

#27: Explosion – Inspection #1010771

A 35 year old male employee died due to injuries during an explosion. Five employees were making routine repairs on a 2” polyethylene (PE) gas distribution main when natural gas was released into the work area resulting in a fire. The employees were replacing a section of the 2” PE line approximately 4’ long that included two tee fittings. During the interval between removing the old section and installing the new pipe natural gas began entering the work space, ignited most likely by static discharge, and resulted in injury to the crew members. Three employees were hospitalized and one died nineteen days later.

Citation(s) as Originally Issued

A complete inspection was conducted at the accident scene. Some of the items cited may not directly relate to the fatality.

Citation 1

Item 1 T.C.A. 50-3-105(1)	The employer did not furnish to each of his employees conditions of employment and a place of employment free from recognized hazards that are causing or likely to cause death or serious physical harm to his employees. Employees were exposed to an explosion hazard while making repairs to a 2” polyethylene high pressure natural gas main. A possible abatement method would be to conduct additional training for all Gas Division employees to include: 1) Hazards of static ignition of natural gas; 2) MLGW General & Gas Division Safety Manuals; 3) Proper response to abnormal operation conditions encountered; 4) Ensure total control of gas flow at the squeeze off point.
Item 2 1910.147(c)(4)(i)	Procedures were not developed, documented and utilized for the control of potentially hazardous energy when employees were engaged in activities covered by this section. The gas flow had not been controlled and locked out in order to prevent the leakage of natural gas at the repair location on the main.

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Photo 1 of 1: Natural gas explosion