple feet. Yeah.
Q. When you perform annual inspections, what records are provided to you to perform or -- to perform the inspection, available at the site?
A. Available at the site?
Q. Uh-huh
A. Those would be on our MDT. We can bring up all the standards.
Q. Okay. So the procedures are available?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. What else do you have available to you?
A. We have the inventory record card in the vault itself.
Q. And explain what the inventory record card is again, please.
A. It has all the information of all the components in the vault itself, the regulators, spring ranges, size of the regulators, serial numbers, filters, recorders --

Q. MAOP?
A. -- valves, MAOP --
Q. Set points? Minimum, max?
A. Yes. Min and max.
Q. And what else? Critical valve information, is that available?
A. Yes. And there's an isometric drawing of all the piping.
Q. The critical valve drawing, or critical valve information, are you provided, during your inspections, with the number of turns required to operate the critical valve?
A. It wouldn't say on the card how many turns. It would depend on the type of valve it is.
Q. So if it's a multi-turn valve, how would you know how many turns would be required to open or close the valve?
A. You turn it till it's tight, basically.
Q. I'm just going to step back in time a little bit. The -- I think, I believe it was the mass aft location during the incident the critical valve was operated. Are you aware --
A. A mass aft by someone. It was not me.
Q. Okay. So you wouldn't have any information about the mass aft? Because I thought that the mass aft critical valve didn't close completely, and that an outlet valve was operated. Are you familiar with that at all?
A. Yes. I know what you're talking about there.
Q. Okay. So --

A. That critical valve supposedly was passing a little still.
Q. Okay. Is that a multi-turn valve, do you know?
A. No. It's a quarter-turn.
Q. Quarter turn. Okay.
(Discussion redacted.)
MR. TOBIN: Can we go off the record real quick?
MR. EVANS: Off the -- excuse me -- off the record.
(Off the record.)
(On the record.)
MR. EVANS: Back on the record with Stephen McGinnity.
Transcriber, please disregard the discussion about bypasses in this previous piece of the testimony.
BY MS. MOTLEY:
Q. Just a few more questions. Over the last year, what changes have been made at the regulator stations? Some of the comments that were part of the inspection record mentioned something about springs being changed.
A. Yeah. We changed a lot of the -- they were brown springs, which would tend to, they tend to, I don't know, I forget the pressure range, but we put 5 to 15 white springs in all the regulators that had Mooney 20L pilots. That was a procedure to do. Not all of them were done. But as we were doing annuals, we were changing them out, which is a lower range spring.
Q. Okay.
A. Some of them still had those already in them.

Q. And for the ERX, the transducers, are you making changes to those also?
A. I don't know what -- you mean the ones that were affected?
Q. Some of the -- it was my impression that the transducers that are currently in the system are from 0 to 28 inches, and that they're being changed out to 6-pound transducers. Are you aware of that?
A. They haven't been yet.
Q. Okay. Thank you. The other items that are being updated are the isometrics. Are those being updated?
A. Yeah.
Q. Yeah. And the critical valve drawings?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. When you perform your inspection of the regulator stations, are you verifying that the information on the new isometrics and the critical valves are accurate?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. Are you aware that during -- let me back up. We performed an inspection together on Friday, September 14th.
A. Yeah.
Q. Are you aware that some of the diagrams that were at the site were incorrect?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. Were you involved in the closure of any of the 14 stations that were involved in the, used to isolate the --

A. Yes.
Q. -- low pressure system? Okay. Which stations did you actually visit?
A. During that night?
Q. During the initial efforts to close or lockout those particular regulator stations. Were you involved in that? Or were you involved later?
A. We were -- I was involved later. I didn't actually, like shut the inlets.
Q. Okay.
A. The critical valves.
Q. Do you know if anyone from M&R was involved in that process?
A. No.
Q. Okay.
MS. MOTLEY: That's it for my questions.
MR. EVANS: Thank you.
This is Roger Evans.
BY MR. EVANS:
Q. Before we go any further, I'd like to know -- I think we have a good idea, but I just want to go down the list of, on the same page, if I'm walking out in the area where there are the 14 regulators, what markings would I see on the location of the regulator? What markings are on that, where the vault is?
A. On the door?
Q. Yeah.

A. Yeah. There's a big yellow circle with, it says, "Columbia Gas," with our phone number, and do not dig within -- or call within -- if you're digging within 25 feet.
Q. Okay. Is there an ID number on that, that tells you which station you're looking at?
A. Not on the door.
Q. You don't get the ID until the door has been opened?
A. Right.
Q. Okay. And the door is locked?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. Once that door has been unlocked and opened, what would one see as far as any numbers?
A. There's an orange tube with all the paperwork, with all the drawings and everything else, in that tube, that should give you all the information you need on that station.
Q. Does the tube have the regulator number on it?
A. It has a premise number on it.
Q. What's the premise number?
A. That's the identification number for that location.
Q. And that premise number would relate back to the numbers on those drawings, iso drawings?
A. I don't know if the premise number is on the iso drawings or not.
Q. Okay. So once we open this tube up -- now, are all the documents that you would ever have in the bunker, are they all in

the tube?
A. Yes.
Q. No other place?
A. No other place.
Q. Is this a water-tight tube?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. Have you seen these where they've been floating or something in water and it was okay, or are these hung on the side, or what?
A. They're hanging upon the door, so when you lift the door, they're on, inside the door.
Q. Okay. So they're not going to get wet if -- unless -- if it floods?
A. They've been good about keeping the water out of them.
Q. Okay. So when those tubes get updated, how do they get new drawings into those tubes? Who does it?
A. We put them in there.
Q. Not technician, not clerical or --
A. No.
Q. -- drawing kind of people? It's all done by the M&R mechanics, technicians?
A. Yeah. They print it out -- they draw it up, print it out and hand us the papers, and we put them in the stations when they're updated.
Q. Okay. And what if something's wrong on those drawings? How

do you communicate that information back to get updated ones? How does that work?

A. I relay that information to Jeff Croke, and then he passes it on to whoever would be involved in that section, whether it's a drawing or if it's just clerical part of it.

Q. Okay. So, and I'd like you to go down the numbers now. So if we just, in your mind, if you open a tube, and you start looking at what's in the tube, just kind of go down the list again of what's in that tube.

A. Well the inventory record card first is what you sign, and you fill out pressures and what you did there, at the location. It's a card. And then under that would be your inventory record card, which would be all the information on the regulator itself, the pilot information, the serial numbers, the recorder information, how many valves, the valve numbers. Then there'd be an isometric drawing of the station itself, and then a critical valve drawing.

Q. And I think I just heard you say that if you need the critical valve information, you really don't have to go to the bunker to get that. You can get it from the, from your, on your screen in your mobile?

A. Yeah, on my MDT.

Q. Okay.

A. And I have a book on my truck, too, with just the valve locations and the drawings.

Q. Okay. In your 33 years, have you ever had vandalism in these --
A. No.
Q. -- had one of the locks been cut or anything like that?
A. Not other than graffiti.
Q. Oh, okay. Okay. Okay. On the inventory list, if you need a part or a piece or a component of something to replace, are all of the replacement parts, are they -- can you get them from this, the tube, or no, you have to --
A. No.
Q. Your replacement parts are not on there?
A. Not -- no.
Q. Okay. If you need to rebuild a regulator, and you need all the parts and pieces, you have that someplace where you can get all that information?
A. Yes. We have manuals.
Q. Okay, good. Where are the manuals located? In an office?
A. No. I have -- there is some in the office, but we have them on our truck also.
Q. Okay. So we spoke earlier about MAOP, okay. I think the concern is in -- with -- MAOP in our business is a big deal. Right. Every kind of system that we deal with, MAOP is really important. Going over MAOP is even more important. So if you go over MAOP with even a half of an inch, do you have to get approval from somebody to do that?

A. If it was -- yes, if it was going to be, like a permanent thing. Not during testing, while I'm there onsite.
Q. Okay. So if you're -- so when you're talking about going over MAOP, are you talking about a situation for testing or are you talking about making a change that the MAOP is now going to be a half inch higher?
A. I can't make that call for permanently be higher. That wouldn't --
Q. Okay. So when we're talking about the MAOP, you're talking about a situation that's a temporary situation, because you're going to do something?
A. Right. Correct.
Q. Okay. Thank you. You were talking about the, collecting the data, and it gets uploaded to the M drive.
A. Yeah.
Q. Once that information's on the M drive, do you know who that information goes to, who it's available to?
A. I don't -- probably a lot of people, because it's on the M drive. I really don't have a list of how many people could actually look at that information.
Q. In your 33 years, have you been asked to, you know, hey Mr. McGinnity, can you come over and let's talk about the download of the M drive? Has that been, has that happened very much in your career?
A. Yes.

Q. And what type of discussions do you have when you discuss the M drive contents?
A. They'll either talk about, you know, low points and high points, and other -- they'll talk about the upgrades that they did on the system, to let me know, you know, to kind of watch, you know, to see if this is dropping off or anything like that.
Q. Okay.
A. Or if it's raising, or whatever.
Q. Does that information, do you know if they share that information with anybody?
A. I don't know.
Q. No. Okay. Okay. Just so I -- I want to make sure I ask this question. It's kind of off the beaten path, but we'll go back to some of the technical stuff. Where were you at 4:04?
A. We were on -- let's see -- I forget the name of the street.
Q. You can take your time. (Indiscernible).
A. Yeah.
Q. Do you want a map?
A. Sure. It's right off of Union Street. I just can't recall the name of the street.
MR. NELSON: How about Google Earth?
BY MR. EVANS:
Q. While he's pulling that up, I just want to get a couple of questions out of the way. Where you were at 4:04, did you hear sirens?

A. Yes.
Q. At 4:04? Did you hear sirens before 4:04?
A. No. I don't think so.
Q. You don't think so.
A. I can't swear by the time, but --
Q. And did you hear sirens from multiple directions, or were they right where, near you, or did you hear them kind of like --
A. They seemed to be all over the place.
Q. Okay. And from your vantage point, did you see smoke, fire, hear explosions?
A. No, I didn't.
Q. You saw no smoke, you saw no fire, and you heard no explosions?
A. No.
Q. That's great.
MR. NELSON: That's South Street. I don't know in reference to where you need to be. You just slide it left to right with your finger.
MR. McGINNITY: It looks different from up in the air.
(Laughter.)
MR. McGINNITY: Whoa.
MS. MOTLEY: Yeah. Can you just get the -- so it shows the streets, instead of the satellite?
MR. NELSON: Let me see if I can do that.
BY MR. EVANS:

Q. Can you tell us where you were when you saw, heard -- or did you hear explosions that day at all?
A. I did not. No.
Q. And that day, did you see -- did you end up seeing a lot of fires and smoke and all that stuff?
A. I seen smoke off in the distance. And the route I took on my -- I didn't see any fires. I just seen smoke up over trees.
Q. And you didn't hear, as well, right?
A. No. There was a lot of sirens, everywhere, and helicopters.
Q. As far as -- where -- from where, your vantage point in all this, that whole day, you never heard a home exploding?
A. No.
Q. Okay.
A. No.
Q. Yeah. I would like to know where you were, though, because I'd like to have that for the record.
MR. NELSON: Yeah, absolutely.
MR. McGINNITY: Yeah. It's right on there, right here, on Cambridge Street in Lawrence.
BY MR. EVANS:
Q. Cambridge and what?
A. Cambridge Street in Lawrence.
Q. What's the cross street?
A. South Union.
Q. Oh, Cambridge and South Union?

A. Yes.
Q. Okay. Thank you so much for that. Appreciate it. So I know you told us that you were here, you've been here 33 years. We've heard from, you know, the -- I'll rephrase that. So you've been here 33 years. In your 33-year career, have you been asked by the Engineering Department to assist them with locating sensing lines so when they did a work package, those sensing lines would be known to the people doing the work? Has that happened in your 33-year career, that you can recall?
A. Yes.
Q. How often -- when was the last time you heard something like that?
A. A long time ago. I don't --
Q. Years?
A. Years ago.
Q. Years ago. Okay. Back in the day when they asked you these questions about sensing lines, did they then come back to you and say, here's the engineering package, we hope we have these sensing lines correct, that you would be a person who would review these documents?
A. No.
Q. So even though you did the -- you told them where the sensing lines were, you were never in the review process?
A. No.
Q. Ever, in your whole career?

A. No.
Q. Okay. Okay, so the other part about this, the sensing line thing is, when you -- in your 33-year career, have you ever had the opportunity to be equipped with a pressure gauge, a radio, and stand by as work is commencing so that you can monitor what's going on?
A. Yes.
Q. And how many years has it been since you did that?
A. Probably four or five.
Q. Four or five years. Okay. Do you know, was there a change in personnel with the company, or was there some -- you know, did you say to yourself, gosh, I wonder why we don't do that anymore? Or was there any inquiries as to why that suddenly stopped?
A. I don't know if it's all the construction they would have been doing, you know, because they're everywhere now, replacing cast iron and bare steel, that it just got lost. I don't know. I really don't know.
Q. So would that be the responsibility of like, a Larry and a Tom? Would they be those type of people that would do the monitoring of a construction situation, to monitor the line, to make sure that there was no, you know, pressure --
A. Yes. If we were asked to.
Q. Okay. Okay, so you think about four years or so is when it was done last? Okay. We heard from your, I guess your manager, Jeff Croke.

A. Yeah.
Q. And we understand that you use a spreadsheet that is, helps you to address risk. You have the scenarios at the top, with each station on the left-hand column, and you -- and these get ranked. And then once they get ranked, if there's something that jumps out at you that Mr. Croke advises that they fix it immediately, it doesn't go on a work order or list, it's done immediately. Have you been part of that process?
A. Yes, I have.
Q. When was the last time that was done?
A. I think it was like last October or November.
Q. Of?
A. And there's actually a meeting coming up shortly, about that. We have one once a year.
Q. Would you say that that risk assessment stuff is done on an annual basis?
A. Yes. I think it is.
Q. Okay. And once they have identified a risk area, are you part of the crew that goes out and makes the repair, and -- or changes something, or improves something or, you know, gets rid of the risk, makes it safer? Or is that -- would that be you and Tom and Mike?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. And the last time you had one of these risk assessments, did you have a long list of items that you had to go

out and fix?
A. No. No.
Q. Typically there's not a whole lot, just, you're covering your bases and just reviewing this stuff and not so much -- and things aren't coming up that are showstopper kind of things?
A. No. Most of it was cosmetic things, the vault itself, not really the piping or the regulators.
Q. Okay. Okay. Thank you for that.
MR. EVANS: That's all I have for now.
MR. NELSON: Dave Nelson.
BY MR. NELSON:
Q. Do you have work orders that are, that you're sent out on, to do the work?
A. Yes.
Q. Is the premise number on those work orders numbers?
A. Yes.
Q. I think you -- the ERX ones that you, that were talked about that were being damaged due to water, was that because they were under water and/or because there was moisture damage?
A. Both.
Q. Both? And can you explain for us what happens if the monitor and the worker are set too close for their settings?
A. If they're set too close? There's a few things. They could start fighting each other. They don't know which one's supposed to be in charge anymore.

Q. So do you try to make sure that there is a differential --
A. Differential pressure between them, so you know that one is the lead, and one is the monitor.
Q. So would that be a potential reason why you'd set a monitor at 14½ inches, if you're trying to set that, temporarily?
A. Well, I'm only -- I wouldn't put it -- I wouldn't set it at 14½. If it went to 14½, it was because I was there adjusting. I wouldn't leave it like that.
Q. Thank you very much.
MR. NELSON: I have no further.
MR. EVANS: Anyone on the phone, please, with any questions?
MR. LEMMERMAN: Yeah, this is Darren Lemmerman.
BY MR. LEMMERMAN:
Q. I guess we talked about sensing lines and drawings a couple times, but I just -- and I might have actually missed some things on the phone here, but the books that you have in your truck, there's mapping and isometrics in there, in your books that show sensing lines for these stations?
A. There's not isometrics, but there is regular drawings.
Q. Okay. So the regular drawings in your books will show their locations and what they're sensing from, or what domain, where they go to?
A. Yes.
Q. For all 14 stations, do you have documents for all 14 that show sensing lines?

A. I don't know. I would have to review them.
Q. Okay. Are you aware, or know of any other locations that maps might exist for these? I mean, does Engineering have them, or any other kind of records that might -- other than your books?
A. Yes. I would have thought Engineering does have those drawings also.
Q. Okay. My next question is about working regulators and monitors. So the worker's obviously designed to be the primary source of control. How often do you find where the worker has failed and the monitor is actually controlling the pressure, on your monthly visits?
A. Never.
Q. So this low pressure system, you have yet to see a monitor actually having to work because the working regulator has failed?
A. Correct.
Q. Thank you.
MR. LEMMERMAN: No further questions for Darren Lemmerman.
MR. EVANS: Thank you.
MS. MOTLEY: Angela Motley.
BY MS. MOTLEY:
Q. Just a point of clarification. Earlier in the testimony, or the interview, you mentioned that you had set the regulators at above MAOP. And then later on in the interview you mentioned that you had tested, during the testing process, it went, the pressures went above the MAOP. Is that correct?

A. Yes. But I didn't set them above that MAOP.
Q. Okay. So never, ever set above?
A. No.
Q. Okay. You also mentioned, four or five years ago, you were on standby at a station due to some work that was taking place. What type of work was taking place?
A. It was probably similar to what they were doing there, cutting off an old main.
Q. Do you remember that to be what was actually taking place, or?
A. No. That -- but that's usually what we would be called for. Either they're putting a new main into service, or they're cutting off an old one.
Q. Would you be on standby if someone was, a third party was digging in the area of your regulator station?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. So that's a little different, another situation where you would be on standby?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. During the risk assessment meetings, what is your role?
A. Just to give my input on what I think needs to be repaired or replaced or updated.
Q. Can you tell me what Larry's job function is?
A. He's the -- his title is the plant electrician.

Q. And what work does he do at the regulator stations?
A. At the stations, he does -- he'll like, calibrate the ERXs or transmitters or anything else that we have at other stations.
Q. So he wouldn't be, he wouldn't operate any valves or anything of that nature?
A. Normally, no.
Q. What is -- can you --
A. If we were there with him, yes.
Q. Do you know if Larry goes through OQ qualifications?
A. Yes.
Q. Do you happen to know if he has OQ qualifications for operating valves?
A. Yes. I'm pretty sure.
Q. So you don't know exactly? You believe he does, but you're not --
A. I believe he does. Because I was of the understanding he had all the same OQs as me.
Q. Okay. And who would have relayed that information to you?
A. I don't know what you mean.
Q. How would you -- who would have told you that he had the same OQs as you?
A. Well, I --
Q. Where did that come from? Him, or someone, a supervisor, or --
A. Yeah. Well, that's hard to say. We all do the same job,

so --
Q. He just has a different title?
A. Title, yeah.
Q. So.
A. Because we're kind of like one department -- at the time. They separated us now, in the last few months, but --
MS. MOTLEY: I believe that's it. No more questions. Thank you.
MR. EVANS: This is Roger Evans, just a couple more questions.
BY MR. EVANS:
Q. Do you happen to know the document flow for the risk assessment, like who would get that? After you guys are finished with it, where would it go? I mean --
A. I don't know. Engineering brings it to us. We have a meeting. And what they do with it after, I'm not sure.
Q. Okay. Can you tell me who is in the room when that takes place?
A. Last couple, it's been different people.
Q. But generally, I mean, Engineering is represented, the -- you know, just --
A. Yeah. Engineering's there. My supervisor, Jeff Croke was there.
Q. So Engineering, and then M&R people?
A. Yes.

Q. Outside of that, anyone else then?
A. No.
Q. Okay.
MR. EVANS: Okay. I just have a document request. I want to make sure that I have that. I think we talked about it, but I don't know. I want to make sure we have the spreadsheet.
MR. NELSON: It's in the works, so --
MR. EVANS: Okay, great. Thank you. That's all I have.
MR. NELSON: Dave Nelson, nothing else.
MR. EVANS: On the phone, anyone else?
MR. LEMMERMAN: Nothing for Darren Lemmerman.
MR. EVANS: Thank you.
MS. MOTLEY: Angela Motley, nothing more.
MR. EVANS: Okay. That concludes the interview. Thank you very much for agreeing to speak with us today. It's been very thought-provoking, actually. So thank you.
Off the record.
(Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:	MERRIMACK VALLEY RESIDENTIAL GAS FIRES AND EXPLOSIONS SEPTEMBER 13, 2018 Interview of Dana Argo
ACCIDENT NUMBER:	PLD18MR003
PLACE:	Lawrence, Massachusetts
DATE:	September 21, 2018

was held according to the record, and that this is the original, complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed to the best of my skill and ability.

Pamela C. Jacobson
Transcriber