



**CALIFORNIA UNDERGROUND FACILITIES SAFE EXCAVATION BOARD  
INVESTIGATION DIVISION  
INVESTIGATION REPORT**

**DATE:** September 5, 2023  
**CASE No.:** CAS-01555-W6J5P1

**Violations:**

- Government Code § 4216.2(b): Failure to notify the Regional Notification Center before excavating.
- Government Code § 4216.4(c)(2): Failure to call 911 emergency services upon causing damage.
- Government Code § 4216.4(c)(3): Failure to report damage to the Regional Notification Center within 48 hours.

**Executive Summary:**

On July 10, 2023, Reliance Fence Company, Inc., excavated using a motorized auger to dig holes for new fence posts without first contacting the Regional Notification Center and damaged a natural gas line operated by the Southern California Gas Company. After causing the damage, Reliance Fence Company, Inc. neither telephoned 911 nor notified the Regional Notification Center of the damage to the natural gas line within 48 hours.

**Reporting Party Information:**

Southern California Gas Company  
555 West 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
Los Angeles, California 90013

**Date of Incident:**

July 10, 2023

**Location of the Incident:**

[REDACTED]  
Bakersfield, California 93309

**Operator:**

Southern California Gas Company  
555 West 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
Los Angeles, California 90013

**Excavator:**

Eugene Aalonzo  
Reliance Fence Company, Inc.  
P.O. Box 1831  
Bakersfield, California 93303

**Facility Type Damaged:**

Natural gas line

**Investigation:**

**Notification of the Incident**

On July 26, 2023, Southern California Gas Company submitted notification of this incident to the California Underground Safety Board. The notification stated that underground infrastructure belonging to Southern California Gas Company had been damaged. by the Reliance Fence Company, Inc., which had been excavating without a ticket. (Exh. 1.) The case was assigned to Investigator Gabrielle Zeps (Investigator).

**Identity of the Excavator**

Government Code § 4216(h) defines an excavator to be “any person, firm, contractor or subcontractor, owner, operator, utility, association, corporation, partnership, business trust, public agency, or other entity that, with their, or his or her, own employees or equipment performs any excavation.”

Reliance Fence Company, Inc., is currently licensed by the California Contractors State License Board, license number 840290. (Exh. 2.)

When the damage occurred at [REDACTED], Bakersfield, California 93309, on July 10, 2023, Foreman Eugene Aalonzo of Reliance Fence Company, Inc. was using a motorized auger to dig holes for fence posts. (Exh. 3.)



Photo 1 provided by Southern California Gas Company depicts excavator’s truck.

**Reliance Fence Company, Inc. Did Not Contact the Regional Notification Center Before Excavating**

Government Code § 4216.2(b) states that an excavator planning to excavate shall notify the appropriate regional notification center of the excavator’s intent to excavate at least two working days, and not more than 14 calendar days, before beginning that excavation.

During his August 15, 2023, telephone interview with the Investigator, Chris Booker, Superintendent of Reliance Fence Company, Inc., stated that Reliance usually gets a ticket from the regional notification center but had not gotten one for this job as he was squeezing it in, and it would be a quick job. If he hadn't expedited it, the customer would have had to wait three weeks. (Exh. 4.)

#### **Excavation & Damage to the Gas Line**

During his August 21, 2023, telephone interview with the Investigator, Eugene Aalonzo, Foreman for Reliance Fence Company, Inc., confirmed he was operating a motorized auger on July 10, 2023, at [REDACTED], Bakersfield, California 93309. He was drilling post holes for a new fence. He struck a natural gas line with the auger which resulted in a natural gas release. He covered the damaged line with dirt to reduce the gas release. (Exh. 3.)

The Bakersfield Fire Department was dispatched to [REDACTED], Bakersfield, California 93309, on July 10, 2023, after receiving a request from a gas company representative already on the scene. A gas company representative stated that he evacuated the two houses on either side of [REDACTED]. The personnel of the Bakersfield Fire Department confirmed both residences were evacuated and stood by until the leak was under control. (Exh. 5.)

#### **Reliance Fence Company, Inc. Did Not Call 911 After the Damage Occurred**

Government Code § 4216.4(c)(2) states an excavator shall call 911 emergency services upon discovering or causing damage to a gas or hazardous liquid pipeline subsurface installation in which the damage results in the escape of any flammable, toxic, or corrosive gas or liquid.

During his August 21, 2023, telephone interview with the Investigator, Eugene Aalonzo, Foreman for Reliance Fence Company, Inc., stated he did not call 911 after damaging the natural gas line because he believed that the people living in the residence there had called 911. Eugene Aalonzo stated that he thought the business office of Reliance Fence Company, Inc., called 411 after he, Eugene Aalonzo notified them of the incident on July 10, 2023. (Exh. 3.)

During his September 5, 2023, telephone interview with the Investigator, Chris Booker, Superintendent, of Reliance Fence Company, Inc., stated that no one at Reliance Fence Company, Inc. called 911 after Foreman Eugene Aalonzo notified him Chris Booker of the damage to the line. Chris Booker did not know that was something he was supposed to do. He stated that they try very hard to do the right thing. (Exh. 6.) In Reliance Fence Company, Inc.'s Response to the Board's Information Request, it reported that on July 12, 2023, the company had a safety meeting about gas lines with the employees. (Exh. 7.)

#### **Reliance Fence Company, Inc. Did Not Contact the Regional Notification Center within 48 Hours of Damage**

Government Code § 4216.4(c)(3) states an excavator discovering or causing damage shall notify the Regional Notification Center withing 48 hours of discovering or causing the damage.

During his August 21, 2023, telephone interview with the Investigator, Foreman Eugene Aalonzo stated that on July 10, 2023, he believed that the people living in the home called the "gas company" right after the damage occurred. He couldn't see two people calling the same number at the same time for the same issue as being helpful. (Exh. 3.)

**Reliance Fence Company, Inc. Did Contact Southern California Gas About the Damage**

During his September 5, 2023, telephone interview with the Investigator, Chris Booker stated that right after Reliance workers notified him of the incident, he called Pacific Gas & Electric while Shadow Booker, office manager of the Reliance Fence Company, Inc., called the Southern California Gas Company. At that time, Reliance did not know which company operated the damaged line, so they contacted both. (Exh. 6.)

**Findings:**

1. Reliance Fence Company, Inc., failed to contact the Regional Notification Center before performing excavation at [REDACTED], Bakersfield, California 93309, on July 10, 2023, by digging post holes with a motorized auger.
2. Reliance Fence Company, Inc., failed to call 911 emergency services after damaging the natural gas line located at [REDACTED], Bakersfield, California 93309, on July 10, 2023.
3. Reliance Fence Company, Inc., failed to notify the Regional Notification Center of the damage it caused at [REDACTED], Bakersfield, California 93309, to Southern California Gas Company's natural gas line within 48 hours of the damage on July 10, 2023.

Investigator Name	Supervisor Name
Gabrielle Zeps	Brittney Branaman
Signature	Signature
<i>Gabrielle L Zeps</i>	



**Exhibit List:**

Exhibit No.	Description	Date	Received From
1	Initial Report from Southern California Gas Company	Received: 7/26/2023	Southern California Gas Company
2	Contractor's License: Reliance Fence Company, Inc.	Requested: 8/4/2023	California Contractors State License Board
3	Interview Summary	Telephoned: 8/21/2023	Eugene Aalonzo, Foreman Reliance Fence Company, Inc.
4	Interview Summary	Telephoned: 8/15/2023	Chris Booker, Superintendent Reliance Fence Company, Inc.
5	Incident Report no. 2023-2325622-000	Requested: 8/17/2023	Bakersfield Fire Department
6	Interview Summary	Telephoned: 9/5/2023	Chris Booker, Superintendent Reliance Fence Company, Inc.
7	Response to Information Request Reliance Fence Company, Inc.	Received: 8/7/23	Reliance Fence Company, Inc.

# Exhibit 1



## No-Ticket Survey Report

[REDACTED]

### Your Information

Your Name

[REDACTED]

Your Phone Number

[REDACTED]

Your E-mail

[REDACTED]

### Reviewer Information

Has the information you are submitting today been reviewed or changed by anyone besides yourself?

No

## Excavator Information

Company Name

Reliance Fence Co, Inc.

## Excavator Contact Details

Name

James Booker

Phone Number



E-mail



## Supporting Documentation

Upload a photo of the company truck, uniform, or business card.



Who took the photos?

Name

[REDACTED]

Phone Number

[REDACTED]

E-mail

[REDACTED]

Upload other documentation substantiating the identity of the excavator.

Additional file.

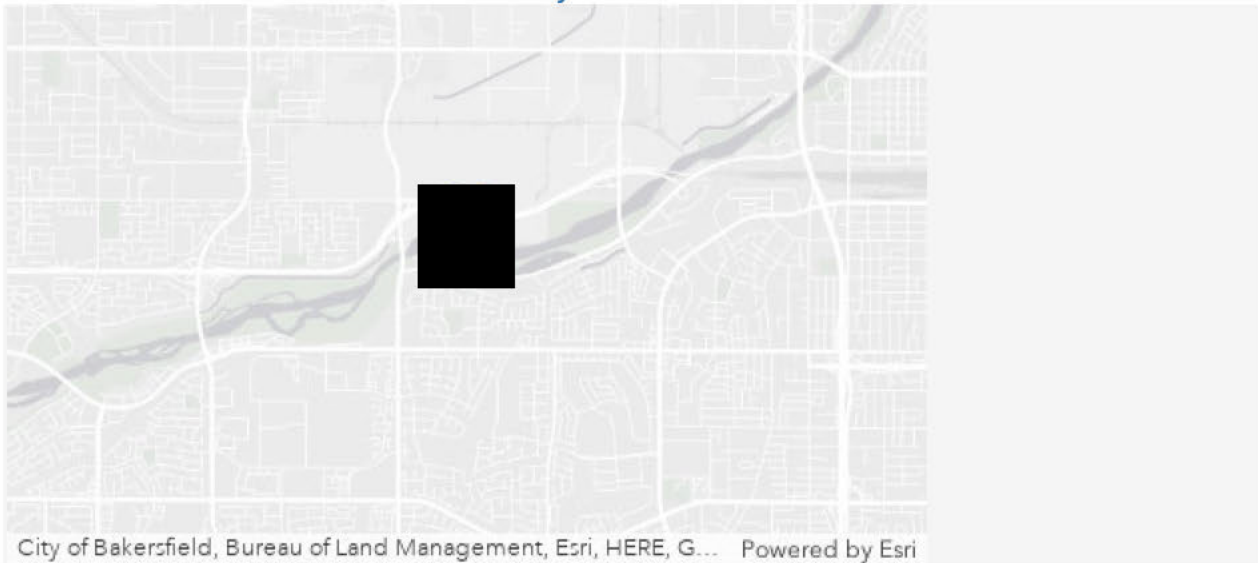
### **Damage**

Does this no-ticket complaint involve a damage?

Yes, damage occurred.

## Location

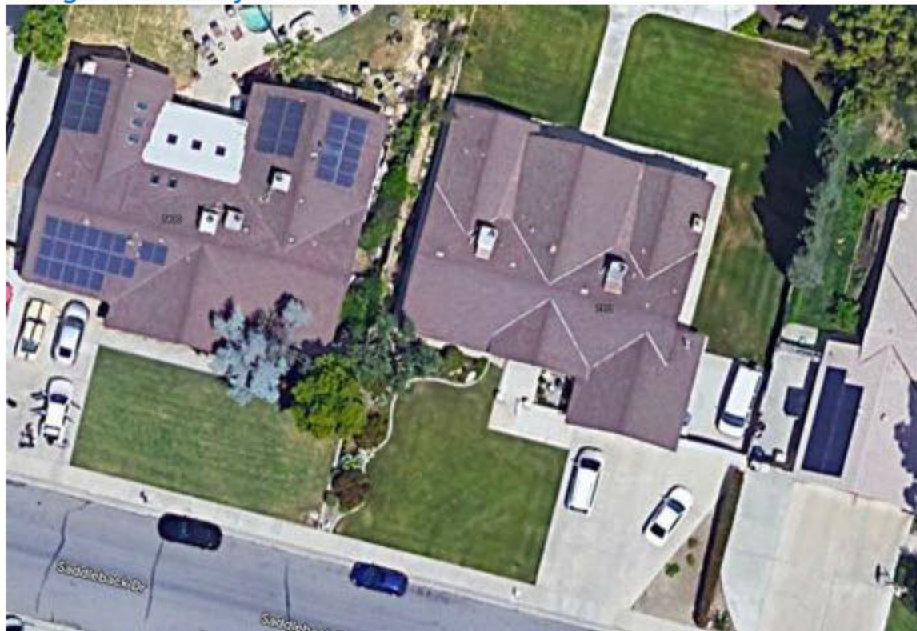
*Indicate location of excavation activity.*



*Describe the observed excavation activity.*

**\*\*Test submittal for actual event\*\*** 3rd party contractor excavating with motorized auger to install fence posts.

*Upload photo of excavation location. The photo should be taken at a wide angle and include location identifiers such as buildings in the background, street signs, bridges, freeways, etc.:*



*Additional Photo*



*Additional Photo*

*Who took the photos?*

*First Name*

[Redacted]

*Last Name*

[Redacted]

*Phone Number*

[Redacted]

*E-mail*

[Redacted]

*Photo 2: First Name*

*Photo 2: Last Name*

*Photo 2: Phone Number*

*Photo 2: E-mail*

*Photo 3: First Name*

*Photo 3: Last Name*

*Photo 3: Phone Number*

*Photo 3: E-mail*

*Upload photo, map, survey, or other documentation substantiating the location of your facilities in relation to the observed excavation activity.*



*Additional file.*

*Who authored the submitted documentation?*



*First Name*

[REDACTED]

*Last Name*

[REDACTED]

*Phone Number*

[REDACTED]

*E-mail*

[REDACTED]

Does this incident involve:

Injury?

No

Death?

No

Fire or evacuation?

Yes

Enter the name of the responding fire department:

Kern County FD

Damage Information

Date you learned of the damage:  
July 10, 2023

Time you learned of the damage:  
11:58

How did you learn of the damage?  
Company notification

Supporting Documentation  
*Upload photo informing you of the damage*

*Additional Photo*

*Additional Photo*

*Upload report or other documentation informing you of the damage*

*Who took the photos?*

*First Name*



*Last Name*

[REDACTED]

*Phone Number*

[REDACTED]

*E-mail*

[REDACTED]

*Photo 2: First Name*

[REDACTED]

*Photo 2: Last Name*

[REDACTED]

*Photo 2: Phone Number*

[REDACTED]

*Photo 2: E-mail*

[REDACTED]

*Photo 3: First Name*

[REDACTED]

*Photo 3: Last Name*

[REDACTED]

*Photo 3: Phone Number*

[REDACTED]

*Photo 3: E-mail*

[REDACTED]

## Damage Details

Type of Facility damaged?

Natural Gas

Other facility type?

Tool that caused the damage:

Auger (motorized)

Upload photo depicting the damaged facility



Who took the photo?

First Name



Last Name

[REDACTED]

Phone

[REDACTED]

E-mail

[REDACTED]

-----

# Exhibit 2



## Contractor's License Detail for License # 840290

**DISCLAIMER: A license status check provides information taken from the CSLB license database. Before relying on this information, you should be aware of the following limitations.**

- ▶ CSLB complaint disclosure is restricted by law ([B&P 7124.6](#)) If this entity is subject to public complaint disclosure click on link that will appear below for more information. Click [here](#) for a definition of disclosable actions.
- ▶ Only construction related civil judgments reported to CSLB are disclosed ([B&P 7071.17](#)).
- ▶ Arbitrations are not listed unless the contractor fails to comply with the terms.
- ▶ Due to workload, there may be relevant information that has not yet been entered into the board's license database.

Data current as of 8/4/2023 12:02:26 PM

### Business Information

RELIANCE FENCE COMPANY INC  
P O BOX 1831  
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93303  
Business Phone Number:(661) 324-6806

**Entity** Corporation  
**Issue Date** 06/08/2004  
**Reissue Date** 08/15/2007  
**Expire Date** **08/31/2025**

### License Status

**This license is current and active.**

**All information below should be reviewed.**

### Classifications

C13 - FENCING

### Bonding Information

#### Contractor's Bond

This license filed a Contractor's Bond with [AMERICAN CONTRACTORS INDEMNITY COMPANY](#).

**Bond Number:** SC1044332

**Bond Amount:** \$25,000

**Effective Date:** 01/01/2023

[Contractor's Bond History](#)

#### Bond of Qualifying Individual

The qualifying individual JAMES WESLEY BOOKER certified that he/she owns 10 percent or more of the voting stock/membership interest of this company; therefore, the Bond of Qualifying Individual is not required.

**Effective Date:** 08/15/2007

### Workers' Compensation

This license has workers compensation insurance with the [TECHNOLOGY INSURANCE COMPANY INC](#)

**Policy Number:** TWC4171327

**Effective Date:** 10/01/2022

**Expire Date:** 10/01/2023

[Workers' Compensation History](#)

### Miscellaneous Information

- ▶ 12/14/2015 - CONTRACTOR HIS LETTER SENT





# Exhibit 3



**CALIFORNIA UNDERGROUND FACILITIES SAFE EXCAVATION BOARD  
INVESTIGATION DIVISION  
INTERVIEW REPORT**

**REPORT DATE:** August 21, 2023

**CASE NO:** CAS-01555-W6J5P1

**DATE/TIME OF INTERVIEW:** August 21, 2023, 7:04 AM

**LOCATION OF INTERVIEW:** TELEPHONE

**NAME/ADDRESS OF INTERVIEWEE:**

Eugene Aalonzo  
Reliance Fence Company, Inc.  
P.O. Box 1831  
Bakersfield, California 93303

**NARRATIVE:**

- He recalls the incident on July 10, 2023, at [REDACTED], Bakersfield, California.
- Eugene Aalonzo and Johnny Castro were building a fence.
- Eugene Aalonzo was digging post holes with an auger.
- Eugene Aalonzo struck a natural gas line with the auger resulting in a gas release.
- He recalls the natural gas line being about one and ½ feet deep.
- Eugene Aalonzo immediately covered the damage with dirt to prevent the gas from leaking.
- Eugene Aalonzo called his boss, Chris Booker, and told him what had happened.
- Chris Booker told him to stop working and for him to stay put.
- Eugene Aalonzo believes that the people living at [REDACTED], Bakerfield, California, may have called 911.
- Eugene Aalonzo did not call 911.
- Eugene Aalonzo believes the people living at [REDACTED], Bakerfield, California, called the “gas company” and he couldn’t see two people calling the same number at the same time for the same issue as being helpful.
- Eugene Aalonzo believes that his office called 411.
- The fire department came but he didn’t speak to any of them.
- Two unnamed people came together from the “gas company.”
- The second of the two unnamed “gas company” people gave Eugene Aalonzo his business card.
- Ultimately Eugene Aalonzo asked if he and Johnny could leave, and they left.
- Eugene Aalonzo went back to the Reliance Fence office.
- Eugene Aalonzo is not aware of a ticket for the job at [REDACTED], Bakerfield, California.
- Eugene Aalonzo said there was no more digging to be done to finish the job.

Investigator Name	Supervisor Name
GABRIELLE ZEPS	<i>Brittney Branaman</i>

# Exhibit 4



**CALIFORNIA UNDERGROUND FACILITIES SAFE EXCAVATION BOARD  
INVESTIGATION DIVISION  
INTERVIEW REPORT**

**REPORT DATE:** August 15, 2023

**CASE NO:** CAS-01555-W6J5P1

**DATE/TIME OF INTERVIEW:** August 15, 2023, 1:31 PM

**LOCATION OF INTERVIEW:** Telephone

**NAME/ADDRESS OF INTERVIEWEE:**

Chris Booker, Superintendent  
Reliance Fence  
P.O. Box 1831  
Bakersfield, California 93303

**NARRATIVE:**

- No firsthand knowledge of the incident.
- Chris Booker, Superintendent of Reliance Fence, said he did not have an 811 ticket for this job.
- Chris Booker said that they usually do get an 811 ticket.
- Chris Booker worked this job in quickly, otherwise it would have been a three-week wait.
- Chris Booker will have the Reliance Fence employees who were onsite available for an interview, by telephone, on August 17, 2023, at 7:00 AM.

Investigator Name	Supervisor Name
GABRIELLE ZEPS	<i>Brittney Branaman</i>

# Exhibit 5

Bakersfield Fire Department  
 2101 H ST  
 Bakersfield, CA 93301  
 661 326 3911

Incident Report  
 2023-2325622 -000

Printed: 08/17/2023 14:17:45  
 Number of Pages: 2

Basic	
Alarm Date and Time	12:21:11 Monday, July 10, 2023
Arrival Time	12:27:00
Controlled Date and Time	
Last Unit Cleared Date and Time	14:31:14 Monday, July 10, 2023
Response Time	0:05:49
Priority Response	Yes
Completed	Yes
Fire Department Station	B11
Shift	B
Incident Type	412 - Gas leak (natural gas or LPG)
Aid Given or Received	N - None
Alarms	1
Action Taken 1	53 - Evacuate area
Action Taken 2	92 - Standby
Casualties	No
Apparatus - Suppression	1
Personnel - Suppression Personnel	3
Property Use	419 - 1 or 2 family dwelling
Location Type	Address
Address	7312 SADDLEBACK DR
City, State Zip	BAKERSFIELD, CA 93309
District	B11
Census Tract	18.02
Latitude	35.3608694444444
Longitude	-119.083930555556
Map Page	102-33-C

Situation	
Incident Delay	1 - No

Person Involved - Person1,	
Last Name	Person1
Street Address	
Phone	7143853301

Apparatus - BE11	
Apparatus ID	BE11
Response Time	0:05:49
Apparatus Dispatch Date and Time	12:21:11 Monday, July 10, 2023
En route to scene date and time	12:22:34 Monday, July 10, 2023
Apparatus Arrival Date and Time	12:27:00 Monday, July 10, 2023
Apparatus Clear Date and Time	14:26:57 Monday, July 10, 2023
Apparatus priority response	Yes
Number of People	3
Apparatus Use	Suppression
Apparatus Type	11 - Engine
Personnel 1	0348 - Battan, Bryan D Position: CAPT

Bakersfield Fire Department  
2101 H ST  
Bakersfield, CA 93301  
661 326 3911

Incident Report  
2023-2325622 -000

Printed: 08/17/2023 14:17:45  
Number of Pages: 2

**Apparatus - BE11**

Personnel 2	0257 - Munoz, Steve Y Position: ENG
Personnel 3	0576 - Gee, Mason R Position: FF

**Authority**

Reported By	0348 - Battan, Bryan D 07:38:25 Tuesday, July 11, 2023
Officer In Charge	- ,
Reviewer	- ,

**Narratives**

Narrative Name	BE11
Narrative Type	Incident
Narrative Date	07:33:55 Tuesday, July 11, 2023
Author	0348 - Battan, Bryan D
Author Rank	CAPT
Author Assignment	1
Narrative Text	<p>At 1221 hours on Monday July 10, 2023 we were dispatched to a gas leak. One unit was assigned to this incident. Three personnel responded. We arrived on scene at 1227 hours and cleared at 1431 hours. The incident occurred at 7312 SADDLEBACK Dr, BAKERSFIELD in District B11. The local station is B11. The general description of this property is 1 or 2 family dwelling. The primary task(s) performed at the scene by responding personnel was evacuation. No mutual or automatic aid was given or received.</p> <p>Alarm number 2325622 has been assigned to this incident.</p> <p>E11 was requested by a gas company representative who was already on scene. Upon arrival the representative stated he had already evacuated the two houses that were on either side of the leak but wanted us to standby until they were able to stop the leak due to potential. E11 confirmed both residence had been evacuated and then stoodby until the leak was under control. Once the leak was under control E11 was no longer needed and completed assignment.</p>

End of Report



# Exhibit 6



**CALIFORNIA UNDERGROUND FACILITIES SAFE EXCAVATION BOARD  
INVESTIGATION DIVISION  
INTERVIEW REPORT**

**REPORT DATE:** September 5, 2023

**CASE NO:** CAS-01555-W6J5P1

**DATE/TIME OF INTERVIEW:** September 5, 2023, 11:52AM

**LOCATION OF INTERVIEW:** Telephone

**NAME/ADDRESS OF INTERVIEWEE:**

Chris Booker  
Reliance Fence Company, Inc.  
P.O. 1831  
Bakersfield, California 90013

**NARRATIVE:**

- Chris Booker stated that no one from Reliance Fence Company, Inc. called 911 after the natural gas line damage at [REDACTED] Drive, Bakersfield, California 93309 on July 10, 2023. Chris Booker stated he did not know that was something he was supposed to do.
- Chris Booker stated that no one from Reliance Fence Company, Inc. called the regional notification center after the natural gas line damage at [REDACTED] Drive, Bakersfield, California 93309 on July 10, 2023.
- Chris Booker stated that Shadow Booker, office manager of the Reliance Fence Company, Inc. called the Southern California Gas Company while he called Pacific Gas & Electric right after his workers notified him of the natural gas line damage at [REDACTED] Drive, Bakersfield, California 93309 on July 10, 2023.
- Chris Booker said that they called both operators as it was unclear which was the natural gas provider at [REDACTED], Bakersfield, California 93309.
- Chris Booker stated that they try very hard to do the right thing.

Investigator Name	Supervisor Name
GABRIELLE ZEPS	<i>Brittney Branaman</i>

# Exhibit 7

**From:** [rf@reliancefence.com](mailto:rf@reliancefence.com) on behalf of [Reliance Fence Company](#)  
**To:** [Zeps, Gabrielle@EnergySafety](mailto:Zeps, Gabrielle@EnergySafety)  
**Subject:** RE: Information Request  
**Date:** Monday, August 7, 2023 11:36:58 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png@01D9C917.6FDF7C0.png](#)

---

We also had a safety meeting when they came back to the yard about gas lines 07/12/23 was the date of the meeting.

---

**From:** "Reliance Fence Company" <[rf@reliancefence.com](mailto:rf@reliancefence.com)>  
**Date:** Mon, Aug 7, 2023 11:15 am  
**To:** "Zeps, Gabrielle@EnergySafety" <[Gabrielle.Zeps@energysafety.ca.gov](mailto:Gabrielle.Zeps@energysafety.ca.gov)>, [Rf@reliancefence.com](mailto:Rf@reliancefence.com)  
**Subject:** RE: Information Request

Attached on this file is the Names of our guys that were out there. Also attached is a PDF file for the work order of the job.

If you are needing anything else other than these two please let me know

**From:** "Zeps, Gabrielle@EnergySafety" <[Gabrielle.Zeps@energysafety.ca.gov](mailto:Gabrielle.Zeps@energysafety.ca.gov)>  
**Date:** Mon, Aug 7, 2023 10:11 am  
**To:** "Rf@reliancefence.com" <[Rf@reliancefence.com](mailto:Rf@reliancefence.com)>  
**Subject:** Information Request

Thanking you for your assistance.

## Gabrielle Zeps

### Investigator

### Underground Investigations Division

[Gabrielle.Zeps@energysafety.ca.gov](mailto:Gabrielle.Zeps@energysafety.ca.gov)

Phone: 279-789-1817

715 P Street, 20th Floor

Sacramento, CA 95814



OFFICE OF ENERGY  
INFRASTRUCTURE  
SAFETY