



# TELEPHONIC REPORT FROM GAS COMPANIES FOR PIPELINE INCIDENTS



**Please use "SFM Call Tree" for phone contacts when reporting pipeline incidents. When State Fire Marshal personnel receive telephonic notification of an incident they will ask for the information required to complete this form. If any information is not known at the time of the telephonic notification, mark "UNKNOWN".**

**\*\*ALL TIMES REQUESTED BELOW SHALL BE MILITARY (24 HOUR)\*\***

Date received at Fire Marshal's Office: 10/24/2011 Time received (military): 07:57

Person at Fire Marshal's office receiving notification of incident: Mike Stromitis

Type of incident:      **GAS LEAK**     **EXPLOSION**     **FIRE**     **OTHER**

Gas operator name: Northwestern Energy    Date of incident: 10/24/2011    Time of Incident: 03:39

Exact location of Incident: 2221 Sunset Drive.

What was the preliminary cause of the incident: First cut regulators failed and escaping gas caught fire.  
Should be identified as (Cause Code G) Other Outside Force Damage.

Federal reporting not required, Damage less than \$50,000.00, no Injury or fatalities

Name of person reporting incident: Bill Faust

Telephone number of person reporting incident: (308) 520-0642

Has the incident been reported to D.O.T. in Washington D.C.?                      **YES**     **NO**     If Yes what time \_\_\_\_\_

Was there a fatality?                      **YES**     **NO**     **UNKNOWN**

Names:    \_\_\_\_\_                      \_\_\_\_\_  
                  \_\_\_\_\_                      \_\_\_\_\_

Was there an injury requiring hospitalization?    **YES**     **NO**     **UNKNOWN**

Names:    \_\_\_\_\_                      \_\_\_\_\_

Was the initial estimate of property damage (including lost gas) \$50,000 or more?                      **YES**     **NO**     **UNKNOWN**

Is the Fire Department on the scene?                      **YES**     **NO**     **UNKNOWN**

Is there a State Fire Marshal on the scene?                      **YES**     **NO**     **UNKNOWN**

**SFM Pipeline Safety Office Use Only:**

No action taken, placed in file:  Sent to SFM Incident File  Placed in "Gas Operator" file

Deputy assigned to investigate: 8731 Incident Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Fire Number: 110441

Meets requirements of 49 CFR Part 191.5  (Operator must report to NRC) Meets requirements of SFM Title 155, Chapter 1-002

**NEBRASKA STATE FIRE MARSHAL  
Fire Incident Report**

**CASE INFORMATION**

Deputy: Mike Stromitis	Assigned By: Jack Malicky	Case No: 110441	Case Status: Closed
Address: 2221 Sunset Dr.	City: North Platte	State: NE	Zip: 69101
County: Lincoln	Occupancy Type: Other	Date of Incident: 10-24-11	Time of Incident: 03:39
Date of Request: 10-24-11	Time of Request: 07:57	Date of Arrival: 10-24-11	Time of Arrival: 08:30
Case Subject: N/A	Total Loss: \$5,000.	Requesting Agency: N/A	
Requesting Person: N/A	Responding Fire Dept: North Platte Fire	Official Spoken With: N/A	

**FIRE DETAILS**

Cause: Accidental	Area of Origin: Other-Area of Origin			
Heat Source: Undetermined	Item First Ignited: Undetermined	Lightning: None		
Weather Conditions: Clear	Wind Speed: 5-6	Wind Direction: ESE	Temperature: 39	Humidity: 86%
Incendiary Container: None	Ignition Device: None	Fuel: Flammable Gas		

**STRUCTURE INFORMATION**

Structure Type:	Building Status:	Construction Type:	
Extent of Damage:	Smoke Detector:	Heat Detector:	
Gas Detector:	Flame Detector:	Automatic Sprinkler Alarm:	
Automatic Sprinkler:	Number of Floors:	Dimensions:	Structure Name:
Suspected Meth Lab: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Utilities: <input type="checkbox"/> Electrical <input type="checkbox"/> Water <input type="checkbox"/> Gas		

**VEHICLE INFORMATION**

Type of Vehicle: N/A	VIN:	Plate:	State Issued:	Make:
Model:	Year:	Area of Origin:	Vehicle Status:	

**INSURANCE INFORMATION**

Company: N/A - Hartford Ins.	Address:	City:		
State:	Zip:	Policy No:	Claim No:	Owner <input type="checkbox"/> Occupant <input type="checkbox"/>
Date Issued:	Date Expired:	Property Amount: \$	Contents Amount: \$	
Property Loss: \$	Contents Loss: \$			
Company:	Address:	City:		
State:	Zip:	Policy No:	Claim No:	Owner <input type="checkbox"/> Occupant <input type="checkbox"/>
Date Issued:	Date Expired:	Property Amount: \$	Contents Amount: \$	
Property Loss: \$	Contents Loss: \$			

**PEOPLE IN THE CASE**

Name: Darrel Ragland	Relation to Case: Property owner	Juvenile: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	
Address (if applicable) : 2221 Sunset Dr	City: North Platte	State: NE	Zip: 69101
Name:	Relation to Case:	Juvenile: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Address (if applicable) :	City:	State:	Zip:
Name:	Relation to Case:	Juvenile: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Address (if applicable) :	City:	State:	Zip:
Name:	Relation to Case:	Juvenile: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Address (if applicable) :	City:	State:	Zip:

<b>Deputy: Mike Stromitis</b>	<b>Signature: Mike Stromitis</b>	<b>Date: 10-24-11</b>
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NEBRASKA STATE FIRE MARSHAL  
246 S. 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
Lincoln, NE 68508

**INVESTIGATIVE SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT**

Case #: 110441      Date of Report: 10/24/2011      Date of Incident: 10/24/2011

**BODY OF REPORT:**

On October 24, 2011, @ 03:39 hrs, the North Platte Fire Department was dispatched to a natural gas fire at 2221 Sunset Drive. The caller indicated water was being sprayed on the fire with a garden hoses. Upon arrival the Fire Department noted the fence and a wood pile was on fire and fire was coming from a ruptured gas line. Using fog protection the fire department secured the blowing gas which extinguished the gas fire and then completed suppression of the remaining fire involved.

The main which served the first cut regulators was operating at a pressure of about 120#, the regulators are set to cut the pressure down to between 5# to 10# to each customer meter set which is located at the home's wall. Each of the regulators involved was a Fisher 621 with a Fisher H203 Over Pressure Protection Valve protecting the customers service line. Each 621 regulator was set at @ 9# and the H203 OPP is preset by the Fisher Factory at 10#. One regulator provided natural gas to 2221 Sunset Dr. and the other provided gas to 2211 Sunset Dr.

This Deputy Fire Marshal, Mike Stromitis, Pipeline Safety, received a phone call at 07:57 hours from Northwestern Energy's Technician, William Faust reporting the fire. I told him I was going to go to the fire scene and he asked if I wanted him to meet me there, which I said yes. I arrived at the fire scene at about 08:30 hrs. Scene was cold, no emergency apparatus or emergency personnel were present. Mr. Faust arrived a short time later. Mr. Faust in order to verify what equipment may have failed, cracked open the main valve, which had been closed by the fire department to check where the gas would leak. Both Over Pressure Protection valves vented gas, the east regulator valve was leaking gas at a vent on the valve body side and the west regulator valve was leaking gas from a flange on the valve body. The various burn patterns on the barrier which was protecting the regulators may indicate there was burning gas impinging on the barrier from each of these sources.

The residents, Mr. Darrel Ragland of 2221 Sunset Dr and Mr. Harold Reeves of 2211 Sunset said they never hear anything. Mr. Ragland said the resident, across the alley to the north, Dan Twarling at 2220 William was awoken by his dog. He got up to check on what was causing his dog to bark and discovered the fire. Mr. Twarling then called Mr. Ragland to tell him of the fire. The extensive fire damage to the west of the regulator set was caused by two wheeled trash carts, one of which held leaves and had leaves piled on the east side of that yard receptacle. The other held household waste which also had several cardboard boxes on the west side of the waste receptacle. These receptacles are city owned and are placed for use by each household. The waste receptacles, carts, are sized as 90 gal wheel carts and are made of heavy duty plastic.

**Per the** NFIRS report from the fire department, the alarm came in at 03:38:20 hrs, with the Department's first fire unit arriving at 03:44:20 hrs. The Fire Officer declared the scene controlled at 04:06:26 hrs, the last fire unit left the scene at 04:35:52 hrs.

**Per the** Police report, the reporting Officer Inv. Tim Nielsen, could find no evidence indicating anything struck the metal barrier and he stated so in his report. Also per his report, the metal barrier was pushed directly to the south into the regulators. The alley runs east and west and both sides of the alley have wooden fences. There are no driveways or garages near this portion of the alley and the regulators/barrier sit on the south side of the alley. He examined the ground for any indication of tracks away from or to the gas line and barrier and could find nothing. He is convinced if a vehicle had struck the barrier, it, the barrier would have leaned either west or east and not to the south.

### **CONCLUSION:**

From the appearance of the barrier in front of the regulator sets, the barrier may have been pushed into the regulators. However what may have pushed the barrier into the regulators, I must agree with the reporting police officer there were no apparent signs such as vehicle tracks to indicate how this may have occurred.

Looking at Photo ID #PA240001, the barrier is tight against the regulator. This may have caused enough stress to cause one or both of the regulator valves to fail open. When this happened an excess of pressure would have caused the OPP valves to open and blow gas. There is no way to determine what the pressure on the service lines may have got to as there is no pressure recording required. With the H203 OPP valves set to open at 10# and sized to handle the amount of gas the regulator could pass, the pressure should not have gone higher than a maximum of 15# as required under 49 CFR 192. When the gas was released from the OPP it ignited. Unknown what might have been the ignition source, and probably will never be known. The ensuing fire destroyed part of the fence behind and to the west of the barrier and regulators, the trash cans and some of the firewood. As shown in Photo ID #PA240011, there was minimal damage.

### **PHOTOS:**



Photo ID #PA240001, Photo taken looking down at dual first cut regulators which serve customers at 2221 (right) and 2219 (left) Sunset Drive.



Photo ID #PA240002, Photo taken from north, most of damage from fire occurred to the right in photo, Owner/customer at 2221 Sunset there were a pile of leaves just to the right continued with a trash can full of yard debris, a second trash can full of household waste. The fence behind the trash cans was totally destroyed.



Photo ID #PA240003, photo of remains of 2 trash cans and destroyed fence identified above.



Photo ID #PA240007, photo shows the over pressure protection valves located below the regulators, both of these vented natural gas when the inlet block valve was opened. Both are and were pointed east.



Photo ID #PA240008, Although the regulators and OPP valves have been removed, the barrier leans into the fence and was against the regulator to the east serving 2219 Sunset.



Photo ID #PA240011, an expanded view of the area involved in the fire.

<b>Deputy Name:</b>	Mike Stromitis	<b>Signature:</b>	Mike Stromitis				
<b>Agency Address:</b>	246 South 14 <sup>th</sup>	<b>City:</b>	Lincoln	<b>State:</b>	NE	<b>Zip:</b>	68508

**END OF REPORT**

# STATE OF NEBRASKA



## Notice of Probable Violation

Dave Heineman  
Governor

STATE FIRE MARSHAL  
John Falgione  
Fire Marshal

November 2, 2011

Ms. Melissa Baruth  
Northwestern Energy  
600 Market Street Southwest  
Huron, SD 57350

Dear Ms. Baruth,

On October 24, 2011, a failure of a first cut regulator serving customer at 2221 Sunset Drive in North Platte, NE, resulted in ignition of released natural gas. The alarm of the burning gas was received at 03:38 hours at the Dispatch center in North Platte, with the Fire Department arrival to the scene at 03:44 hours. The Fire Department declared the scene controlled at 04:06 hours, and left the scene at 04:35 hours. Per the fire report Northwestern personnel arrived prior to the Fire Department leaving the scene at 04:35 hours. The Fire Department was responsible for securing and extinguishing the natural gas. Deputy State Fire Marshal Mike Stromitis received the telephonic notification of the release of gas and the resulting fire at 07:57 hours from Northwestern Technician, William Faust.

As a result of this time line, it appears Northwestern Energy has committed a probable violation of Title 155. [Nebraska Administrative Code Title 155, Chapter 1, Part 002.](#) states within two (2) hours or as soon as practical, following the discovery of any reportable incident, an operator shall notify the State Fire Marshal Pipeline Safety Division, Lincoln, Nebraska at (402) 471-2027 during normal business hours. After hours, operators shall call the area Pipeline Safety Deputy.

002.01. Reportable incidents, either before or past the meter are:

002.01Ai. A death or personal injury necessitating in-patient hospitalization; or

002.01Aii. Estimated property damage, including cost of gas lost, of the operator or others, or both of \$50, 000.00 or more; or

002.01Aiii. Any failure which results in the explosion or ignition of natural gas.

☐ MAIN OFFICE  
☐ DISTRICT A  
246 South 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
Lincoln, NE 68508-1804  
(402) 471-2027

☐ DISTRICT B  
438 West Market  
Albion, NE 68620-1241  
(402) 395-2164

☐ DISTRICT C  
200 South Silber  
North Platte, NE 69101-4219  
(308) 535-8181

■ FUELS DIVISION  
☐ FLST ■ Pipeline  
246 South 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
Lincoln, NE 68508-1804  
(402) 471-9465

☐ TRAINING DIVISION  
2410 North Wheeler Avenue  
Suite 112  
Grand Island, NE 68801-2376  
(308) 385-6892

After the Fire Department left the scene, 3 hours and 22 minutes passed before notification was made to Nebraska State Fire Marshal's Office of Pipeline Safety. Upon arrival on the scene or very shortly thereafter, we feel the Northwestern employee should have recognized the release and ensuing fire was a reportable incident and made the telephonic report to Nebraska's State Fire Marshal area Pipeline Safety Deputy immediately as required in Title 155.

The purpose of this letter is to request a response from NorthWestern Energy within 30 days of receipt of this letter, **please reference #20111102-N in your correspondence**. The response may accept the findings and state a plan of action to address the probable violation or, the response may disagree with the findings. If NorthWestern Energy chooses to disagree with the findings, please justify your position in the response.

Whenever the State Fire Marshal has reason to believe any person is violating any provision of subsection (1) of section 81-545 of the Nebraska Natural Gas Pipeline Safety Act of 1969 or any regulation under the Nebraska Natural Gas Pipeline Safety Act of 1969, the State Fire Marshal may request the Attorney General of Nebraska to bring an action under section 81-547 of the Nebraska Natural Gas Pipeline Safety Act of 1969 in the district court of the county in which the defendant's principal place of business is located. The district court may impose a civil penalty not to exceed ten thousand dollars for each violation for each day that such violation persists, except that the maximum civil penalty shall not exceed five hundred thousand dollars for any related series of violations. The district court shall have jurisdiction to restrain violations of the Nebraska Natural Gas Pipeline Safety Act of 1969 including the restraint of transportation of gas or the operation of a pipeline facility.

We wish to stress the State Fire Marshal takes Title 155 and 49 CFR 191 reporting requirements very seriously and encourage you to continue educating your personnel concerning these requirements.

Sincerely,



Clark Conklin  
Chief Deputy, Pipeline Safety  
Nebraska State Fire Marshal



Wm Mike Stromitis  
Deputy, Pipeline Safety  
Nebraska State Fire Marshal



Melissa J. Baruth  
DOT Coordinator  
Telephone: (605)353-7462  
e-mail:  
Melissa.baruth@northwestern.com

NorthWestern Corporation  
d/b/a NorthWestern Energy  
600 Market Street  
Huron, SD 57350  
Telephone: 800-245-6977  
Facsimile: (605)353-7513  
www.northwesternenergy.com

December 20, 2011

Clark Conklin  
Chief Deputy, Pipeline Safety  
Nebraska State Fire Marshal  
246 South 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
Lincoln, NE 68508-1804

Received on:  
DEC 22 2011  
NE State Fire Marshal

Re: Response to NPV #20111102-N

Dear Chief Deputy Conklin and Deputy Stromitis:

This letter confirms receipt of the letter and attachments sent on November 2, 2011 in regards to the failure of a first cut regulator at 2221 Sunset Drive in North Platte which resulted in ignition of released natural gas. NorthWestern concurs the event met the requirements of Title 155 and required notification of Nebraska State Fire Marshall office. NorthWestern also agrees a NorthWestern technician did respond to the event prior to 04:30 on October 24, 2011. However, despite training on the requirement of Title 155 the technician did not notify your office in a timely manner committing a violation of Title 155 by waiting until 07:57 to notify Deputy Stromitis.

NorthWestern has revisited the requirements Title 155 with the employee and North Platte area. In addition NorthWestern will refresh all employees in Nebraska on the requirements of Title 155 during the annual Emergency Response training in the first quarter of 2012.

If you have additional questions please feel free to contact me at (605) 353-7462.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Melissa J. Baruth".

Melissa J. Baruth  
DOT Coordinator  
NorthWestern Energy

CC: Deputy Mike Stromitis

# STATE OF NEBRASKA

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## Letter of Approval

Dave Heineman  
Governor

STATE FIRE MARSHAL  
John Falgione  
Fire Marshal

April 6, 2012

Ms. Melissa Baruth  
NorthWestern Energy  
600 Market Street SW  
Huron, SD 57350

Dear Ms. Baruth,

RE: Correction of Probable Violations to Title 155 reporting requirements  
20111102-N & 20120130-N

On November 2, 2011, a "Notice of Probable Violation" was issued to NorthWestern Energy which indicated a violation to the reporting requirements of Title 155 of Nebraska's Administrative Code Chapter 1.001. This violation occurred in North Platte, NE on November 2, 2011 and concerned failure to report the incident within the time frame required.

On December 20, 2011, NorthWestern responded with acknowledgement of the violation and that you had revisited the requirements of Title 155 with the employees of the North Platte office.

On January 30, 2012, a second "Notice of Probable Violation" was issued to NorthWestern Energy which also indicated a violation to the reporting requirements of Title 155 of Nebraska's Administrative Code Chapter 1.001. This violation occurred in Kearney, NE on January 20, 2012 and concerned failure to report the incident within the time frame required.

On February 10, 2012, NorthWestern responded with acknowledgement of the violation and that you had revisited the requirements of Title 155 with Kearney's office. Both letters from NorthWestern indicated the requirements of Title 155 would be reviewed with all of NorthWestern's employees in Nebraska during the annual Emergency Response training that was to be held on February 20 and 21 at each of Nebraska's offices.

**MAIN OFFICE**  
 **DISTRICT A**  
246 South 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
Lincoln, NE 68508-1804  
(402) 471-2027

**DISTRICT B**  
438 West Market  
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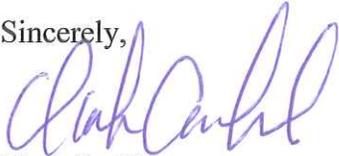
**FUELS DIVISION**  
 **FLST**  **Pipeline**  
246 South 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
Lincoln, NE 68508-1804  
(402) 471-9465

**TRAINING DIVISION**  
2410 North Wheeler Avenue  
Suite 112  
Grand Island, NE 68801-2376  
(308) 385-6892

Our representative, Deputy State Fire Marshal Mike Stromitis, attended each of the trainings NorthWestern conducted on February 20 and 21, 2012, and believes the requirements of Title 155 was extensively reviewed with all of NorthWestern's Nebraska employees. It is believed NorthWestern has taken steps to ensure requirements of Title 155 to be observed

We again stress the State Fire Marshal takes Title 155 and 49 CFR 191 reporting requirements very seriously and encourage you to continue educating your personnel concerning these requirements.

Sincerely,



Clark Conklin  
Chief Deputy, Pipeline Safety  
Nebraska State Fire Marshal



Wm Mike Stromitis  
Deputy, Pipeline Safety  
Nebraska State Fire Marshal