



National Transportation Safety Board
Washington, D.C. 20594

Name: Juan Gomez

Department Atmos Energy / Mid-Tex Operations

Title: Operations Supervisor

Date of Interview: February 28, 2018

I have reviewed my transcript(s) from the above referenced accident and:

I have no comments to make.

My comments are submitted herewith.

My comments are marked on the attached copy.



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

NATURAL GAS-FUELED EXPLOSION OF *
RESIDENCE, DALLAS, TEXAS *
FEBRUARY 23, 2018 *

* Accident No.: PLD18FR002

* * * * *

Interview of: JUAN GOMEZ

Hampton Inn and Suites
Dallas, Texas

Wednesday,
February 28, 2018

APPEARANCES:

RAVI CHHATRE, Investigator in Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

STEPHEN JENNER, Ph.D., Human Performance Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

ALEX COLLETTI, Accident Investigator
Pipeline and Hazardous Material Safety Administration
(PHMSA)

DARREN LEMMERMAN, Senior Investigator
PHMSA

JIM COLLINS, Regional Manager
Railroad Commission of Texas

JOHN McDILL, Vice President of Pipeline Safety
Atmos Energy

NICK HOFMANN, Associate General Counsel
Atmos Energy

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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MR. CHHATRE: On the record.

3 Good afternoon. Today is Wednesday, February 28, 2018. We
4 are currently at Hampton Inn and Suites located at 3051 North
5 Stemmons Freeway, Dallas, Texas. We are meeting regarding the
6 investigation of explosion of a house located at 3534 Espanola
7 Drive in Dallas, Texas that occurred on February 23, 2018.

8 My name is Ravi Chhatre. I am with the National
9 Transportation Safety Board located in Washington, D.C., and I am
10 investigator in charge of this accident. The NTSB investigation
11 number for this accident is PLD18FR002.

12 I would like to start by notifying everyone present in this
13 room that we are recording this interview and we may transcribe it
14 at a later date. Transcripts will be provided directly to the
15 interviewee for review and identifying any typographical errors.
16 The transcripts may be posted in NTSB's public docket.

17 Also, I would like to inform Mr. Juan Gomez that you are
18 permitted to have one other person present with you during the
19 interview. This is a person of your choice: your supervisor,
20 friend, family member, or if you choose, no one at all.

21 Please state for the record your full name, spelling of your
22 name, organization you work for and your title, business contact
23 information such as email, mailing address, and whom you have
24 chosen to be with you during the interview. And please do not
25 give me your personal information.

1 MR. GOMEZ: My name is Juan Gomez, J-U-A-N, G-O-M-E-Z.
2 Address is [REDACTED]. I'm an
3 operations supervisor for Atmos Energy. I don't choose to have
4 anybody here.

5 MR. CHHATRE: Yeah, you --

6 MR. GOMEZ: I have -- Nick ^{Hofmann} ~~Holman~~ [sic] is here with me
7 today.

8 MR. CHHATRE: With you. Okay.

9 MR. GOMEZ: Yes.

10 MR. CHHATRE: Now I'd like to go around the table and have
11 everybody introduce themselves, starting from my left.

12 MR. McDILL: John McDill, vice president of pipeline safety,
13 Atmos Energy, [REDACTED]. It's
14 [REDACTED].

15 MR. COLLINS: Jim Collins, J-I-M, C-O-L-L-I-N-S, regional
16 manager for the Railroad Commission of Texas. Contact info
17 provided on the card.

18 MR. HOFMANN: Nick Hofmann, N-I-C-K, H-O-F-M-A-N-N, associate
19 general counsel with Atmos Energy. Contact information provided
20 on the card.

21 MR. LEMMERMAN: Darren Lemmerman, federal office of pipeline
22 safety. D-A-R-R-E-N, Lemmerman, L-E-M-M-E-R-M-A-N. Contact
23 information is on the business card.

24 MS. COLLETTI: Alex Colletti, A-L-E-X, C-O-L-L-E-T-T-I.
25 PHMSA accident investigation. Contact on card.

1 DR. JENNER: Stephen Jenner, S-T-E-P-H-E-N, J-E-N-N-E-R, a
2 human performance investigator with the NTSB.

3 MR. CHHATRE: Thank you very much.

4 INTERVIEW OF JUAN GOMEZ

5 BY MR. CHHATRE:

6 Q. Mr. Gomez, for the record, just give us some background: Any
7 formal/informal training; your current position with the company;
8 how long you have been with the company. Anything that you have
9 regarding your work.

10 A. I've been with the company for 19 years, and I'm an
11 operations supervisor. You say any training?

12 Q. Yeah, any formal/informal education, training pertaining to
13 your job.

14 A. Pertaining to my job, we have many trainings available.
15 Safety meetings. We have -- in the learning center, we have many
16 trainings that we take to help ourselves learn new things that
17 come out.

18 Q. Okay. And you said you are 19 years with the company?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Can you give me some background to that? You started as a --

21 A. I started with the company reading meters. I was -- I moved
22 to construction. And then after construction, I was holding a
23 position of field construction coordinator, and then operations
24 supervisor.

25 Q. And then operations supervisor, is it an OQ-qualified job?

1 You're a supervisor, that's why I'm asking you.

2 A. No, it's not.

3 Q. It's not. Okay. And what are your duty hours normally?

4 A. 8 to 4:30.

5 Q. Okay. Monday through Friday only?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Okay. And as an operations supervisor, what do you do?

8 A. Various things. From the top of my head, we manage the
9 workforce, make sure that we have the force available to do our
10 daily operations. I review employee time, make sure that we have
11 the fleet up and running. And everything that, you know, pertains
12 to operations mostly.

13 Q. Okay. Now when you say operations, are you talking about gas
14 distribution?

15 A. Managing the employees.

16 Q. Employees.

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Okay. And what kind of employees you manage?

19 A. I manage service technicians mostly.

20 Q. Mostly. Okay.

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. And what territory you cover? Or you are responsible the
23 entire Dallas area?

24 A. We don't have a specific territory. We --

25 Q. So -- go ahead.

1 A. We cover various parts, whatever the work is needed.

2 Q. Okay, so there is no demarcation. So how many operations
3 supervisors work every day?

4 A. We have right now a total of seven --

5 Q. Seven.

6 A. -- operations supervisors.

7 Q. And they all work at the same time, Monday through Friday, 8
8 to 4:30?

9 A. Yes. When they're -- somebody's not on vacation, so --

10 Q. But seven people are working every day, pretty much?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Barring vacation, sickness or whatever.

13 A. Right.

14 Q. And so who -- just so I can understand, who handles what?

15 A. As far as duties, departments --

16 Q. Correct. Because, I mean, are you guys -- (indiscernible)
17 operate differently. Are you -- are these seven supervisors
18 assigned a certain number of crews, or there is no other
19 demarcation like that?

20 A. Yes. We have a number of employees we manage. For example,
21 I manage from -- you know, fully staffed, about 15 to 17
22 employees.

23 Q. Okay. And you have the same employees every day or that kind
24 of depends?

25 A. Yeah, the same employees every day, you know, if we don't

1 have anybody moving to another department or something.

2 Q. And when you say you manage, do you assign duties or tasks to
3 these service technicians, or what is the daily work operation you
4 manage? How do you manage that?

5 A. Normally the technicians that I manage go to -- respond to
6 customer committed ~~orders~~ ^{orders} and emergency work, you know, like leak
7 investigations.

8 Q. Okay. So customer odor complaints and emergency operations.

9 A. Right.

10 Q. Okay. All you work is complaints?

11 A. Turn-ons -- meter turn-ons, seals, and the customer
12 complaints as well.

13 Q. Okay. The meter turn-on, what is that?

14 A. When a customer moves into a new location, they request
15 service, and if the meter's off, we go to the premise and make
16 sure everything's correct and turn the meter back on.

17 Q. Okay. In that process, what does your technician typically
18 do?

19 A. It depends. It depends what is needed. The technicians will
20 know what to do.

21 Q. I'm a little confused. A technician knows, but the
22 supervisor -- how do you know the technician has done everything
23 right that he's supposed to do or she's supposed to do? How do
24 you know that?

25 A. They receive training. And, you know, when they're ready,

1 they get released to go perform those duties. Yes.

2 Q. Okay. And you had to be a technician before you become
3 operations supervisor?

4 A. Not necessarily.

5 Q. Not necessarily. Okay. Were you an operations -- before you
6 became a operations supervisor, were you a service technician?

7 A. No.

8 Q. Okay. Now training-wise, how do you decide a certain
9 employee's training is adequate, not adequate, needs to be
10 retrained?

11 A. What kind of employees are you referring to?

12 Q. Service technicians. Because they are your primary
13 workforce, right? Or was that -- you are supervising mainly the
14 service technicians?

15 A. You mean a new -- coming in, a new technician coming in?

16 Q. Right. I mean, new coming in or the existing ones. Do you
17 have any refresher trainings or --

18 A. Right. Yes.

19 Q. -- how do you evaluate the performance?

20 A. Yes. The current technicians that we have, they go different
21 levels. Service Technician 1, 2 and senior technicians. And
22 service technicians coming in go through a lot of training, our
23 new technicians. And, you know, before they get released to go on
24 their own, they go training with our service center in Plano, and
25 also go with senior technicians after that and before that to make

1 sure we have them ready to be on their own.

2 Q. So correct me if I'm wrong. The service technicians start as
3 Service Technician 1, then promoted to 2, and then they are then
4 called senior technicians.

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Correct? Progression-wise. Is there any formal training
7 involved in step 1, step 2 and step 3; Technician 1, Technician 2
8 and senior technician? Is it just based on number of years of
9 experience and it's automatic, or they need to complete some
10 training, or how does that work?

11 A. A little bit of everything. They have to have the time to be
12 -- to move to a different level. But also they have to have the
13 training, the qualifications. And that's how they determine to --
14 when they move to the next level.

15 Q. Okay. So who makes that decision that John Doe or Jane Doe
16 is going to move from Technician 1 to Technician 2?

17 A. It's based on their training and based on feedback from
18 senior technicians or the technicians that go out with them to do
19 a job -- OJT, on-jobsite-training. And the feedback from other
20 supervisors that --

21 Q. But I guess, understand the -- but who makes that decision
22 that I'm ready to be moved from Technician 1 to Technician 2?
23 Somebody has to make that decision finally. I understand it's
24 based on information, but who makes that decision?

25 A. Management makes that decision to move up an employee to --

1 Q. Help me out. To me, I guess management is a nebulous concept
2 to me. Who is management? Are you involved as supervisor in that
3 process?

4 A. Supervisor, the manager, and the director, they get involved
5 on that decision.

6 Q. So from operations supervisor, then the manager, and the
7 director --

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. -- is the hierarchy?

10 A. Um-hum.

11 Q. Okay. So they make (indiscernible) decision or somebody has
12 to recommend that or --

13 A. So we -- the supervisors have to recommend. And then, you
14 know, and then they get reviewed by the higher levels.

15 Q. So you will make the recommendation, go to your manager; the
16 manager agrees with that and goes to director? Okay.

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. And does the same process apply if somebody is not performing
19 to your expectations? The same way the person can be demoted? Or
20 the person just, once he gets into supervisor -- Technician 2,
21 it's impossible to move him to Technician 1? I'm just saying --

22 A. Yeah, it could happen. I mean, a lot of things have to be in
23 place. You know, a lot of people is involved in that process.
24 But yes, it could -- they can.

25 Q. Does it happen often? Frequently, infrequently or --

1 A. Since I've been a supervisor, I haven't seen one.

2 Q. So very infrequent?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. So as supervisor, operations supervisor, do you ever get
5 involved at all in the actual fieldwork?

6 A. I visit jobsites, but that's as much as I do. Yeah.

7 Q. No, I mean not you as an individual. I'm just saying in the
8 position, do the operations supervisor -- it can be you or other
9 operations supervisor -- do they ever get involved in the actual
10 fieldwork?

11 A. No, sir.

12 Q. No.

13 A. Not that I know of.

14 Q. Okay. So do you direct the technicians to do fieldwork? And
15 who assures -- I guess makes sure that they are doing the right
16 thing?

17 A. As a supervisor, we assign the work, and their task is to
18 complete the work accordingly with the procedures.

19 Q. Right.

20 A. Or, you know, how they've been trained.

21 Q. Okay. But how would a supervisor know that -- for example,
22 if I'm reporting to you, how would you know that whatever you send
23 me for a jobsite, I did everything right?

24 A. Because we have provided the necessary training.

25 Q. I understand that. I'm saying how do you make sure as a

1 supervisor that I discharged my duties for that particular job
2 correctly? Is there any way that you would know that?

3 A. Well, because they've been trained. They've been, you know,
4 released to do that and they're OQ-qualified to do that task.

5 Q. Okay. So does anybody randomly checks their work? That if
6 I'm sent to -- for an odor call, does somebody, a senior
7 technician or somebody above that person, randomly goes to that
8 site and makes sure that that -- I don't expect every job to be
9 checked. I mean, I -- don't get me wrong. But is there a random
10 check to make sure the technician is doing the right thing?

11 A. It could happen.

12 Q. But there is no formal way of saying, okay --

13 A. Yes. You know, as far as I know.

14 Q. Know it, no.

15 MR. CHHATRE: That's all I have. Thank you much.

16 MR. GOMEZ: Thank you.

17 MR. CHHATRE: Steve?

18 BY DR. JENNER:

19 Q. Okay, I didn't get how long you were in your current
20 position.

21 A. I started last year in October.

22 Q. Start in October of --

23 A. 2017.

24 Q. Oh, okay. So just a few months.

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Okay. And how long in your previous position?

2 A. It was 7 -- I'm sorry. About approximately 10 years in my
3 last position.

4 Q. And that was?

5 A. Field construction coordinator.

6 Q. Okay. I understand the previous line of questions, and I
7 understand your response that the people who you send out to do
8 the job, you have confidence that they're adequately trained and
9 prepared and have enough OJT to do their work successfully. I
10 think the line of questioning is how do you evaluate their
11 performance, that they're actually carrying out these tasks?
12 They've had all the training in the world that they need, but how
13 do you know that they're successfully completing these tasks and
14 following procedures correctly? Is there a mechanism for the
15 company to evaluate their performance that they're --

16 A. Yeah. We as supervisors are -- you know, we ride with
17 employees within the year and go about a checklist of items or
18 things they have to do on that particular order. And, you know,
19 that's how we check our employees.

20 Q. Okay. Is that one of the tasks that you're required to do?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Okay. Have you -- you've only been in that position a short
23 time. Have you done that yet?

24 A. We have -- I have started doing on some employees. But we --
25 with the workload right now has been, we haven't had the

1 opportunity. We have to complete that.

2 Q. Right. As you settle into your job, how -- do you -- can you
3 foresee how many you would like to do per week or per month or per
4 year that you yourself is riding along?

5 A. I would like -- I would want to do all my employees at least
6 three times a year or more each.

7 Q. So some of the technicians that we've spoken to or will speak
8 to, if they've been there long enough -- let's say more than 3 or
9 4 years -- we didn't ask them. We didn't think to ask them. But
10 would we expect that someone sometime during their -- you know,
11 over the last year, that someone has ridden with them the way you
12 just described?

13 A. Not that, you know, not that I've known, because of my short
14 period of time. Don't know who's going to get interviewed, so I
15 couldn't tell you who's been or who's not.

16 Q. I guess I'm asking if there is already in existence a program
17 where a manager or supervisor has been riding along for, you know,
18 some of these technicians? Is this a brand-new program that
19 you're talking about or has it been in effect for a while?

20 A. I couldn't tell you. I am assuming it's been ongoing, but I
21 couldn't tell you for sure.

22 Q. Okay. How did you get into your position, your new position?
23 What made -- what was the decision to -- for you to get -- become
24 an operations supervisor?

25 A. You know, since I started with the company, I always wanted

1 to be in management. And through my hard work, you know, I was
2 able to achieve that.

3 Q. Okay. What were some of your duties as a -- I don't know if
4 you asked this already, or answered. As a field construction
5 coordinator, what were your duties there?

6 A. I was in charge of overseeing our contractors install new and
7 replace pipeline. And various other things.

8 Q. Okay. So you would have to basically supervise or evaluate
9 their performance --

10 A. Right.

11 Q. -- in doing work for your company?

12 A. Right.

13 Q. Overall, what degree -- how satisfied have you been with the
14 contractors that you've hired out?

15 A. It's -- very satisfied. I mean, we have -- I believe we have
16 some good contractors working for -- doing work for Atmos.

17 Q. Right. Have you come across any type of -- and you don't
18 have to name names, but any contractor where you were not
19 satisfied with the work they performed?

20 A. Yeah, occasionally. Yes.

21 Q. Okay, and how did you -- what was your -- what weren't you
22 satisfied with?

23 A. It depends what was the task and what were they not
24 performing to -- you know, how Atmos would like the work to be
25 done. You know, cleanliness, maybe, or not notifying customers,

1 for example. Things like that.

2 Q. Okay. So changing subjects a little. There were three house
3 incidents that we're learning about. Do you have a role in any of
4 the response, the employees' response to these incidents?

5 A. Can you specify a little bit?

6 Q. Are you a decision maker of -- in terms of who is going to be
7 sent out there and how long they're supposed to be and when you
8 can close out an incident and things of that --

9 A. We have our dispatch system that, you know, assigns the work
10 to our service techs. And, you know, they assign the leaks or
11 whatever ~~orders~~ ^{orders} that might be in our system, and they assign them
12 to the techs. And they're there until they complete the work
13 they're doing safely.

14 Q. So during these -- these were three pretty significant
15 events, incidents. Are you being updated with current information
16 so you can make these decisions or do you really rely on the
17 technicians to do their job and at a later date you're briefed?

18 A. No. You know, in a situation like this, we are currently
19 involved. Or, you know, we have to be involved on making sure
20 that we stay there as long as needed and things like that.

21 Q. Okay. So what sort of decisions did you make in regards to
22 any one of these three incidents?

23 A. I did not -- all the decisions that were made here were, you
24 know, through the channel, up and down. And that's how, you know,
25 it went about here.

1 Q. So in this case, it sounds like your people were directly
2 involved, but you weren't a direct decision maker --

3 A. Right.

4 Q. -- for these.

5 DR. JENNER: Okay. Terrific. Thank you.

6 MR. GOMEZ: Um-hum.

7 MR. CHHATRE: PHMSA?

8 MS. COLLETTI: Sorry. Just taking a note there. Alex
9 Colletti, PHMSA.

10 BY MS. COLLETTI:

11 Q. I wanted to go back to the field construction coordinator
12 role real quick.

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. In terms of overseeing, is it specifically overseeing
15 contractors or is it overseeing any construction work? So do you
16 have -- does Atmos have their own construction crews or do you
17 guys really rely heavily on contractors?

18 A. To answer the question, a little bit of both, but more -- I
19 was more overseeing contractors. Very -- not so much company
20 personnel when I was doing FCC, field construction coordinator.

21 Q. Okay. What kind of contractor training do you guys have?

22 A. They have to go through the proper training, OQ training, and
23 they have to have all the certification. And, you know, as far as
24 training, I'm not involved on training the contractors, so I
25 couldn't really specify or go into details on that.

1 Q. Okay. What kind of -- I guess, I -- specifically, while we
2 were out on-site there was an incident where during one of the
3 excavations, struck one of the service lines with a backhoe. Is
4 that something that regularly happens? Did we just catch it on a
5 bad day or what -- and how does the field coordinator's role kind
6 of play into that? I mean, I know that's not your role right now,
7 but since you have background in this --

8 A. Right. Well, you know, it could have been many scenarios. I
9 don't know exactly what happened, but it don't happen very often.
10 So, you know, it could have been that, you know -- like I said, it
11 could have been a lot of scenarios that could have been in play
12 when that happened.

13 Q. So that's not something you dealt with a lot in your role?
14 You didn't see a lot of first-party line strikes, for example?

15 A. Not that much, no.

16 Q. Okay. Otherwise you'd want a different contractor, right?

17 A. Right. Exactly.

18 Q. Yeah. Yeah, okay.

19 MS. COLLETTI: All right, that's all I've got.

20 MR. CHHATRE: Okay.

21 MR. COLLINS: Jim Collins, Railroad Commission. Hey, Juan.

22 MR. GOMEZ: Hey, how you doing, sir?

23 MR. COLLINS: Good. I think we did a new construction audit
24 together?

25 MR. GOMEZ: Yes, we did.

1 MR. COLLINS: When I was very younger. So it's been a while.

2 BY MR. COLLINS:

3 Q. Who is your direct report to? Name and position, please.

4 A. Benny Rosenberg.

5 Q. Benny.

6 A. Manager.

7 Q. Thank you. Okay. So you guys, do you all do the -- ops
8 supervisors, do you all do a rotation where you're on call?

9 A. Yes, we do.

10 Q. Okay. And so in this -- on this week, you were on call?

11 A. No, sir.

12 Q. No, sir. Who was on call?

13 A. I cannot remember who was on call.

14 Q. Okay. Thank you. But you all do have on-call rotations,
15 right?

16 A. Yes. Yes.

17 Q. Okay. So that's somebody we need to find. Second question.
18 I know you're very new at this. Has Atmos provided training as
19 far as emergency response training?

20 A. Yes, they have.

21 Q. Okay. So my question is, if you were on call during this
22 time and you're reporting to Benny -- through the field personnel
23 to Benny, okay? Would it be up to you or to Benny to enact the
24 emergency response plan?

25 A. That would be to anybody that's out there in field, really.

1 Q. Anybody in the field can do that?

2 A. Yes. Yes.

3 Q. Okay. I know -- go ahead. Sorry. I didn't mean to
4 interrupt.

5 A. But, you know, communications, like I said, it's -- once
6 that's determined, communications go back.

7 Q. So you're -- it seems like your duties are more to funnel
8 information from the field up to Benny.

9 A. Whenever it's necessary and appropriate, yes.

10 Q. So in this specific time frame, Thursday night through
11 Friday, you weren't the on-call supervisor, but you were
12 contacted, correct?

13 A. I was contacted Thursday at midday.

14 Q. Midday. Okay. For a request of help or assistance?

15 A. Yes. Yes.

16 Q. And you just, you told Josh ~~Wills~~ ^{Wallis} [sic] to report. Or was
17 that through a dispatch? How -- I guess, how does that work?

18 A. My understanding -- and I did not -- I didn't call Josh. It
19 was another supervisor that called Josh and sent him to the scene.

20 Q. Okay. Was that supervisor on call, or do you know his name?

21 A. No, he wasn't on call. It was Salvador Sanchez.

22 Q. Salvador. Okay. Okay, when we talk to him, we'll ask that.

23 Let's see here. I know you've had a lot of experience as an
24 FCC. And in that role, you are reviewing contractors' work and
25 kind of overseeing the whole project from A all -- router to the

1 tooter, as we call it.

2 A. Right.

3 Q. So I know -- I don't want to get into specifics about when a
4 contractor has not performed to your standards or Atmos's
5 standards. Can you walk me through maybe if a contractor didn't
6 perform to the standards you require, being Atmos, is there a
7 documentation procedure and a retraining? Or have you ever run
8 into that situation where you had to go that far, or is it just a
9 verbal, hey, your guy is not doing what he's supposed to, make him
10 do it right? I'm just curious.

11 A. Right. Well, both, a little bit of both. You know, we have
12 our personnel that's over the -- overseeing our company
13 contractors. And all that information goes through them also, and
14 they'll make a decision based on what's happening.

15 Q. Okay. So it's a situational decision --

16 A. Right.

17 Q. -- is what I'm asking. Okay. All right.

18 MR. COLLINS: Okay. I believe that's all the questions I
19 have. Thank you.

20 MR. CHHATRE: Any questions, John?

21 MR. McDILL: Yes. Hey, Juan. John McDill, Atmos Energy.

22 BY MR. McDILL:

23 Q. Following up on the questions around reviewing or what you
24 described with the periodic reviews of technicians and going out
25 in the field with them, do you go out with the technicians fairly

1 often or -- are you out there, able to go out with your employees
2 fairly routinely?

3 A. To answer your question correctly, I don't -- I haven't been
4 in my position --

5 Q. Long enough.

6 A. -- long enough to answer that question correctly. Yeah,
7 we --

8 Q. That's fair.

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. But as, also as part of -- maybe not in your current role
11 today, but in your old role, there's a formal review process?

12 A. In my --

13 Q. Of performance reviews?

14 A. In my old role?

15 Q. Right.

16 A. Performance review, yes. You know, in my old role as an
17 employee, I had to do performance -- I had to submit a performance
18 review to my supervisor. And, you know, just kind of outlining
19 what I was going to do.

20 Q. Right.

21 MR. McDILL: Okay. Thank you.

22 MR. CHHATRE: Okay. Ravi Chhatre, NTSB. Couple of quick
23 follow-up questions.

24 BY MR. CHHATRE:

25 Q. You said Joshua reported to you?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Okay. As supervisor, are you familiar with various
3 procedures service technicians are supposed to follow? I'm not
4 saying you have to remember everything. I'm saying are you
5 familiar with the -- that these different tasks, these procedures
6 exist? Let me rephrase it. Do you know which tasks have a
7 followed procedure and which don't?

8 A. Not from on top of my head.

9 Q. I understand. I understand.

10 A. I have to look at a list of things according to their title
11 or what they have to have to be fully qualified.

12 Q. Okay. Now are these technicians supposed to carry these
13 procedures with them when they are dispatched to a job? Or they
14 can look at the computers, or how does that work?

15 A. They have access to our procedures in the computer. And
16 they're -- they can look at the procedures anytime they will need
17 to look at the procedures.

18 Q. Now are they required to follow the procedure or they can
19 modify these procedures?

20 A. The procedures we have to follow, you know.

21 Q. Have to follow the procedures.

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Now if the person has a procedure in his truck, on the
24 computer, and this person is working in the field, and if he has a
25 -- how is he going to make sure? Does he have to go back, then,

1 drop what he is doing and go back to the truck and follow it? I'm
2 just trying to understand the logic. See, I was in that alley the
3 other day. And I tell you -- I mean, I'm old. I realize that.
4 But for me to get out of one ditch and go to my truck maybe half a
5 block away and come back was an effort.

6 A. Right.

7 Q. So I'm just trying to understand -- because we heard
8 different responses to different kind of tasks to a certain
9 extent. So I just want to make sure what is -- how a person
10 really make sure that they are following the procedure? Because
11 if the person doesn't remember -- not necessarily they don't want
12 to follow, but if they don't remember the procedure or have the
13 procedure in hand, how that person going to do the task?

14 A. Well, I couldn't answer that question directly, because I
15 mean, each individual is different. I mean, I guess -- I think it
16 depends on who is the person. If they feel the need, that they
17 need to review those procedures again, you know, that's how --
18 that's what they have to do.

19 Q. Okay. I'm a little stuck I guess, if you would, but I'm just
20 trying to find out how -- you know, in a hierarchy of checks and
21 balances -- and these technicians report to pretty hazardous
22 conditions. I mean, some of those can be very time dependent
23 emergency situations. How does the management -- you are part of
24 management, and people above you -- know these key employees are
25 actually really following the procedure to the T or they are not?

1 How do you make sure that this thing is happening? And when I say
2 you, I don't mean you personally. I mean you as a company.

3 A. Right. Well, I think our -- I couldn't answer that question,
4 I think, correctly or --

5 Q. No, no. I mean, if you don't, you don't.

6 A. Right.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. So, I mean, we -- like I said, we have -- we train our
9 employees. We -- whenever they are ready, they have to --

10 Q. Right. Okay.

11 A. -- make sure they follow the procedures.

12 Q. Okay. Now when your employees are dispatched to an emergency
13 situation -- could be fire, could be inside leak -- what happens
14 to information? I mean, the technician goes out and he follows
15 whatever the procedure he or she has to follow. And they generate
16 the readings and, with the computer system these days, they feed
17 the data back to something or somebody.

18 A. Right.

19 Q. How you as the supervisor know that -- what happened to that
20 situation afterwards? Who does, I guess, within the company?

21 A. That service technician is in charge of documenting what he
22 finds and put it on the leak order information. And then we as a
23 supervisor, we have to review those leaks and make sure that
24 everything was followed. Or, you know, see the comments, what the
25 contract -- or the -- I'm sorry -- the service tech put on those

1 notes.

2 Q. Okay. So I guess I'm trying to find what is the closure,
3 then? If somebody calls in for a gas odor and somebody goes and
4 does bar hole, they feed the information. And so what is the
5 closure to this procedure? As a supervisor, how do you know the
6 event is properly closed? You do some kind of a closure, either
7 repair, replacement, whatever.

8 A. Right, right. If they find a leak, you know, they have to
9 grade it accordingly or, you know, call in for an emergency or --
10 depending on what they find out there.

11 Q. Right.

12 A. You know, they (indiscernible) --

13 Q. From what I understand, the people feed the information in
14 your system, and then they can be assigned to a different task.

15 A. Right.

16 Q. And so I'm just trying to find out from that point onwards.
17 You are the supervisor. How do you know that, okay, we got this
18 data? Who looks at that data and says, okay, it's all done and
19 taken care of; file it? Or somebody says, no, I think that this
20 needs to be looked into a little more further. Who makes that
21 decision?

22 A. The technicians are trained to make the right decision and
23 they complete the orders appropriately to whatever they find in
24 the field. And that information, they submit it, then we -- into
25 the system.

1 MR. CHHATRE: Okay. That's all I have. PHMSA?

2 DR. JENNER: I have --

3 MR. CHHATRE: Go ahead. I'm sorry.

4 DR. JENNER: Okay.

5 BY DR. JENNER:

6 Q. I just want to follow up on that --

7 A. Sure.

8 Q. -- on your last statement. So technicians perform their
9 task, feed it to the system. And I imagine quite a few reports
10 are generated on a daily basis; is that right?

11 A. Yeah, that's correct.

12 Q. Right. On average, how many reports might you get submitted
13 in one day?

14 A. Couldn't answer that question accurately. I mean, that could
15 be 20, 30.

16 Q. Okay. So your guess is about --

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. -- 20, 30. Okay. So that's a lot of reports to review. I
19 mean, that's -- so does each one of those reports that get
20 generated to the system get reviewed by a supervisor?

21 A. I don't know if all of them get reviewed. I don't know how
22 many or you know.

23 Q. Is that part of your job duties to review this?

24 A. Somehow, you know, whatever the -- we as supervisors have to
25 review the leaks that got created in the system and review the

1 notes of the technician to make sure they, you know, see what
2 happened or what the technician put in the order.

3 Q. Right. Between the group of you, of those people who have to
4 review, are they able to keep pace with the number that are
5 generated each day?

6 A. Yes. And, you know, and to a certain -- you know, as we're
7 reviewing, we're, you know -- I guess I couldn't answer that
8 question correctly.

9 Q. Okay. Do you, upon reading a -- if you know -- reading a --
10 one of these reports, if you have questions or something looks
11 confusing, what do you do? Do you call the technician or -- to
12 ask for clarification? Or are there -- does that ever happen?

13 A. Yes. Like if we have a question on a comment or the
14 information they put in there, we'll call the technician and try
15 to get some clarification.

16 Q. Right. Okay. Do you ever have to reach out to the fire
17 department for -- let's say both of you are at the scene of an
18 incident. There's a fire and then an Atmos person comes out, and
19 there's sometimes exchange of information there and maybe
20 information that the fire department has from their own
21 investigation. Is there ever a time or a need where you reach out
22 to the fire department for their reports?

23 A. I couldn't answer that. I couldn't answer that. I haven't
24 -- you know, with my short period of time, I don't know.

25 DR. JENNER: Okay. Very good. That's all I have. Thank

1 you.

2 MS. COLLETTI: This is Alex Colletti, PHMSA.

3 BY MS. COLLETTI:

4 Q. So forgive me if you've given the answer to this question
5 already.

6 A. Okay.

7 Q. But specifically talking about the 3515 incident and
8 essentially all that your guys did and some of the other folks,
9 the other teams did in this area, what specific information did
10 your employees provide to you about what was going on? And how
11 did they do that?

12 A. By phone. And also ~~by Beverly~~ ^{verbally}. When I was out there, they
13 were updating me on the readings, their leak investigation. Now
14 that's for that 3515 and the house next door, the --

15 Q. The 3531? Yeah. Okay. So let's say they come to you on
16 3515 and they said, hey, we leak surveyed down here but -- and we
17 saw this reading on the main but we couldn't figure out where it
18 was coming from. What would you do? Would you provide them
19 guidance? Is that something you expect them to figure out? Kind
20 of what's your role? What's the interplay there?

21 A. Can you repeat the question?

22 Q. Oh, yeah. It's just a hypothetical question, so not
23 something specific. So let's say, let's say in this case, so they
24 did find -- they found -- 3531, they found a leak there at the
25 house on the pressure line. But let's say some mystery house, and

1 they went and they found a leak on the main. And then they went
2 to the house and they tried to find where the leak was and they
3 couldn't pinpoint it. And, you know, they said -- do you help
4 them figure out where to go next or is that something that they
5 make that decision independent? I'm trying to figure out how much
6 involvement you have in that process.

7 A. They kind of pinpoint the leak and, you know, based on the
8 information they provide, you know, migration or amount of gas
9 that they are picking up, then, you know, we act on those.

10 Q. So that's not something where you would step in and say, hey,
11 why don't you think about looking here? You know, you're really
12 trusting your guys because they're your guys and you know their
13 skills, right --

14 A. Right.

15 Q. -- to do that. Okay. In terms of -- what specifically did
16 your guys tell you about -- you know, they told you about the
17 readings, right? Did they say, hey, we feel like there's
18 something bigger going on here or, you know, there's this, this
19 and this and this, then this happened; can you try and put the
20 dots together, boss? Or how -- you know, or is that a Benny
21 decision? Or how does that work?

22 A. Yeah. Well, all the information that we were getting out in
23 the field was, you know, shared with the management who have been
24 -- we were making decisions, you know, as we -- as the leaks were
25 found.

1 Q. Okay. So what specific information did you pass up your
2 chain?

3 A. I was out there mainly, you know -- I was out there with
4 another supervisor, Salvador Sanchez, and he was the main one that
5 was communicating up the channel. I was there to -- I was there
6 also, but I was writing the people that were coming to the jobsite
7 and things like that, like -- things like that. And then, you
8 know, communicating with Salvador of what's going on.

9 Q. Okay. So Salvador took that main role of liaisioning between
10 the field?

11 A. Mainly. Mainly.

12 MS. COLLETTI: Okay. That's all. Thank you. That's all
13 I've got. Thank you.

14 MR. COLLINS: No questions.

15 MR. McDILL: Juan, just to clarify. Maybe you answered this
16 already, so my apologies, but -- John McDill, Atmos Energy.

17 BY MR. McDILL:

18 Q. You mentioned, I think on several times, but as information
19 about leaks or about customer work or whatever goes into a system,
20 tell me about -- there is a process you described, I think, of
21 reviewing of the information, correct?

22 A. Right.

23 Q. And oftentimes, if it's discovered for a leak that requires
24 some subsequent action, can you describe the process that connects
25 when it's discovered and then maybe how that gets to someone for

1 follow-up action?

2 A. When something is discovered that we think it needs
3 attention, we either send somebody else to reinvestigate or it
4 gets passed to the appropriate person to investigate.

5 Q. And if it required construction work, we would --

6 A. Right. Yeah.

7 Q. -- we would initiate that work?

8 A. If it requires to upgrade that leak to a higher grade or
9 importance, then we will act on that to repair it.

10 MR. McDILL: Okay. I think that may be all. Just to clarify
11 the the process to bring the work to closure. So --

12 MR. GOMEZ: Yes.

13 MR. CHHATRE: Ravi Chhatre, NTSB. Just one thing I forgot to
14 ask earlier.

15 BY MR. CHHATRE:

16 Q. On the call on 3515, initial call, do you say you were at the
17 scene on that one?

18 A. 3515 I was near the scene. I was, I think, on -- mainly on
19 Larga. But yes, I was in the -- on Larga.

20 Q. And Larga incident is where the lady had gas bubbling out --

21 A. Right.

22 Q. -- from the front lawn?

23 A. Yeah, on Larga.

24 Q. Okay. And why would you go there for that incident?

25 A. Well, that's what -- we were, you know, parking and we --

1 that's where all the space to be at was at, right there, at the
2 alley of -- behind, you know, 3515 and Larga.

3 Q. I mean, for that location, did you go there to assist? Did
4 you go there to supervise? What was the intention to respond
5 to --

6 A. Yeah, that was -- I was out there to -- as a supervisor.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. So did anybody come to you for advice or to make a decision?
10 Or did you made any decision when you were at 3515?

11 A. When the techs provided that information that they found a
12 leak on the side of the house, I think it was -- I believe it was
13 3519, we -- through the decision, you know, through everybody, we
14 decided to -- that we were going to fix it that day.

15 Q. And were you aware that there were some readings as high as
16 -- was it 52 percent or something like that? Were you aware of
17 those readings? Did any other technician came in and told you
18 that, that they got one high reading on -- right here. 3552.

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: 3519?

20 MR. CHHATRE: 3519.

21 MR. GOMEZ: Yeah, that was the -- if it's -- if I'm right,
22 and I could be wrong, that's --

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Ravi, here's the leak report.

24 MR. CHHATRE: Okay.

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: If that helps.

1 MR. CHHATRE: Yeah.

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Sorry.

3 BY MR. CHHATRE:

4 Q. So I'm just trying to find out. So you were aware that that
5 reading was that high?

6 A. I cannot recall the -- any readings. I know that day the
7 technicians found a leak by the riser at the 3519, if I'm saying
8 that address correctly.

9 Q. I think the leak was on the main, and maybe the service tee
10 probably or could be. But the reading was on the main, not on --
11 near the meter.

12 A. Okay.

13 Q. So I guess my question, when you are there, so didn't the
14 technicians come and tell you the high reading, or you -- nobody
15 came and told you or --

16 A. I don't recall nobody telling me that we had a reading that
17 high that day.

18 Q. So let me ask you the question different way. So you are
19 there as a supervisor. So what were your responsibilities? What
20 were you intending to do to be there?

21 A. Just to make sure that we had all the resources that we
22 needed for ~~improvised~~ ^{improved} support for our employees, making sure that
23 if they needed extra equipment, we'd make a call and provide --

24 Q. The equipment.

25 A. -- equipment necessary.

1 Q. But you are not asking them to report any readings to you as
2 a supervisor?

3 A. Well, they were reporting the readings to us of what they
4 found, but I can't recall readings that high. That I can't
5 remember right now.

6 Q. Sure. But if you are -- let's just say, if you are aware of
7 that reading, what you would have done? As a supervisor.

8 A. You know, depends on the situation. You're saying 35
9 percent?

10 Q. No, it was at 52 percent on the main. And the number was
11 3519. So he's almost like next door.

12 A. Right. So it will depend, you know -- everything was
13 reported on that address, the reading. The information was
14 reported to our bosses, and they -- we made the decision.

15 Q. But I guess, would you have taken any other action, besides
16 the data being fed, with 52 percent high? Do you believe it's a
17 high reading, unusual reading, or you are not maybe that familiar
18 with these readings?

19 A. That's, you know, fairly high readings. You know, and also
20 it depends on several things, like migration patterns, you know,
21 getting into different conduits --

22 Q. I understand.

23 A. -- or whatever, you know. That's how you make the decision.

24 MR. CHHATRE: Okay. Thanks.

25 Anybody has any follow-up?

1 If not, thank you so much for stopping by, waiting that long
2 for us and helping us out.

3 MR. GOMEZ: Thank you.

4 MR. CHHATRE: Off the record.

5 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD


IN THE MATTER OF: NATURAL GAS-FUELED EXPLOSION OF
RESIDENCE, DALLAS, TEXAS
FEBRUARY 23, 2018
Interview of Juan Gomez

ACCIDENT NO.: PLD18FR002

PLACE: Dallas, Texas

DATE: February 28, 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.


Eileen Gonzalez
Transcriber



National Transportation Safety Board
Washington, D.C. 20594

Name: Juan Gomez

Department Atmos Energy / Mid-Tex Operations

Title: Operations Supervisor

Date of Interview: June 6, 2018

I have reviewed my transcript(s) from the above referenced accident and:

I have no comments to make.

My comments are submitted herewith.

My comments are marked on the attached copy.




UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

NATURAL GAS-FUELED EXPLOSION OF *
RESIDENCE, DALLAS, TEXAS *
FEBRUARY 23, 2018 *

* Accident No.: PLD18FR002

* * * * *

Interview of: JUAN GOMEZ

Atmos Energy Offices
Dallas, Texas

Wednesday,
June 6, 2018

APPEARANCES:

ROGER EVANS, Investigator in Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

RACHAEL GUNARATNAM, Hazardous Materials Accident
Investigator
Emergency Response Group
National Transportation Safety Board

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

MICHAEL PARKER, Engineering Specialist
Railroad Commission of Texas

JIM COLLINS, Manager, Region 6
Railroad Commission of Texas

THOMAS TOBIN, Attorney
Wilson Elser
(On behalf of Juan Gomez)

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I N T E R V I E W

(2:04 p.m.)

1
2
3 MR. EVANS: This is Roger Evans on the record with Juan
4 Gomez.

5 Good afternoon. Today is June 6th, 2018. It is now 2:04
6 p.m. My name is Roger Evans. I'm the investigator in charge of
7 this case. I'm with the National Transportation Safety Board out
8 of Washington, D.C.

9 We are at the Atmos offices in Dallas, Texas. This interview
10 is being conducted as part of the investigation into the Atmos
11 fatality accident that occurred in February, on February 23rd,
12 2018. The case number is PLD18FR002.

13 This interview is being recorded and may be transcribed at a
14 later date. A copy of the transcript will be provided to the
15 interviewee for review prior to being entered into the docket.

16 Do we have permission to record this interview?

17 MR. GOMEZ: Yes.

18 MR. EVANS: Thank you. Mr. Juan Gomez, you are permitted to
19 have one person present during the interview. This is a person of
20 your choice -- supervisor, friend, family member or nobody at all.
21 Please state for the record who you have selected to be present
22 during this interview.

23 MR. GOMEZ: I've selected Tom Tobin to sit here and represent
24 me.

25 MR. EVANS: Okay. Mr. Tobin, can you please introduce

1 yourself?

2 MR. TOBIN: Hi. My name is Tom Tobin. I'm an attorney with
3 the Wilson Elser law firm in New York.

4 MR. EVANS: Thank you. I'd like to go around the room,
5 starting with my -- to my left, and have everyone state their
6 name, title, agency or organization you're representing, and
7 including those people on the phone.

8 MR. PARKER: This is Michael Parker with the Railroad
9 Commission of Texas.

10 MR. COLLINS: Jim Collins, Regional Manager, Railroad
11 Commission of Texas.

12 MS. GUNARATNAM: Rachel Gunaratnam, hazmat investigator,
13 NTSB.

14 MR. LEMMERMAN: Darren Lemmerman, PHMSA accident
15 investigator.

16 INTERVIEW OF JUAN GOMEZ

17 BY MR. EVANS:

18 Q. Again, thank you for agreeing to talk to us today. Let's
19 start out with the spelling of your name, your job title, and how
20 long you've been with the firm.

21 A. My name is Juan Gomez, J-U-A-N, G-O-M-E-Z. I've been working
22 for Atmos Energy for approximately 20 years.

23 Q. And your job title?

24 A. My title here is currently operations supervisor.

25 Q. And before this position, what were you doing?

1 A. I was holding a position of a field construction coordinator,
2 senior field construction coordinator.

3 Q. And then prior to that, did you do CGI-type work or RMLD
4 work, or anything like that for surveys?

5 A. No, sir.

6 Q. Okay. So no hands-on experience doing any kind of bar hole
7 testing, nothing like that?

8 A. I have done many -- I have done some bar hole testing and CGI
9 handling.

10 Q. And when was that, a long time ago?

11 A. A while back.

12 Q. Okay. And just recap for us, now when did you arrive on
13 scene?

14 A. I couldn't remember the time that I arrived at the scene. I
15 remember it was maybe around lunchtime.

16 Q. Okay. And what time did you leave?

17 A. I can't remember the exact time that I left. It was closer
18 to midnight.

19 Q. Okay. And describe your role as -- you know, what you were
20 doing on that evening?

21 A. It was help coordinate the work resources needed for what we
22 were doing, you know, assisting the company personnel and
23 contractors on the scene.

24 Q. Now, were you, during this time, I guess, being a -- do
25 you -- I mean, not to -- just politically correct to say this --

1 you're in your truck most of the time while you were there; is
2 that correct, because you're talking to dispatch or you're talking
3 to your supervisors, or are you out in the field with the guys at
4 the -- at each of the, where they were doing the work?

5 A. I couldn't recall about how much time I was in and out of the
6 truck or walking around. I did some of both.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. I have a -- you know, getting inside, listening to phone
9 calls, things like that nature, inside the truck.

10 Q. Now do you access your -- the laptops or something that shows
11 what's going on, you know, the drawings and stuff and the
12 graphics? Is that part of what you do?

13 A. That day, we didn't have any of that equipment in my truck,
14 no computers or anything.

15 Q. Okay. And who -- your communication outside of your truck,
16 besides your direct reports, that's all via radio or telephone or
17 what?

18 A. It was a cell phone most of the time. Salvador Sanchez was
19 the one that communicated the most with our directors, you know,
20 ~~site~~ ^{our} managers. I believe I did some. I can't remember how much
21 of it I did.

22 Q. Okay. Do you recall who came to you as what when, you know,
23 as far as, you know, what they found?

24 A. I can't remember exactly, you know, the events. It was a lot
25 of things going on. You know, it's been a while. I remember Josh

1 Wallis and Juan Cruz, they were reporting on how much they were
2 bar testing and kind of where they were bar testing. Yes.

3 Q. But as far as this whole night, did it seem to you like this
4 was a, you know, a routine or outside of routine, kind of maybe
5 more leaks than you're used to seeing? Or did you just consider
6 this just to be a night like any other night with your addressing
7 leaks?

8 A. It was mostly -- I mean, it was a routine job. I mean, we
9 didn't think anything of it, other than making sure that the area
10 was safe. You know, we -- if we had leaks that needed to be
11 repaired, we want to make sure that we have the right amount of
12 resources to take care of those leaks.

13 Q. Okay. Were you party to any evacuations? Did anybody have
14 to be evacuated or not?

15 A. I remember one garage apartment that needed to be evacuated
16 that night. It was kind of late at night.

17 Q. And can you approximately give us the map location, the
18 streets of where that would have been, the garage apartment?

19 A. It's -- this was Marsh here, and Durango. It was the corner
20 house that we found a leak right at the mouth of a alley, that it
21 was a hazardous leak that we -- our employees took action on
22 evacuating the area.

23 Q. So that was a Grade 1?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Okay. And was that one of the priority repairs you did that

1 night?

2 A. Yes, sir. That was one of the immediates that we had to move
3 on and correct.

4 Q. Okay. As far as the evacuation, were you -- what was --
5 describe your involvement with that evacuation.

6 A. Well, it was handled by two of our employees. I was not at
7 the scene when the people had been evacuated. I know that people
8 were evacuated through my employees. But they took action, they
9 corrected it and, you know --

10 Q. So they just came back and told you, hey, we had to evacuate
11 that --

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. -- garage apartment on --

14 A. Right.

15 Q. -- this street and that street?

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. Okay. Okay. Your training, when it comes to evacuation, can
18 you describe that for us a bit?

19 A. We get a lot of training. You know, we go through safety
20 meetings. We have -- go through courses online that we take, and
21 we go to our service center, which is in Plano, that gives us a
22 lot of first responder training, you know, and so we can know what
23 kind of actions to take when it comes to emergency situations.

24 Q. And can you describe for us your interface with the fire
25 employees when you do evacuations?

1 A. We only involve them if necessary, if we have any issues with
2 -- problems with evacuations, people not wanting to leave or, you
3 know, making the area safe, not letting anybody into the scene or
4 whatnot.

5 Q. Okay. So let's talk about the alleyway. You know, we
6 understand that there was quite a few -- we heard from another
7 person today that there was -- he was walking through the alley
8 with his RMLD and had a kind of a large presence of gas. How do
9 you ensure that once that gas has been detected, that the next
10 step is taken?

11 A. I'm not sure if it was gas. I'm not sure that we detected
12 any gas. In what part of the alley are you referring to?

13 MR. COLLINS: Yeah, this --

14 MR. EVANS: Introduce yourself.

15 MR. COLLINS: Jim Collins, Railroad Commission of Texas.

16 BY MR. COLLINS:

17 Q. The specific alley we're talking about is behind -- in
18 between Espanola and Durango, from El Centro to Larga.

19 A. Okay.

20 Q. So this alley in particular, it was mentioned that the -- he
21 had indications the whole length of the alley.

22 A. Okay. What I can remember is walking with a employee maybe
23 halfway through the alley, because our two employees that arrived
24 there earlier had done the bar testing all the way to maybe
25 halfway through the alley. I can't see the addresses right here,

1 but -- so they had that area investigated. And then, what I can
2 remember, walking on that time with that employee was maybe
3 halfway. And he was shooting his RMLD and it was making sounds,
4 you know, everywhere. But as far as good methane indications, we
5 couldn't -- we didn't pick up any.

6 Q. You didn't pinpoint any?

7 MR. COLLINS: I'm sorry. Go ahead. I apologize.

8 BY MR. EVANS:

9 Q. So when you say there was no indications, the source of that
10 comment was from whom?

11 A. From the technician.

12 Q. And who was that again?

13 A. It was Gavin Hornsby. He did mention that he was having his
14 equipment, you know, go off in each, every direction he pointed it
15 in, but no really good indications that it was methane back in
16 that alley. If he would have mentioned something, we would have
17 taken action right away.

18 Q. So as far as you're concerned, based on his -- the
19 indications he was receiving were like false positives, that he
20 was getting noise, but he wasn't getting gas? That's your
21 understanding?

22 A. That's what my understanding was from our technician, yes.

23 Q. Okay. Typically how do you ensure that once a -- if a tech
24 comes to you and says, I have indications, you know, how do you
25 ensure they're not false positives?

1 A. We go back and bar test. We bar test this, a standard area.
2 We, if we could pick up any gas, we'll bar test until we get
3 zeros, I mean, from -- so that's how we go back and test each
4 location that the technician said that he picked up some
5 indications.

6 Q. So after this string of hits from his RMLD, there were no bar
7 holes done, because based on what you're saying is that there were
8 false positives so he didn't -- you didn't order any CGIs?

9 A. Right. The previous technicians that did the bar hole
10 testing, they zero out, going back that -- to this street here.
11 So there was no indications that they -- that we were getting gas
12 back this way when we walked it with a survey technician. I mean,
13 he was getting -- you know, his machine was going off everywhere,
14 but not really, you know, on the ground or anything like that,
15 that I can remember him mentioning it to.

16 Q. And that night, did you -- I mean, can you describe the
17 weather for us?

18 A. It was cold, which, you know, different cold to me can mean
19 different cold for others. I mean, I'm kind of a cold person. It
20 was raining off and on all through the day and through most of the
21 night, and that is (indiscernible).

22 Q. Did you sense any sort of wind that night?

23 A. I cannot remember. I cannot remember.

24 MR. EVANS: Okay. That's all I have for right now.

25 MR. COLLINS: Jim Collins, Railroad Commission of Texas.

1 BY MR. COLLINS:

2 Q. So just so I'm clear, you walked with Gavin beginning at El
3 Centro, headed west down the alley?

4 A. Right, uh-huh.

5 Q. And his RMLD was making indications, but up high, not on the
6 ground? I just want to make sure I'm getting it correct in my
7 head here.

8 A. I remember that he was -- he told me once or maybe twice, I
9 can't remember exactly, that his machine, that everywhere -- you
10 know, it was, it's -- it was constantly going off. He was
11 pointing it different directions and it was just going off. It
12 wouldn't shut up. So, but he could not tell me that he found any
13 indications to go follow up on.

14 Q. Okay. Would -- did anybody else go down that alley with an
15 RMLD?

16 A. As far as I remember, he was the only one that I walked with,
17 going half this alley and back this way.

18 Q. Back that way?

19 A. To, towards Marsh.

20 Q. Towards Marsh.

21 A. I did not see any other person with an RMLD going back there.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. Not to my knowledge.

24 MR. COLLINS: Okay. Okay. All right. That's all the
25 questions I have. Thank you.

1 MR. EVANS: Darren?

2 MR. LEMMERMAN: I have no questions.

3 MR. EVANS: Okay. Rachael?

4 MS. GUNARATNAM: No questions.

5 MR. EVANS: Okay.

6 BY MR. EVANS:

7 Q. What is your knowledge of the effectiveness of RMLD?

8 A. I have very little knowledge. I don't have the opportunity
9 to work with that equipment. So, you know, what we do is, you
10 know, we rely on our technicians. They have trainings, you know,
11 with the RMLDs and --

12 Q. Let's say there's a 30-mile-an-hour wind. Would you think
13 that would be okay, to send an RMLD tech out to test an area?

14 A. It depends on the situation. You -- they say every situation
15 is different. We'll have to see what the, you know, the
16 circumstances are, to do that.

17 Q. Okay. What is your knowledge of RMLD with rain? Any
18 compromise of integrity of the sensing with rain? Is that -- have
19 you heard that before?

20 A. I know it's, you know, it's not recommended to do it in --
21 you know, to use it in wet weather, which that's why we go back
22 and follow up with the bar testing.

23 Q. So, you know, your logic -- I mean, obviously that night,
24 it's raining. You're aware -- I mean, you just told us that you
25 know it doesn't work well in the rain. But your motivation to

1 send the RMLD out even though it's raining, you know, what was the
2 full motivation for that? I mean --

3 A. Oh, we didn't have any indications that we had any trouble on
4 that alley. And those alleys, we were doing that just to, you
5 know, to do a far -- going above and beyond what we were trying to
6 accomplish, making -- trying to make the area safe. And, you
7 know, we were trying to go above and beyond our search.

8 Q. So the RMLD would give you an extra step of assurance that it
9 was either gas free or -- if you had gas?

10 A. In this situation, since we already had the bar testing done,
11 we had zero out every, each direction, you know, that was us
12 trying to go above and beyond our --

13 Q. Do you call for like -- I mean, is RMLD something that you
14 would always call for? I mean, is that a routine thing that you
15 would call for when you have gas?

16 A. It is. It's one of the resources that we rely on to pinpoint
17 leaks that are, you know, hard to pinpoint. You know, that will
18 give us indications and -- you know, of course it's going to give
19 you a small amount of indications. We go back and do our -- we'll
20 start from there, you know, to start our investigation, bar test.

21 Q. So the sequence you use is, you're going to at least hit it
22 with the RMLD, see if you get some kind of readings. If you do,
23 then you're going to go and do the CGI or --

24 A. Right.

25 Q. -- from that point forward?

1 A. That's correct.

2 Q. Okay. So, in a way, I guess you could say -- not putting
3 words in your mouth, but weather doesn't make a whole lot of
4 difference if you're going to use the RMLD or not?

5 A. I don't know much about RMLD, so I couldn't tell you exactly.

6 Q. No, I'm just saying though, I mean, what you're telling us is
7 that even with bad weather they still have some benefit, because
8 even with bad weather you can still sense -- even if it's raining,
9 even if wind's blowing --

10 A. Right.

11 Q. -- you can still get some benefit out of it?

12 A. Yes, sir.

13 Q. So I guess, in your mind, would you say it's a correct
14 statement to say there's not a whole lot of reluctance to send an
15 RMLD out because I'm going to get some benefit from using that
16 device? Is that a true statement?

17 A. Well, it's a lot of, it's -- you know, the RMLD is good, but
18 it's -- you know, that's -- and we called them out there to help
19 us out, you know, do the investigation. But we assure that we
20 don't leave nothing behind by going back in and doing our bar
21 testing and making sure that we -- with the bar test, we zero out
22 each direction and, you know, across the alleys and, you know.

23 Q. I guess what I'm getting at, though, is just generally, in a
24 general way, so if someone says, hey, I did the RMLD, I have goose
25 eggs, no gas.

1 A. Okay.

2 Q. What's your next step?

3 A. If -- it depends what you get. I mean, if you're smelling it
4 or if you have any other doubts, you -- we're going to go ahead
5 and bust out that drill and do bar tests. I mean, we -- if we
6 have any doubts that we're leaving something behind, we go back
7 and investigate.

8 Q. But could it be that you do RMLD and you find no trace and
9 you leave?

10 A. If the circumstances, and you believe that that's the case,
11 yes.

12 Q. They're going to --

13 A. I mean, if you don't have any other reason to believe that --
14 any kind of reason to believe that you have any indications of
15 anything out there, you know, like I say, it's appropriate.

16 Q. And have you used that for that in the past?

17 A. For?

18 Q. For -- I mean, just use the RMLD and then walk away once the
19 RMLD found nothing?

20 A. No, sir. No, sir. You know, the survey, I don't work with
21 the survey department.

22 Q. Right.

23 A. But, you know, they're -- they do survey to survey our
24 system. And they go out there and do indications, and then we go
25 back in and, you know, pinpoint and fix. But if we have a leak

1 call, our method is to drill and do the full investigation. If we
2 want to go beyond the investigation, we do with the bar test and
3 CGI, so we call the survey guys to help us out, broaden that, the
4 area of our investigation.

5 Q. Okay. So whenever you go out to a scene, like in this case,
6 and you -- you know, you all have a very nice DIMP program, by the
7 way.

8 A. Thank you.

9 Q. You know, you have a very good -- I think a very nice
10 program. But do you ever consult the people in the DIMP
11 department to say, hey, I'm going out and looking at this line,
12 can you give me the history, and how many leaks have I had on this
13 line in the last 5 years, or --

14 A. If we believe we need that information, we will, absolutely.
15 And we have done that before, yes.

16 Q. Did you do the inquiry that evening for this line?

17 A. I can't remember if we did or not, you know, by my other
18 supervisors or a manager or director. I personally didn't do it
19 because we were still working there. We were still, you know,
20 making sure that we were fixing all the problems that we knew at
21 that time. And I'm sure that, you know, that was going to be
22 considered.

23 Q. Did you have a chance to look at the DIMP database after the
24 fact, and see what type of leaks, you know, frequency you had in
25 this neighborhood? Did you do that?

1 A. I did not, because that's when, you know, everything happened
2 and, you know, at that time everybody was -- all our personnel was
3 involved. So I was taking care of other things and it was left to
4 other personnel.

5 Q. So can the service tech take it upon himself to call the DIMP
6 department and get a report on a segment?

7 A. Absolutely. Yeah, they --

8 Q. Is that standard training?

9 A. It's standard training if the -- you know, we have good
10 technology here. They have access to most of the material there,
11 that we all have available. But if for some reason they don't
12 know how to access it, they -- they'll always be told that, you
13 know, they're just a phone call away, to access our procedures, to
14 access any kind of information that they need to do that
15 investigation properly.

16 Q. Is there an OQ for understanding DIMP by -- for you guys? Do
17 you have some sort of an OQ that you do for DIMP, for the DIMP
18 department?

19 A. The DIMP program, what --

20 Q. The integrity management plan, is there some sort of a OQ
21 that you have to cover that says, this is what we have in our DIMP
22 program; if you need to query into that database, here's who you
23 call; and significant events -- you know, if you have 10 previous
24 leaks on this pipe, and it's 1,000 feet --

25 A. Right, right.

1 Q. -- then we need to maybe replace the pipe instead of fixing
2 it?

3 A. Right.

4 Q. That type of stuff, how does that all --

5 A. It's just by safety meetings and, you know, meeting with our
6 employees, letting them know if you run across this issue, you're
7 just a phone call away, or you do this, or come to me if you need
8 some kind of training to be able to access our material or
9 information in the computer. We make every effort for our
10 employees to know and to be prepared for what they do.

11 Q. So does the segment IDs -- and I know you folks, you track
12 everything by segment ID. Is that a common term to you and your
13 reports, the guys who report to you, that they would know what
14 segment IDs are and how to go find them and --

15 A. Not necessarily. They -- certain groups of people, they just
16 were focused on certain tasks. But if they need the information,
17 we could always go back to that department and find somebody to
18 provide that for us.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. So in your role, like if you want to -- let's say there's 10
22 leaks that you've addressed, can you yourself make a decision to
23 replace the pipe?

24 A. Absolutely. If we think it's something that is a safety
25 hazard or if it could become a safety hazard, we have the

1 authority to address it right away.

2 Q. And do you have to go up a level or something, a couple of
3 levels, to get approval to spend that money to replace that pipe?

4 A. Yes. But, you know, our safety culture here, I mean, if an
5 employee believes and brings a concern to the table, since I've
6 been here, I mean, we have not -- they have not denied any
7 replacement or find a method to make it safe. You know, not
8 necessarily replace it, if that employee, that's what he was
9 thinking, but investigate and take the appropriate action to
10 address that concern.

11 Q. But would you say that the access to the DIMP database and
12 the frequency of leaks on a segment are something that everyone in
13 your crew would know all about, or is it just a segment of the
14 people in your business that actually address that information?

15 A. It will get translated -- so are you saying that if one of my
16 employees finds an issue on a segment of pipe?

17 Q. Well, I'm saying like, your piping's all divided up into
18 segment IDs --

19 A. Right.

20 Q. -- right?

21 A. Um-hum.

22 Q. So maybe 1,000, 2,000 foot of segment is a segment link. And
23 that segment has a failure occurrence rate, right? I'm trying to
24 figure out if those numbers, the failure occurrence rate, get down
25 to your level; where if you know you have a leak on that line,

1 that you are aware of that failure rate so you're going to take
2 action --

3 A. Right.

4 Q. -- and that's part of your world?

5 A. That is correct. Yes.

6 Q. You do see that?

7 A. I do see that. We have a system where we review leaks daily
8 of where our service techs get called to a leak investigation. We
9 review those leaks and, you know, notes and address them as
10 appropriate. And then if we see a trend of issues in one area,
11 then we're going to -- if we don't understand, we have to call the
12 tech, and so he could explain what he found, what was the issues
13 are, where is the issue.

14 MR. EVANS: Okay. Thank you. That's all I have.

15 MR. PARKER: I've got some questions I didn't ask.

16 MR. EVANS: Pardon me?

17 MR. PARKER: I've got some questions I didn't ask.

18 MR. EVANS: Okay. Go ahead.

19 MR. PARKER: This is Michael Parker with the Railroad
20 Commission.

21 BY MR. PARKER:

22 Q. Earlier, you were going through and stating that you make
23 sure you get all of the information and everything to your guys
24 that they need to go through and be able to do what it is that
25 they're out there to go and do. And a question I want to go

1 through and ask you is, when they're going through and conducting
2 bar hole investigations in an area, how is it do they go through
3 and determine what the depth of the main is when they're in a
4 particular area?

5 A. The only way to know how deep the main is, is by a pothole.
6 You know, when we do leak investigations, we take the action of
7 locating the service line and then to the main. And then the
8 main, we'll drill on top of it. We don't necessarily do know the
9 depth. We know an approximate depth, but we don't know how --
10 really, how deep the main is, I mean, unless we pothole and drop a
11 tape measure in there.

12 Q. Okay. How do you get that approximate depth?

13 A. By leak history, by area, you know, and mostly by records of
14 previous work that has been done in that area.

15 MR. PARKER: Okay. That's all I have.

16 MR. COLLINS: Jim Collins, Railroad Commission of Texas.

17 BY MR. COLLINS:

18 Q. Going back to the safety culture. So when you walked with
19 Gavin down the alley, and there's indications from his RMLD but he
20 can't pinpoint them, as a safety culture company, wouldn't it be
21 prudent to investigate that further, than just relying on the
22 halfway bar hole test, that were done halfway down the alley and
23 not the other section?

24 A. Well, that night, he was ^{not} getting good indications on that
25 section of alley. And, you know, as far as our safety culture, if

1 he would have sensed that it was any concern to him, or to -- or
2 any indication that we had anything in there, we would have sent
3 additional resources to investigate that, that's for sure.

4 I mean, Gavin and everybody out there that was there that
5 night, I mean, they're highly trained service technicians and they
6 take pride on their work. And I'm sure that if he sensed or if he
7 had any doubts that maybe we had an issue there, we would have
8 addressed it. And they know that. I mean, they know that we will
9 support a hundred percent on going back, no matter what, how long
10 it takes, no matter the resources that we have to call out to get
11 the work done.

12 So I was confident that he make -- you know, that he was
13 doing the right thing out there.

14 MR. COLLINS: That's all the questions I have. Thank you.

15 MR. EVANS: Darren?

16 MR. LEMMERMAN: No more questions here.

17 MR. EVANS: Okay. Rachael?

18 MS. GUNARATNAM: No more questions.

19 MR. EVANS: Okay. Well, that's all I have. Anybody else?
20 Thank you very much.

21 MR. GOMEZ: Thank you, sir.

22 MR. EVANS: Appreciate it.

23 MR. GOMEZ: Thank you.

24 MR. EVANS: Off the record.

25 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: NATURAL GAS-FUELED EXPLOSION OF
RESIDENCE, DALLAS, TEXAS
FEBRUARY 23, 2018
Interview of Juan Gomez

ACCIDENT NO.: PLD18FR002

PLACE: Dallas, Texas

DATE: June 6, 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 Jacobson
Transcriber