

Chandlers General Contractor Services
License # 1087357
Ishmael Chandler
Case No. D23860001
Location of Violation: 2794 Agua Vista Drive San Jose CA 95132

Defense Statement

1. 811 Call Responsibility

I did not call 811 in this case because PG&E had already called 811 for the same project area. I have personally called 811 hundreds of times in my career and would have done so again had I known that duplicate tickets were required when working in the same area. The marks from 811 clearly showed the exact area I was working in—from the power box to the house main electrical panel—and I reasonably relied on those markings. At no point did I intend to avoid safety procedures. I have since learned that even when another contractor or PG&E calls 811, I should also call under my own name. I now always do so. At the time, I acted in good faith and believed I was following correct procedure.

no_reply	Inbox CA TICKET: 2025081402760-000 - 448 E Middlefield Rd, Mountain View, CA 94043 - Underground Service Alert of Northern & Central Cali... 202508140276...	Aug 14
no_reply	Inbox CA TICKET: 2025061802798-000 - 1625 Austin Ave, Los Altos, CA 94024 - Underground Service Alert of Northern & Central California 811 /... 2025061802798...	Jun 18
no_reply	Inbox CA TICKET: 2025062300480-000 - 20180 Chateau Dr, Saratoga, CA 95070 - Underground Service Alert of Northern & Central California ... 202506230048...	Jun 23
no_reply	Inbox CA TICKET: 2025060200419-000 - 358 N 7th St, San Jose, CA 95112 - Underground Service Alert of Northern & Central California 811 // 8... 202506020041...	Jun 2
no_reply	Inbox CA TICKET: 2025062000250-000 - 10460 Sterling Blvd, Cupertino, CA 95014 - Underground Service Alert of Northern & Central Californi... 202506200025...	Jun 20
811-response	Inbox Job update, - ***** To: Chandler's Plumbin...	Aug 15
no_reply	Inbox CA TICKET: 2025071503113-000 - 325 El Cerrito Ave, Hillsborough, CA 94010 - Underground Service Alert of Northern & Central California... 2025071503113...	Jul 15
no_reply	CA TICKET: 2025071400689-000 - 3437 BUCKNER DR, San Jose, CA 95127 - Underground Service Alert of Northern & Central California 811 // 80... 202507140068...	Jul 14
no_reply	Inbox CA TICKET: 2025042010122-000 - 1133 Thornton Way, San Jose, CA 95128 - Underground Service Alert of Northern & Central California R... 2025042010122...	Apr 28

Proof I Call 811 for my plumbing business Chandlers Plumbing (408)449-3443 and am aware

2. Inspector's Orders and the Gas Line Strike

On October 12, the trench was already fully dug to the required 24-inch depth, running from the main panel to the PG&E power box. My team and I had completed this work carefully, coming within inches of the gas line without causing any damage. We were proud of the precision of our work.

During inspection, however, the PG&E inspector ordered me to dig an additional 10 inches deeper, despite my clear warning that this would put the gas line at serious risk. The inspector dismissed my concerns and walked away without consideration. Feeling pressured by PG&E's authority and instructions, we complied. The following day, October 13, the gas line was struck—exactly as I had warned—because of the inspector's directive. Photos taken of the trench confirm this.

3. Poor Planning on PG&E's Side

Two days after the accident, PG&E themselves used a backhoe to dig up and remove the gas line from the very same trench. This raises the question: why wasn't I instructed to wait until the gas line was removed before continuing my work? It was unreasonable to require me to hand-dig in an unsafe area when PG&E already had a plan to excavate and replace the line with heavy machinery. This demonstrates poor planning and coordination on PG&E's part—not negligence on mine.

4. My Record and Professional Background

I have been a licensed California contractor since 2012 and have worked in this industry since I was 18 years old. My team and I take tremendous pride in our work, and we have maintained a perfect safety record when it comes to trenching and underground utilities. This incident was not the result of carelessness on my part but of conflicting instructions, poor planning, and pressure from PG&E personnel. The homeowner on this project witnessed these events firsthand and confirms that the inspector ordered me to dig deeper after the trench had already been completed correctly.

5. Lack of Witness Interview

I was also surprised to learn that the homeowner—my only third-party witness—was never interviewed by the safety board regarding the incident. His testimony is critical, as he observed the inspector's orders and fully supports my account of what happened. By excluding his statement, a key piece of evidence in my defense has been overlooked.

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Conclusion

This incident occurred not because of my actions, but because of poor coordination, lack of planning, and unsafe directives given by PG&E's inspector. I relied on existing 811 markings in good faith, followed inspector instructions against my better judgment, and warned of the risks before the damage occurred. My professional record, the homeowner's testimony, and the timing of PG&E's own gas line replacement all show that I acted responsibly under difficult circumstances. I do not feel like I should be held responsible for this incident's outcome and I am an extremely fair minded person.



The red line is where we stopped digging. This was so PG&E could handle the rest. We weren't even supposed to dig that close to the box and the original agreement. I believe it was one to 2 feet away.



Backhoe used to dig in the same trench to replace the gas line 2 days after the accident, but I can't use power tools

All work was completed. Permits were pulled and finalized for this job under my General Contractors License: Chandler's General Contractor Services License # 1087357

This incident has traumatized me and is one of the reasons I stepped down from being a general Contractor.

Home Owners Statement:

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me Sep 28



Shrikant Subraman... Sep 28

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to me ▾

Hello Ishmael,

I hope you are able to get through this well. My responses to your questions are as follows:

1) The trench was dug to correct depth ? and then and only then the gas line was stuck under the PG&E inspector direction to dig down 10 more inches around PG&E power box
My response: Agreed. There was confusing directions from multiple inspectors often providing conflicting information - one clearly mentioned that the depth was correct and then another asking for more digging.

2) Could this incident been avoided ? by scheduling my team to dig after the gas line was removed because it was scheduled for replacement two days after the incident happen. Therefore, it was poor planning on PG&E side. I could have of waited till the gas line was removed. Did all the digging I need to do without any hazards.
My response: We could have avoided this if you could have planned it to be done either before or after the gas line replacement - but, remember, the gas line replacement helped you since PG&E did some digging for you and also covered up the dig.

< Reply

→ Forward



9:22

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me Sep 28



Shrikant Subraman... Sep 28

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to me ▾

3) Do you agree or disagree with the google PG&E overview statement ? since you have worked with PG&E on this project which if i remember correctly was very frustrating for you

I asked Google for inspector reviews and complaints do you and it said the following:

Overview
Reviews of PG&E inspectors are mixed, highlighting pros like good pay and an enjoyable, independent outdoor work environment, but also noting cons such as poor planning and management, a stressful and bureaucratic company culture, and difficulties in getting recognized or entering the company. While some employees find the work environment and coworkers positive, others point to issues with management support and fairness, with some complaints involving racism and a lack of accountability for leaders.
Employee Reviews for PG&E Inspectors

Toxic Work Culture: Some employees have reported experiencing a toxic environment, including racist and sexist comments that were allegedly not adequately addressed by HR
My response: Agreed - extremely frustrating to work with PG&E inspectors. One of them actually yelled at me - talk about treating customers well.

4) Was your Experience with Chandler's general contracting services was the opposite experience of PG&E?
Meaning, great planning ,nice work environment employees easy to work with and accountability of the owner

Agreed - as I mentioned earlier, PG&E was difficult to work with.

5) And one final thing, do you agree or disagree that me and the Inspector should only get safety classes or Perhaps even this case thrown out altogether They can make that decision because my record was perfect before working with PG&E spotless record I had Before working with PG&E no one should be penalized or fined for this incident since there is proof on both sides of poor planning And this was all a learning experience and it will never happen again.

Agreed - PG&E should probably get you attend some training classes.

< Reply

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me Sep 28



Shrikant Subraman... Sep 28

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to me ▾

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