UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Investigation of:	*
	*
NATURAL GAS DISTRIBUTION PIPELINE	*
LEAK AND MULTISTORY STRUCTURE	* Docket No.: DCA-14-MP-002
EXPLOSION IN HARLEM, NEW YORK	*
MARCH 12, 2014	*
	*

Interview of: FRANK McBRIEN

Con Edison
4 Irving Place
New York, New York

Monday,
August 4, 2014

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

BEFORE: RAVI CHHATRE
Investigator-in-Charge

APPEARANCES:

RAVI CHHATRE, Investigator-in-Charge
National Transportation Safety Board
Washington, D.C.

KALU KELLY EMEABA, Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

MATTHEW NICHOLSON, Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

FRANK McCARTON, Deputy Commissioner
Office of Emergency Management
New York, New York
(Party Representative)

ANASTASIOS GEORGELIS, Director of Field Operations
Bureau of Water and Sewer Operations
Department of Environmental Protection
New York, New York

LEONARD SINGH, Chief Engineer
Gas Distribution Services
Con Edison
(Party Representative)

CHRIS STOLICKY, Utility Supervisor (Safety)
New York State Department of Public Service
(Party Representative)

ROBERT ALBANO, Esq.
(Representative on behalf of Mr. McBrien)

I N D E X

I N T E R V I E W

MR. CHHATRE: Good morning. Today is Monday, August 4, 2014. We are currently in Con Edison's facility located at 4 Irving Place, New York. We are meeting regarding the investigation of natural gas distribution pipeline leak and multi-story structure explosion that occurred on March 12, 2014 in Harlem, New York.

My name is Ravi Chhatre. I am with the National Transportation Safety Board located in Washington, D.C. and I am the Investigator-in-Charge of this accident. The NTSB investigation number for this accident is DCA-14-MP-002.

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

Also, I'd like to inform Frank McBrien that you are permitted to have one other person with you during your interview. Now, this person is of your choice: your supervisor, your friend, family member, or if you choose, no one at all.

Please state for the record your full name, spelling of your name, organization you work for, your title, business contact information such as mailing address, and whom you have chosen to be present with you during the interview.

MR. McBRIEN: My name is Francis M. McBrien, M-c-B-r-i-e-n. I work at 750 East 16th Street, Manhattan. I am the section manager of Manhattan gas operations GES, Gas Distribution Services and Emergency Response. I have chosen Bob Albano to be present with me for this interview.

MR. CHHATRE: Now I'd like to go around the room and have each person introduce themselves. Please state your name, spelling of your name, your title, and organization that you represent and your business contact information. And we'll start from our right. Matt?

MR. NICHOLSON: Matthew Nicholson; M-a-t-t-h-e-w, N-i-c-h-o-l-s-o-n. I am an NTSB investigator. My e-mail address is [redacted].

MR. KELLY: Kalu Kelly Emeaba; K-a-l-u, K-e-l-l-y, E-m-e-a-b-a. I'm an NTSB investigator. My e-mail address is [redacted]

MR. MCCARTON: My name is Frank McCarton; Frank, M-c-c-a-r-t-o-n. [redacted]. And I am the New York City party rep for this investigation.

MR. GEORGELIS: Anastasios Georgelis; A-n-a-s-t-a-s-i-o-s, Georgelis, G-e-o-r-g-e-l-i-s. I am with the New York City Department of Environmental Protection. I am the Director of Field Operations for Water and Sewer Operations. My e-mail is [redacted]gov.

MR. SINGH: Leonard Singh, Chief Engineer, Gas

Distribution Service; NTSB party rep representing Con Ed. L-e-o-n-a-r-d, last name S-i-n-g-h. E-mail, [redacted]

MR. STOLICKY: Chris Stolicky, New York State Department of Public Service, Utilities Supervisor (Safety). E-mail address is [redacted]

MR. ALBANO: Robert Albano; R-o-b-e-r-t, A-l-b-a-n-o, Con Edison. I'm accompanying Mr. McBrien at his request.

INTERVIEW OF FRANK McBRIEN

BY MR. CHHATRE:

Q. Frank, just for the record, can you state your formal education, your position with Con Edison and how long you have been with Con Edison, your past experience?

A. You say you want my education first?

Q. Um-hum.

A. I have a master's degree in organizational management, a bachelor's degree in business. I'm 29 years at Con Edison and I'm currently 4 years in my current position. What was the initial information, I'm sorry? That's it? Okay.

Q. Okay. Now, can you tell me what your responsibilities are in your current position?

A. My responsibilities are we respond to leaks that get called in. I'm responsible for leak response, public service commission mandated inspections, all the inspection work in Manhattan, every leak response for Manhattan. I -- responsible for the off hours, which is basically it's a 24/7 operation. I

have crews that work 24/7. They make -- they'll make, in the off hours, they'll make the repairs, make temporary repairs to make safe for the construction crews in the day. We do follow-up surveillances, encroachment, special surveys. So most that -- things of that nature.

Q. Okay. And what about OQ qualification for the plastic pipes?

A. Under me right now, right now I have the emergency response force people would be OQ'd under -- for plastic. The GDS mechanics are not required to have OQ for plastic unless they are a lead mechanic, which means they're dual qualified in both gas distribution services and construction services, and in those instances they would be OQ qualled. Otherwise, only the leads and GDS would have OQ for plastic.

Q. And GDS, meaning what?

A. Gas distribution services.

Q. And do the accident location comes under your jurisdiction?

A. 116th Street? Yes.

Q. Now, are you involved in operator qualification for plastic fusion in any shape or form, the training center or with the --

A. I was an instructor at the learning center in the past. I was -- I did operator qualifications. Currently I'm on the training committee and I'm on the NGA committee.

Q. Okay. And how do you get on the training committee?
A. I was appointed to be on the training committee.
Q. Okay. And who makes that decision?
A. That was the general manager at that time asked if I'd be on the training committee.
Q. And have you been on the training committee at the time of the accident?
A. Yes.
Q. And what do you do as a member of the training committee?
A. Review policies, best practices, new -- well, you look at implementation of new tools, new covered -- we also review, like, the NGA plan, new covered task, any new covered task that come on board and what's relevant, what needs to be implemented, and how it pertains to Con Edison.
Q. And does that include the plastic welding --
A. Yes.
Q. -- the fusion?
A. Yes. Yes.
Q. And how do you become familiar with the new tools or new techniques?
A. We go to -- we have, like, a tool and van committee which looks at the new tools and stuff and then they're presented and they give overviews to the people, to the members of the committee, and then based on the different committees and the

different people involved, they do like a presentation, like a demonstration first to see how it works and then also demonstrates at the learning center that we have to see them.

Q. And what's your involvement in developing curriculum at the learning centers?

A. I don't.

Q. You don't. Okay. So do you review the training offered, training that is being offered at the training center?

A. The training that's being offered? No, I just -- I don't review the training, no.

Q. Okay. And are you responsible for the contractor's work who are doing work, for example, the work at the ground zero installation of the service tee?

A. No, I don't have anything to do with that. That would be on the construction side, on the construction side of the house.

Q. Okay. That will be construction?

A. Yeah.

Q. Now, do you use contractors?

A. I use contractors, yes.

Q. For the plastic fusion?

A. The company does. I particularly don't have any contractors in plastic fusion reporting to me, no.

Q. Okay. So do you have any involvement with the contractors to make sure they're qualified for plastic fusion

welding?

A. I don't have any reporting to me --

Q. You don't. Oh, okay.

A. -- so I wouldn't --

Q. You would not have any. And what is your involvement in NGA?

A. I'm on the NGA operator qualification committee for Con Edison. We'll review the NGA plan. I attend NGA meetings and we annually review the NGA plan, any updates to that plan, and then the committee gets involved in the changes and how they pertain to Con Edison.

Q. And just for the record, can you spell NGA, what it stands for?

A. Northeast Gas Association.

Q. Okay. And how often do you guys meet?

A. Well, are you talking about Con Edison's committee or the NGA --

Q. No, NGA.

A. There's various monthly meetings, depending on the committees you're on. Usually ours is quarterly.

Q. Okay.

A. And if changes are made, it's subsequently more frequent if there's things pertaining to changes that have come up.

Q. Okay. Does that committee discuss any lessons learned from other members in terms of, I mean, mishap, near misses?

A. No, they review -- they'll review different things that they've had at the NGA meetings, yes.

Q. Okay. That's all for me. Thank you.

A. Okay.

MR. CHHATRE: Kelly?

BY MR. EMEABA:

Q. Initially, I did ask the previous interviewee questions on some of the field inspectors. What activities do you do with the field inspectors you have? Do you work close with them?

A. Can I just clarify? Are you meaning like supervisors or like construction inspectors?

Q. Construction inspectors.

A. I don't have any reporting to me.

Q. No?

A. I don't have -- I am in a separate department. I don't have interaction with them pertaining to my work.

Q. Okay. You did mention that one of your responsibilities is leak response?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. Other than leak response, are you involved in leak surveys?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. So can you tell us the activities that are being performed in the area of leak survey for the past 5 years in the area that the incident occur?

A. No, I could not.

Q. Okay. Do you know of special incidents of leaks that were found in that general area?

A. I know of leaks that have been found in that general area, yes.

Q. Okay. And you have records of them?

A. Let me clarify. I do a leak survey when the leak survey department -- I do special leak surveys, not the planned leak surveys. I do special leak surveys.

Q. Can you elaborate more on that?

A. Sure. So if there is a -- just for example, 2nd Avenue subway -- I'm just giving this as an example -- 2nd Avenue subway is working. They do blasting of the ground to put the subway in. We will come by and do a survey pre and post. We do pre and post milling of streets surveys, where my people will go out and do a leak survey of that street. We don't do the large -- it's very localized to certain blocks. It's not a mass leak survey, not a mass survey. It's specialized based on the work being performed in a generalized area.

Q. Okay.

MR. SINGH: Can I just let you know, the people responsible for leak survey on a normal basis will be here later in the week. They're on the agenda.

MR. EMEABA: Okay. I'm not (indiscernible). Okay.

BY MR. EMEABA:

Q. So based on the activity that are called or the incident, what kind of leak surveys did your group perform at the time of the accident?

A. My group responded to the leak. We didn't do a mobile survey. My group did not do a mobile survey, if that's what you're referring --

Q. Okay. So in addition to leak responses, can you remind me again what other activities do your group perform?

A. We'll do turn-ons of customers, integrity tests of riser integrities, meter exchanges, public service commission mandated inspections, vaults, buildings of public assembly, main valve inspections, those type of inspections, along with leak surveillance and leak response.

Q. Okay. And you mentioned the one question from Ravi that you do not -- you are not involved in development of the OQ curricula, correct?

A. OQ curriculum?

Q. For plastic fusions and all that?

A. No, I do not. As far as the learning center goes, no.

Q. Okay. So your being a member of the committee --

A. Um-hum.

Q. -- what is your contribution?

A. My contribution is that I have -- I'm actually operator qualified myself. I worked as a mechanic and a supervisor. I've done it and I was an instructor at the learning center. So I'm

brought in on the various types of questions regarding operator qualification coverage and those type of things pertaining to various types of functions by mechanics and the groups of the mechanics and who it would pertain to.

Q. Okay. So indirectly do you make contribution on how the curriculum should be written?

A. No, I don't -- the curriculum at the learning center is separate. I'll review operator qualification.

Q. Yes.

A. Yes, yes. I don't review curriculum for the learning center. That's something completely different.

Q. Yeah. And when you say you review operator qualification, is it not from the operator qualification that curriculums are generated to train your employees?

A. But that's not the only curriculum, and that's -- it's one aspect of a broad, broad -- the curriculum at the learning center revolves hours and hours and hours of training that some of it has nothing to do with operator qualification. Operator qualification is one aspect of it.

Q. Okay.

A. One aspect of training. So if you say -- and I don't implement how it's trained, the hours of classes; I don't have anything to do with that. I -- these are the -- we review and say these are the topics that need to be covered. The way they want to administer it has nothing to do with me.

Q. Okay. Can you please tell us a little bit of the covered task that you've given -- you made contributions as to how the -- your personnel or contractors who they train, some of the covered task?

A. Covered tasks? Okay. We do like meter exchanging. So who would have to be -- we have new contractors that come in and do meter exchanges, so those are contractors and Edison people. We go review this, what's needed. We do main valve inspections, inspecting of main valves, greasing and operating of main valves. We review the same thing, the mechanical fittings, service work, main cut-outs, stopping off of gas, the various 70-some-odd that are applicable right now to Con Edison. There's 74, I believe, right now. It's changing, but I think there's 74 of the 84 that are applicable right now to us that were reviewed to see yes or no if it's applicable to this department or this department and who it would pertain to.

Q. Okay. Do your company use a stab-on coupling in your system?

A. Stab couplings?

Q. Yes?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. So that is part of mechanical fitting?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. So, and that is part of the things individuals, employees are OQ qualified?

A. Yes. Yeah.

Q. So you actually contribute towards the OQ qualified -- qualifications, rather?

A. Well, yeah, but that had been in place well before I came on to -- those type of couplings had been there before I came on, stab couplings. I didn't implement that. That was already implemented by the time was there.

Q. Okay. Thank you.

MR. STOLICKY: I do have a couple questions.

MR. CHHATRE: Tell who you are.

BY MR. STOLICKY:

Q. Chris Stolicky, New York State Department of Public Service. When you say the special leak surveys is handled by your group, does that include the frost survey?

A. No.

Q. Okay. So mainly just special project at the 2nd Avenue subway?

A. It's cranes -- if there's a crane on the job, we'll go by and do a special survey in the area of the crane. Post-milling, DOT comes in mills a street, we'll come in and do -- leak survey will do the pre-milling, like the pre-paving inspection survey. Once the street is milled, my group will come in and do a survey of the post-milled street. We also, if leak survey is involved, we'll do the -- sometimes, not all the time, we'll do like a parade route, you know, the Columbus Day Parade,

Thanksgiving Day Parade, those type of things, New Year's Eve.

Q. Super Bowl?

A. Super Bowl. Super Bowl, yes.

Q. Okay. Let me see. So you said you came up through the ranks, you've been with the company 29 years.

A. Um-hum.

Q. Have you ever worked in the field performing plastic fusions?

A. Oh, absolutely, yes.

Q. Okay. Have you experienced any failures in the field?

A. Of a plastic fusion?

Q. Yes.

A. No. You mean -- could you just clarify what you mean?

Q. Meaning any visual failures, anything that's broken off, any pressure test failures?

A. Oh, no, I've seen failures of pipe where I've excavated something and it was a failure and then we would take that and make out a plastic failure report, whether it was the fitting or whatever it was. You would take it out and you make out a plastic failure report. We have what's called a plastic failure report.

Q. Any fusions?

A. I would say, yeah, over the course of my career, I would say I've probably seen a couple of fusions, yes.

Q. And of those fusion failures, was any kind of root cause analysis done as to why it failed?

A. It was when I was a mechanic. I actually don't know.
Q. Okay. And you mentioned you've been on your job about 4 years?
A. As the manager, yes.
Q. This is kind of a question we asked someone earlier. Con Edison has a program where they bounce managers around every few years. Is there any kind of process in place for -- basically for business continuity and training? Meaning they throw you into this job. Is there an overlap with your predecessor to make sure that things don't fall in the gaps or that there's a continuous of business operations?
A. Well, in my experience, yeah, I have where I've gone and met with the person that I'd be replacing and, you know, and gone and asked like, well, how do you do this? And, you know, you get just to, you know, pick their brain and find out how they run things and you see how they do it. And the same thing with me, when I left my previous position, the person came to me and asked me the same thing. And you go back and forth and see what --
Q. Is there a formal program or like a check-off list --
A. Not that I'm aware of.
Q. -- something that you're aware of?
A. Not that I'm aware of.
Q. That's all I have.
MR. CHHATRE: Do you have anything Frank? Okay.
BY MR. CHHATRE:

Q. Just a couple of follow-up questions on OQ and maybe you can elaborate. You said you are involved in OQ part of the training center, developing --

A. OQ, I'm on the operator qualification committee, as far as for gas operations, where we review tasks for both GDS and construction, so -- and other departments and where it would be applicable.

Q. And how does that information that you gain from NGA gets translated to the training center?

A. Well, there's a --

Q. Or the learning center, whatever the terminology is.

A. Yes. The manager of the learning center for the -- the manager of the gas school portion of the learning center is on the committee. So they're aware of it. And there is also an instructor from the learning center on that committee. So the learning center has input into it, as well as each operating area has somebody on the committee. So it's not done in a bubble. It's a broad aspect where every area has somebody who has participation within the committee.

Q. In the OQ, prior to the March 12th accident, from what I understand there was no destructive testing for requal of the operators. Do you have any input on that or have you reviewed the procedure?

A. The only time I've -- my -- was 2012 was when we started doing the destructive testing at the learning center of the one

aspect of it. That's the only time I've had it.

Q. So you had no direct involvement, then, in developing the curriculum at the training center?

A. No, the -- when I was a mechanic, and as far as the -- as an instructor, the curriculum was there. Things were changed based on the -- based on the, you know, removal or adding of covered tasks. However, in my time I never did a destructive test, no.

Q. Okay. And any of your people who are OQ qualified for plastic fusion, their field experience, or you as supervisor, your experience, how does that get translated in getting included in the curriculum if it is missing? Is there a process for that?

A. Can you repeat the question again?

Q. Yeah. How does a field experience get translated in developing the curriculum at the training center? Is there a formal process for that?

A. Yeah. The majority of the instructors have field experience. They have field experience. They've been in -- numerous years of experience. The curriculum, then, at the -- the curriculum that's at the learning center, based on -- the training methods are based coming out of training committees and so forth and what's applicable to the mechanics' needs, modules and so forth. So you have the op qual covered tasks and then the modules. So we review things in depth.

We go into how to install a service, how to cut out a

main. Those things are all done with a fusing. It's done on multiple days, repetitive training, variations of training based on the person's experience when they come in from fresh or if they coming for refreshers. If they're coming brand new, fresh out of being hired out of the street, there's a curriculum for new hires to get them through the first year, second year, all the way up until they get the title. There's variations of time frames and certain modules that those people will be trained in. And they will get an op qual card for covered tasks that they've been tested in, all the way up until you become an A-mechanic or lead mechanic.

So there are multiple train -- the curriculum is done by the training committees. It's reviewed and then implemented at the learning center. Now, the way it's rolled out, the -- you know, day one this, day two that, that's on the learning center. That's not on the committee.

Q. But do you get to look at the program? When you said the review process --

A. Yeah, we --

Q. -- do you get to review that?

A. We review the covered tasks and to ensure that the covered tasks are being covered. Any new tools, is there any new way that we could -- is there a new way, especially with the environmental stuff, is there any way we could eliminate methane emissions into the air, and no-blow technology, that type of

stuff. We're constantly looking at ways to improve on those aspects of doing it and how we can implement that into the new -- into the curriculum of the training.

Q. So whatever your people find out in the field, either a new technique or the problem or the --

A. Oh, yeah. Absolutely.

Q. -- to do things better, how does that get translated to the training center? Is there a formal way of doing it, or --

A. Yeah, there is. There's a tool and van committee, so -- on every committee, the learning center has representation. So whether if it's the tool and van, which we have a committee where there's tool and -- all new tools and vans, or if there's a problem with a tool, it's discussed. That's -- they meet, I think, don't -- I'm not 100 percent sure, but I believe it meets monthly, and they review new tools, new, you know, industry, new industry technologies that are being implemented. We also have an R&D department which has, you know, looks at new tools and stuff and see if we can -- can we do testing on this? And we'll do field testing on it. And then based, yea or nay, present it to the committee and it's reviewed.

The learning center is usually represented on those committees. So learning center has buy-in. It's not that, you know, the committee's operating over here and the learning center's over here. Learning center has an inclusion in the committees.

Q. So the participation is mandatory in these committees?

A. No, they're always -- we always have -- or we always try to have a diverse panel of people on these committees, where so you have somebody from each area so that there is buy-in across the board from all the areas involved.

Q. You said these are monthly meetings in this committee?

A. I believe the -- I believe it's monthly.

Q. Okay. So if you then learn something which is critical, how does that get translated to the training center?

A. Meaning?

Q. Like if you're -- let's just say you're OQ qualified person doing the fusion welding, found out that this particular material doesn't do very well.

A. Yeah, we --

Q. How does that get translated?

A. -- we will send out an e-mail saying that there has been a problem.

Q. Okay.

A. There's been a problem with such-and-such a fitting and to please look at it. If you have them on your shelf, please take them off the shelves until we have further analysis done by our development lab to see, or from the manufacturer if we can get more information. So --

Q. And that goes through you?

A. That -- no, that goes through the whole committee and

through all of gas ops. It'll be sent out to every -- to all the supervisors and everybody.

Q. Thank you so much. That's all I have.

A. Okay.

MR. CHHATRE: Matt?

MR. NICHOLSON: Yeah, I've got some follow-ups.

BY MR. NICHOLSON:

Q. I'm not sure, Frank, did we get your title correct? You're Section Manager OQ Plastic Fusion, Welding and Training?

A. No, no.

Q. Oh.

A. No, no, no, no.

Q. I think we might have missed that. Can you just state your title again?

A. Yeah. I am the Section Manager of Manhattan Gas Distribution Services and Emergency Response.

Q. Okay. But you are an instructor or had been an instructor?

A. I had been an instructor at the learning center.

Q. Okay. That helps. All right. And what was it you were instructing at the learning center?

A. I did gas operations -- or basically gas OQ for GDS and construction.

Q. Okay. Did that include --

A. Fusion, yes.

Q. -- fuse joints? It did? Okay.

Okay, so can you just talk to me a little -- it sounds like you've had time in the field as well?

A. Um-hum.

Q. I'm curious when they're making the fuse joint at the training center, how does that differ from a field-installed joint? Is there a large difference or is it the same?

A. The only difference really is you have more room because you're in an open room, rather than being in a hole.

Q. Okay.

A. But the processes and the equipment is the same.

Q. Okay. Does the training cover how to prepare a pipe, cleanliness? Can you elaborate what's -- what do you say or what --

A. As far as this, we show them how to prepare a pipe if you're doing electrofusion; on regular fusion, how to, you know, clean the pipe, prepare the pipe, line it up, checking the irons for temperature; checking the equipment to make sure it's operating correctly; electric, making sure that the electrofuse is plugged into a -- that the vehicle is not going to cycle or trip off because now you're in the middle of a process. All those things are checked. And shown -- told the mechanic or the mechanic that's going to be doing the work how to prepare the pipe, fuse the pipe, check to see -- check for gaps, check its -- all of that is done, how to prepare the pipe and fuse the pipe

together at the learning center.

Q. Okay. And just excluding electrofusion, what are the most important parameters for doing a properly fused joint, what you called regular fusing, I guess?

A. Well, I guess, butt fusing.

Q. Okay.

A. The butt fusion -- you know, you have electrofusion, butt fusion, sidewall fusion.

Q. Okay. Sidewall fusion is what I'm most interested in?

A. Okay. So it's preparing the pipe --

Q. Which includes -- how do I prepare it?

A. Well, you --

Q. Solvent wipes or --

A. Well, you're going to make sure that there's no mud or anything on the pipe.

Q. Okay.

A. Make sure that the pipe is clean, wipe it down. You're going to prepare the bottom with emery paper to get it -- we use emery cloth, emery paper.

Q. Right.

A. Check your iron, make sure that you have the right size. For sidewall, you're going to make sure that you have the right size iron.

Q. Okay.

A. Because the size -- if it's 8-inch pipe with an inch and

a half tee, make sure you have the right irons on there. Check the temperature of the irons, use a --

Q. How do I make sure I've got the right irons? I'm sorry?

A. They're marked.

Q. Oh, okay.

A. On the sides of them they're marked. They'll say 8-inch for the -- you know, it'll be 8-inch --

Q. So just checking size, size of --

A. Yeah. So you want to make sure that you have an 8-inch iron adaptor --

Q. Oh, okay.

A. -- for an 8-inch pipe. You don't want to have a 6-inch iron on. So you make sure that you have the right iron sizes.

Q. What would happen if I had a 6?

A. Well, it's not going to sit properly and you're going to have to -- you'd have to redo it and change it because you're not going to -- the pipe, it's contoured to sit on the pipe correctly.

Q. Okay.

A. So you're not going to have a correct fit.

Q. So I won't heat up the surface --

A. You won't have -- you won't get a full because it's not going to sit -- that 8-inch is contoured to sit on 8-inch pipe.

Q. Okay.

A. Six-inch. It's the same thing with 4; if you have the wrong size, it's not going to sit --

Q. Okay.

A. -- the contour won't be the same. And the same thing with the top part of the iron. Based on the size of the tee, 2-inch, inch and a half, inch and a quarter, 1-inch, it's going to be contoured to fit that tee on top.

Q. I see.

A. So you wouldn't have --

Q. I would know it right away or I'd never get the bead to develop or --

A. Yeah, you wouldn't get the bead to go fully around, so you would --

Q. Okay.

A. It wouldn't sit properly.

Q. Okay. Okay, so that's important. Anything else?

A. Yeah. Then you want to look at -- you want to make sure that your iron is at the proper temperature and that you're doing your -- that you have the proper manufacturer soak --

Q. Okay?

A. -- melt and fuse temperatures. So you have variations of temperatures. Based on the tee, there's variations of temperatures that you have to use and the pressure involved and so forth.

Q. Okay. And is it one person typically that does the sidewall fusion?

A. Sidewall fusion is a one-person operation, yes.

Q. And that's how you teach it?
A. Um-hum.
Q. Okay. What about electrofusion? Is that something that's taught as well, electrofusion?
A. Um-hum. The same thing, preparing the pipe, measuring, making sure that you've cleaned enough area. So you put the coupling next to it and make it -- or measure it and make sure that you've cleaned enough area to install the coupling and to make sure, install the electrofuse. You're looking to -- I'm just thinking here. You're looking to ensure that the pipe is clean again also. Clean it, prepare it, and then based on the -- you're going to scan it because it'll have a barcode. Ours have -- I don't know if they're all throughout the country, but ours have a barcode on. You have to scan it. That reader then tells you the size, the temperature needed, and basically then it's -- the machine is doing the electrofuse for you. It's --
Q. Okay.
A. -- all done through that. So as long as you prepare it, and then if it fails or overheats or it conks out or if it's no good, you have to cut it out and put a new piece in, so --
Q. If it overheats? Can that happen?
A. I'm saying if it overheated where the temperature, it cycled or something with the --
Q. Oh, okay.
A. Yeah. It's through --

Q. Something with the equipment?

A. Yeah, with the equipment, right, right. You would get a failed, you would get a fail read on it.

Q. Oh, on the screen, the --

A. Yeah, the screen would tell you a fail.

Q. Okay. So there's no visual on a electrofuse?

A. No, because everything's internal.

Q. It's all internal?

A. You're inspecting the coupling itself to ensure the coils are all there and there's no damage to --

Q. It's a pre-inspect?

A. Yes, yes, before it's inserted.

Q. Okay. And when -- you also then train them to do the electrofusion sidewall as well?

A. Yeah, same thing. It's basically the same step except that there's some screws involved where you putting it. It's --

Q. Clamps?

A. Yeah, clamps on it. It's either a clamp or some of them have an undermount screw where it put in. And it's the same, same exact thing with scanning, cleaning. It's a repetitive step. It's just that instead of now joining two pieces, you're sitting it on top.

Q. Okay. And you said you performed this in the field yourself at one point?

A. Oh, yes, yes.

Q. Okay. Now which ones did you install? The electrofusion or the --

A. Oh, I installed electro- -- I've done all of them.

Q. I mean on sidewall fittings.

A. Sidewall.

Q. You've done both, electrofusion and --

A. Yes. Yeah.

Q. Okay. Which one's quicker?

A. Electrofusion is quicker.

Q. Okay.

A. Well, depending on the size of the pipe, I should say. Electrofusion is -- yeah, I'd say electrofusion is quicker.

Q. Okay. Which one's more prone to error?

A. Sidewall.

Q. Sidewall electrofusion or sidewall --

A. I'm sorry, sidewall regular, manual fusion without sidewall fusion -- without electrofusion.

Q. Just -- why? Because there's just more steps involved?

A. More steps involved.

Q. Okay. How critical is temperature, ambient temperature to installing a sidewall?

A. Well, there is temperatures where you can't fuse or if -- I'm not 100 percent sure, but there's guidelines where if the ambient temperature's over 100-and-something or below 0, I believe, there's area where you -- the pipe has to be brought up

or brought into where the parameters are if it can be.

Q. Okay. And how do you do that?

A. Well, normally in the -- you'd set up tents --

Q. Oh, okay.

A. -- and you can do it. And the rain, same thing with the rain; it can't be in rain. You'd put up a tent so you're out of the -- you're not impeding the -- what's the word I'm looking for? You don't want to have anything to do with the nature of the fuse, where water would get in or anything. So if it's a rainy day and you have to fuse, you would put up a cover up there to ensure the fuse.

Q. Okay. And just to go back to your leaks, you said you perform leak surveillance and leak response, and I just was curious, what do we mean by leak surveillance? Can you tell me?

A. So if a leak is -- leak surveillance is -- we classify leaks 1's, 2's, 2-A's. So if a type 2 or a type 3 or whatever the leak would be that is not being worked, that's due to be within the parameters of the surveillance. So if it's within 6 months, that leak has to -- you know, it has to be, every 2 weeks -- a type 2-A, you know, you're going to review it every 2 weeks, has to be surveilled. So we'll go out and review the leak every 2 weeks to ensure that it hasn't progressed in severity.

Q. So there's a 2-A and a --

A. There's a 1, there's a 2, there's a 2-A and a 3 and a 4; 4 is --

Q. I thought there was another 2 -- well, a 2-M?
A. 2-M, 2-M.
Q. 2-M. Okay.
A. You have a 2-M --
Q. So just A and M?
A. Yeah, but in Manhattan the 2-M is basically we get the fire department, is where you can't get access, we --
Q. It's a manhole?
A. Yeah, that feeds something --
Q. Okay.
A. -- and the fire department will get us access.
Q. Okay.
A. So we very --
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It's a Con Ed spec.
MR. McBRIEN: Yeah. Yeah, Con Ed only.
BY MR. NICHOLSON:
Q. Con Ed spec.
A. Yeah, it's not --
Q. And what's a 2-A? 2-A is a state spec?
A. Yeah, yeah.
Q. Okay. And then there's also just a 2?
A. There's a 2 -- there's a 1 in severity; 1 is the most severe.
Q. Right.
A. That's what we do all the time. You have a 2-A.

Q. Oh, and the 2-A, the 2 --

A. Yeah, and then a 2 and then a 3. And --

Q. Do you surveillance 3's?

A. Surveil -- 3's get done every, annually.

Q. Okay. And just explain to me, I didn't understand. You said one of your leak response or your special leak surveillance tasks would be if there's a crane on the job, on a construction job? What's -- why?

A. So if we have cast iron main in proximity of a crane, the load where it's transferring, we go by there and we take -- we do special surveys to ensure that it's not impeding around the area of the cast iron. And even though it may not be, we still go by the crane to ensure that there is no leaks found. The cranes are moved -- sometimes people move cranes, so we'll go along the route. I usually -- they'll call us that we're going to be doing a crane move.

Q. So the concern is the over-burden on the pipe?

A. Yes, on the pipe.

Q. The weight on the pipe.

A. So we'll do those type of surveys.

Q. Okay. And you said the same thing for post-milled street work?

A. So went the street -- in New York, there's constant paving going on. So we do a pre-paving, meaning prior to paving, the leak survey group will come in. They get the list and they

will come in and do a pre-milling, meaning, all right, we found a leak here or it's clear. The problem that we have is once that machine comes and starts scraping and shaking the ground when it's taking off the asphalt, we get some leaks after that. So you have a 15-day window where the city says can you come in and do a post-milling, meaning it's down to the base concrete. The asphalt's been removed, can you come in? And we, my group usually will go in.

Q. Okay. Same reason, mechanical forces --

A. Yes. Yes, yes.

Q. -- could be forcing --

A. Yeah, the shaking the ground.

Q. Okay. And special events, parades, is more of just a concern because you're going to have a -- don't want to be --

A. Yeah, you don't want to have something in the middle of the parade happen, so --

Q. Okay.

A. And that's usually split; either leak survey or myself will do it, depending -- my group will do it depending on the timing for it.

Q. And then I think the other time you get involved is, you said, if there's a call?

A. Oh, so if somebody called in and said they smelled gas, it goes from either the -- whoever they called, the call center or 911, it goes to the gas emergency response center and they will

dispatch it to my mechanics.

Q. Okay. Okay, we won't go any farther than that because I know we want to save that discussion for Rick.

Okay, that's all I have for now. Thank you.

MR. CHHATRE: Kelly?

BY MR. EMEABA:

Q. You've asked some of the questions, but just being more specific, on Park Avenue, based on your experience and the fact that you work on pavings, did your group perform special leak survey after 1642 was installed? And also, after those patches on Park Avenue were done, there were road patches, did your group conduct surveys on them prior to the accident?

A. My group specifically didn't, no. They didn't do the survey, the mobile survey. No, my group did not do that.

Q. Okay. But you just mentioned that part of your responsibility is after road pavings --

A. No, not on patches. I'm talking streets curb-to-curb, block-to-block. It's large, not a patch. It would be where they come in -- the city says we're going to do 6th, 7th and 8th Street from Avenue A to 3rd Avenue. We will do those. It's not just a small patch. It's a large -- large paving projects.

Q. Okay. So if the DOT performs road patches which they scrape and then do a re-patch, who -- do you people perform leak survey, and if yes, who does?

A. We will do a follow-up survey on a leak if there was a

leak there, if it was a leak. If it's a new business job, we do not do it. If there was a leak there where someone is -- there was an active leak and a repair has been made, we will go out on a -- the leak is gone from whatever classification it was to a 4, we will go out and do a 15-day recheck on that afterwards to ensure that that 4 is still a 4.

Q. Okay.

MR. STOLICKY: Just so we're all clear, what is a 4?

MR. McBRIEN: Four is no gas -- I'm sorry, 4 is no gas. It's meaning no gas. The leak condition now is down to where whatever the reading was is now zero.

BY MR. EMEABA:

Q. Okay. So, in conclusion, when there are road patches, Con Edison do not do leak surveys over such areas --

A. Unless there was --

Q. -- unless there is a reported leak?

A. If there was a leak there and we made the excavation and we repaired the excavation, we take a shot by that excavation to ensure there's no gas in that excavation.

Q. Okay. Thank you.

MR. CHHATRE: Questions?

MR. GEORGELIS: No, I'll wait for the emergency response.

MR. CHHATRE: Okay. Frank?

MR. McCARTON: No, I'm good.

MR. CHHATRE: Len?

MR. SINGH: I just want to clarify to your question around paving. Patching holes in the street, I mean, Frank can talk about this a little, Frank McCarton. There are thousands upon thousands of that done every day. That's not a notification that we currently get. However, large paving projects where they do curb-to-curb restoration or repaving of streets, we get notification. That's what Frank McBrien was referring to before. So that's two different issues. I just wanted to clarify that.

MR. EMEABA: Okay. So you don't get notification for --

MR. SINGH: As I said, we currently don't. We are working on some opportunities to look at that and do some, may make some improvements in those processes.

MR. EMEABA: Okay. Thank you.

BY MR. CHHATRE:

Q. One question on your group's work. In the process of your crew, do you see excavated ground, streets? And my questioning is do you see groundwater table, how high the table would be or do you see water in the street if there's an excavation?

A. You would see water depending on where you're working and the depth. There are some known unstable areas, like swamp locations. I mean, if you worked in -- I worked in Queens. You work in Queens, you go down by Citi Field, it's swamp. You go down by the Marlborough, down by -- they're known low water

tables. So you go down, you have low water tables. In Manhattan, it's very few and far between, but there are some but it's very few and far between.

Q. Okay. On the Park Avenue, did you have an opportunity in the past few years to look at any excavation that shows where there's water?

A. On Park Avenue? The first excavation I saw there, my memory, is the day of the event.

Q. Okay. But none prior to that?

A. No.

Q. Okay. Thanks. That's all I have.

A. I was up on 130-some-odd street a few years prior and there was no water there.

Q. No water? Okay.

A. Yeah, on Park Avenue.

Q. Okay. Thanks.

MR. NICHOLSON: I just had a couple follow-ups if you're finished?

MR. CHHATRE: Yeah. Go ahead.

BY MR. NICHOLSON:

Q. What we were talking about, the load on the street and that affecting pipe is the concern there, do you do that for all pipes or is it only cast iron?

A. Cast iron.

Q. It's only when cast iron's -- okay. And then if -- I'm

going to reverse back to what we talked about much earlier on the fusion welding. And I didn't ask you about the heating adapters. How critical is it that your heating adapter, when you're doing a fused joint, be clean and free of debris or --

A. Yeah, that has to be clean and you're checking it. You're checking the temperature on that also with our tempil sticks to ensure that they're within their parameters of the temp. So the adapter, even though the adapter is put onto the iron, it still has to meet the temperature guidelines for it and make sure that it's clean, that there's no debris on the iron, the adapter itself as well.

Q. That's taught in the course?

A. Oh, yeah.

Q. Oh, okay. And is there anything they do to clean the adapter? I mean, does the guy drop it in the trench and then pick it up or --

A. No, no, you're told that if it's -- if the adapter is -- let it -- you have to stop, let it cool down, because whatever could you put on now could melt it and make it worse. So now you're told let it -- unplug it, let it cool down, clean it with -- we have like lint free rags. You don't want to use any type of solvent on the things.

Q. Okay.

A. We're just told to clean any of -- it's usually just mud that someone could get from when it's transferred. Most of the

guys they wrap it when they're transferring it so that they don't get anything on it.

Q. Okay.

A. Or they put it in some type of -- we usually have these lint free rags that we use for fusing. And they'll tape it up and -- and we also what's called -- it's called an oven, but basically it's a fireproof carry bag that they put these in to hold them so that the heat stays, you know, if -- and when they use too. So they keep them in that so they --

Q. Like a thermal insulated bag?

A. Yeah, it's like a thermal insulated bag, yes.

Q. Okay. And so that keeps it away from dirt and oil?

A. Um-hum.

Q. What kind of contaminants could be present in a trench?

A. Oh, well, if there was contaminants in a trench, like if we had like oil, if anyone saw oil or water or any of that stuff, we -- if it's oil, we call up for our EH&S people right away. They come out, we take analysis and so forth, make sure any type of -- if there's signs of asbestos, because we work -- in Manhattan you're working on steam, those things. It's stopped, everything is stopped. EH&S comes out to check. We get samples and nothing can proceed then until the samples are taken to make sure that it's free.

If it's an event or an emergency where there would be something, say, some type of water situation or anything that the

water be sampled and tested, on emergency situation we have people that can suit up and go in, not in contaminants, but like to go into --

Q. Sure.

A. Yeah.

Q. Okay. So those are things you can kind of pass -- oil, water, those things can be present?

A. Um-hum.

Q. Okay. And they are to stop work at that point? You wouldn't --

A. Yeah, we also, you can't -- we also tell the people, like, we've gone to jobs where, you know, it was called to do a -- put in plastic and you find out that, you know, there is -- it's an oil -- maybe it was an old gasoline station there or something and the ground has oil in it and now we can't put plastic in there. Because you're getting a smell off the ground, they come and sample it and they say it's petroleum in the ground; you can't put the plastic. All right, I'm going to put steel. You can't put, you can't put the plastics in.

Q. Okay. That makes sense. Okay, great. Thanks.

MR. CHHATRE: Nobody have any questions?

MR. EMEABA: Just a quick one.

BY MR. EMEABA:

Q. Do Con Edison use a socket fusion in, as part of your plastic pipeline installations?

A. Socket fusion? I'm just trying to -- can you clarify what you mean by socket fusion? Like --

Q. It's similar to solder fusion and all that, which you also melt and then --

A. No, no, we don't.

Q. You don't?

A. No, we do butt fusion. No.

Q. Okay. Thank you.

A. I just wanted to clarify that. Thank you.

MR. SINGH: Are you talking about electrofuse couplings?

MR. McBRIEN: No, it's like --

MR. EMEABA: Socket.

MR. McBRIEN: -- alloys that they used to use.

MR. SINGH: Oh, okay.

MR. McBRIEN: That's what I wanted to make sure that's what he meant.

MR. EMEABA: No more question.

MR. CHHATRE: Okay. Thank you very much for spending your time with us.

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:	NATURAL GAS DISTRIBUTION PIPELINE LEAK AND MULTISTORY STRUCTURE EXPLOSION IN HARLEM, NEW YORK MARCH 12, 2014 Interview of Frank McBrien
DOCKET NUMBER:	DCA-14-MP-002
PLACE:	New York, New York
DATE:	August 4, 2014

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.

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Karen A. Stockhausen
Transcriber