



Sample of
**Incidents Involving Underground
Infrastructure in BC and Canada 2008-2012**
in BC and Canada

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Compiled July 2012

British Columbia

Broken gas line not properly mapped, says Fortis

Author: Gary McKenna

Source *The Tri-City News* (Port Coquitlam, BC) Feb 8, 2012

Text:

A gas line broken by an excavator that forced the evacuation of more than 50 residents in Coquitlam Tuesday was not accurately documented on Fortis BC records, according to the company.

Kirsten Walker, a spokesperson for Fortis, said a city contractor was relying on faulty information when its digger struck the pipe while replacing a water main along North Road. The broken gas line was abandoned in the 1970s, she said, and does not appear on current maps of pipe infrastructure for the area.

"The rupture was a result of contact with a half-inch abandoned service pipeline," she said. "It is approximately 40 years of age and it is not indicated on our maps."

Undocumented abandoned lines are rare, but they do exist, Walker said. She added that the company's documents have a high degree of accuracy and that additional surveying will be conducted to ensure there are no other abandoned lines in the area.

Ninety-nine per cent of all ruptured pipes are the result of two factors: the contractor did not phone BC One Call, a service that maps out what is buried on a dig site, or they did not follow safe excavation practices. Cases where unmapped lines are broken -- like Tuesday's incident -- make up 1% of pipe ruptures, she said.

"The construction contractors followed all proper procedures," she said. "They did have their current information on site and they were using their equipment appropriately."

The incident occurred at 675 North Road while construction crews were working to replace a water main along the Burnaby border. Initially, the leak was thought to have impacted only a one block radius, however emergency crews discovered gas had migrated into neighbouring apartment buildings.

"The risk is from migrating gas," said Coquitlam fire chief Tony Delmonico. "Depending on the percentage of concentration you could have an explosion and a fire."

Evacuees were transported to nearby Cameron Recreation Centre in Burnaby and were allowed to return to their homes shortly after midnight.

Delmonico said he was pleased with the response, particularly given the fact that multiple agencies were at the scene to assist. Coordination between Burnaby fire fighters, Fortis BC, Burnaby and Coquitlam police, ambulance services and TransLink went smoothly considering the circumstances, he added.

"When you are liaising with another city it adds a complexity," he said. "We work regularly with Burnaby, so from our perspective, I think a lot of things went well."

Gas leak closes Coquitlam Road

Source *The Tri-City News* (Port Coquitlam, BC) Feb 8, 2012

Text:

Several apartment buildings in Coquitlam were evacuated Tuesday afternoon after an excavator hit a gas line in the area.

The leak impacted several city blocks and forced the closure of Clarke Road near the Burnaby border.

Buses were rerouted around the area and fire and emergency crews spent hours at the scene.

Evacuees were allowed to return home later Tuesday night and the roads were re-opened.

-courtesy of CTV

Leak prompts evacuation

Author: Kevin Rothbauer

Source: *Cowichan Valley Citizen* (Duncan, BC) Aug 10, 2011

Text:

Several Duncan businesses had to be evacuated on Wednesday morning following a natural gas leak, and some had to stay closed for the rest of the day.

Just after 9:30 a.m. the city's volunteer fire department was called out to the leak near the intersection of St. Julian Street and the former Robertson Street, which is now an unnamed lane through the Coronation Mall parking lot, where a construction crew installing a back-up generator for Shoppers Drug Mart had struck a two-inch gas line.

Although things turned out alright, Duncan fire chief Mike McKinlay noted that such an incident "can be serious."

"With a gas line that big, and in that area, it is possible that it could have been worse, if the wind was blowing in the right direction."

Fortis was on the scene within 20 minutes, said McKinlay, and crimped the line before replacing a section.

Firefighters evacuated the Duncan Financial Centre, Snap Fitness and the Toronto Dominion bank, while Shoppers was on standby. Some businesses in the Financial Centre, including Scotiabank, Western Forest Products and the Cowichan United Way, had to close for the rest of the day.

"Because of the location of the leak, directly behind our building and a lot of gas shooting up into the air, it was coming down into our rooftop HVAC units," said Scotiabank branch manager David Strong.

Bank employees put fans out, but they didn't disperse the gas quickly enough, and air scrubbers had to be brought in to make sure the branch could open Thursday. The fire department was clear of the scene by 11 a.m., and Fortis had things taken care of by 12:30 p.m. While Fortis spokesperson Kirsten Walker could not confirm whether or not the construction crew had called about the location of the gas line, she advised people to be cautious.

"We do always encourage customers to call BC One Call," she said. "We always want customers to call before they dig."

In 2010, Fortis had 1,300 incidents of damage to gas lines in B.C., Walker added. "What we find is that about 90 per cent of the damage could be prevented if people followed safe excavation procedures."

According to McKinlay, such incidents are rare in Duncan.

"They don't happen very often in the downtown area," he said. "Companies are usually diligent in making sure they have the right calls made. It has been over a year since I was at one."

Homes evacuated after gas leak; Contractor punctured four-inch pipe while using bobcat on Coquitlam's Millard Avenue

Author: John Kurucz

Source: *Coquitlam Now* (New Westminster, BC) April 6, 2012

Text:

Wednesday afternoon's gas leak in northeast Coquitlam has been attributed to contractor error.

Coquitlam Fire and Rescue Services assistant chief Rod Gill said a bobcat working in the area of 3379 Millard Ave. punctured a four-inch pipe that was clearly shown on underground maps of the area.

"That's a classic [case of] call before you dig, which they didn't do," he said.

Gill added that a marker was in place noting where the gas line was located, and the contractors had strayed outside of the property line they were working in.

"Had they stayed within the property area, there would have been no issue whatsoever," he said.

No one was injured during the incident, which was first reported around 1:30 p.m. Two homes were temporarily evacuated adjacent to the property where the leak originated.

About 15 firefighters responded to the call, along with close to a dozen crew members from Fortis BC.

Traffic along Coast Meridian Road north of David Avenue up to Queenston Avenue was closed for the brunt of Wednesday, while the puncture was capped shortly after 4 p.m. The road was reopened before 5 p.m.

Leak sparks evacuation; A gas leak closed down several local businesses for part of Monday morning

Author: Matthew Claxton

Source: *Langley Advance* (Langley, BC) February 7, 2012

Text:

A gas leak shut down several streets in Langley City Monday morning.

At about 8: 40 a.m., City firefighters were called to the area around Industrial Avenue and 200th Street.

An excavator operator working on 200A Street, a short side road, apparently hit a two-inch natural gas pipe, said Langley City fire chief Rory Thompson.

Firefighters and Langley RCMP evacuated an area around the leak and blocked Industrial from 201A Street to 200th Street, but the smell of gas was obvious for up to a quarter mile away.

The gas leak was contained by 9: 45 a.m.

Deputy fire chief Bob Scott said firefighters checked gas levels in several nearby buildings before allowing the employees to go back into the area.

Three gas line breaks, two evacuations for Happy Valley

Author: Edward Hill

Source: *Goldstream News Gazette* (Victoria, BC) September 30, 2011

Text:

Angry and annoyed Happy Valley Road residents were allowed back in their homes just before noon today after being evacuated for a second time in two months due to a ruptured natural gas line.

A contractor struck the line before 9 a.m. this morning on Loma Linda Drive, near Happy Valley Road in Langford. It's the third gas line break in the same area this summer after incidents on Aug. 2 and 4.

Dennis Dyck, who was evacuated from his home on Aug. 4 after a six-inch gasmain was ruptured, is losing his patience. "The first time it's an accident. The second time it's 'what are they thinking?' The third time you have to wonder what the hell is going on," Dyck said.

Where the Aug. 4 break roared with the fury of a jet engine, this apparently smaller break sounded similar to a rushing river. "At first I thought it was raining," Dyck said. "I couldn't believe it was another break. What the hell?"

Natural gas wafted through the area for about two and a half hours before the line was shut down at 11:35 a.m. Similar to the August line break, Fortis BC crews dug two holes on either side of the rupture to crimp off the line.

Avril McEvoy, waiting to get to her home near Wildridge Way, couldn't believe it was happening again.

"It's the third time in two months. I don't know what they are doing wrong," McEvoy said. "It's not close enough to my house to make me nervous, but it's definitely a major inconvenience. To happen three times just can't be a mistake."

Tom Hayward and his family took shelter on a BC Transit bus brought in to house evacuees. It was his second evacuation, and he took it in stride.

"Guys are working and things happen. I'm not upset," he said. "What can you do?"

FortisBC spokesperson Marcus Wong said the company is conducting an investigation, but couldn't speak to any outcome of the investigation from Aug. 4. He said the priority of the crew is ensuring public safety and shutting down the gas.

Wong said the company stands by the accuracy of its gas line maps. Contractors need to call "BC OneCall" service to obtain maps for any underground utility, he said, and any contractor should hand dig until they find the utility line.

He said construction contractors hit gas lines 1,300 times last year, a nine per cent decrease from the year before. Wong said FortisBC will send a crew to a worksite if a contractor can't find the gas line. "(Contractors) are welcome to call us. We will help find the line," he said.

Langford engineering manager John Manson said WorkSafeBC is investigating once again. Manson couldn't immediately confirm if it was the same contractor who hit the line today and on Aug. 4.

Manson said WorkSafeBC and Langford will take a close look to see if this is operator error, if the utility maps are wrong, or there was a combination of both.

"We understand this isn't the first time. We want to determine the circumstances behind both instances, and see if there is a connection," Manson said Friday afternoon, referring to the rupture on Aug. 4 and today. "This shouldn't be happening on a regular basis."

Kim Coy, owner of Sunshine Early Childhood Centre on Loma Linda Drive, said her staff is getting good at evacuating the 40 tots and babies. They carry or walk the kids to the South Vancouver island Rangers property on Luxton Road, and then bus the kids to facility in Colwood.

"In three minutes we are down the Galloping Goose and out of the area, even before the fire department gets there," Coy said. "The kids are calm, we walk the Goose all the time.

"The most stressful thing is having parents leave work early to pick up their kids. This is the third time due to gas leaks."

Coy said the contractor indicated to her that he was working off inaccurate maps, and even found old pipes not found on any current map. "I feel for the excavator operator," she said. "He wears all the damage, but is working off maps that aren't correct."

Langford Mayor Stew Young said WorkSafeBC has jurisdiction, but he wants to see stronger safeguards and verification of where lines are before any contractor digs in that area.

"This is getting ridiculous. We've never had this happen before," Young said.

Gas leak evacuates homes on Scott Street

Author: Keri Sculland

Source: *Alberni Valley Times* (Port Alberni, BC) September 1, 2011

Text:

Homes were evacuated in Port Alberni following a natural gas leak in a residential area.

The evacuation was put in place yesterday, shortly before 11 a.m., after a gas line was struck when a person was digging a retaining wall close to the line without knowing it was located on the property.

Most people in the surrounding houses weren't home at the time, so only two houses were evacuated.

The worker was driving a small Kubota tractor, digging a trench for a retaining wall around the property.

The Port Alberni Fire Department attended the scene on the 4400 block of Scott Street to evacuate surrounding homes and stand guard in the event of sparks coming in contact with the gas.

PAFD Cpt. Peter Aspinall said the leak was too close to a main line to shut it off and repairs will be necessary. People are expected to return to their homes in approximately half an hour.

The fire department was on scene for about an hour, Aspinall said. Crews from FortisBC, the gas company, arrived while firefighters were on Scott Street, and began marking the gas lines in preparation for repairs. The fire department left once the gas was shut off.

FortisBC arrived next to map out the line so it could be squeezed off and repaired. Repairs were expected to be complete shortly after the fire department left the scene.

Accidents like this occur because gas lines are not visible from the surface, Aspinall explained.

"They never are. They are all under the alleys, that is why you should always call before you dig," he explained.

Whether landscaping, planting trees, installing fences, building a deck or starting an excavation project, having gas line information on-site is important.

Gas leak prompts evacuations in downtown Kamloops

Source: *Kamloops This Week* (Kamloops, BC) Nov 10, 2011

Text:

Homes in a residential block of downtown Kamloops were evacuated this morning (Nov. 10) after a gas line was ruptured underground.

Emergency crews were called to the area around a home at 917 Nicola St. just before 11:30 a.m.

Kamloops Fire Rescue Assistant Chief Curtis Bossert said homes were evacuated in the 900-blocks of Nicola and Columbia streets.

There was a strong odour of gas in the air in the area.

KFR, along with Kamloops RCMP and Fortis BC, were working to repair the leak and keep area residents and structures safe.

An hour after the initial call came in, Bossert said things were "well in hand," and would likely be back to normal within hours.

Bossert said he doesn't yet know what caused the leak, but investigators will look into it.

Natural gas pipeline ruptures in FSJ

Source: *Prince George Citizen* (Prince George, BC) June 30, 2012

Text:

There's been another natural gas pipeline accident in northeast BC, -the second involving Spectra Energy in less than a week.

A line carrying sour gas ruptured Thursday night north of Fort St. John.

Spectra spokeswoman Rosemary Silva says the leak was isolated by 3 a.m. Friday and has been secured so there's no risk to the public.

No injuries have been reported and it's not known how much sour gas may have leaked. Two workers were injured June 23 in a flash fire at a compressor station operated by Spectra Energy, north of Fort St. John.

The Transportation Safety Board is investigating both incidents.

Gas lines ruptured 1,700 times last year in B.C.

Source: *CBC News* January 16, 2008

Text:

A CBC News investigation involving B.C. contractors found most were not going to check for underground gas or electrical lines before they started digging, shedding light on a nationwide problem.

Professional locator Andrew Mark uses electronic sensors to check for underground gas pipelines on a Metro Vancouver property.
(CBC)

The rupturing of pipes is a big issue in Canada as lines are being hit thousands of times each year. In B.C. alone, gas lines were hit 1,700 times in 2007. In Ontario there are an average of 3,500 gas-line hits every year.

The probe discovered that fines and prosecutions are rare after gas lines are hit and homeowners must be aware when it comes to locating the pipes.

As part of its investigation, *Marketplace* asked seven contractors for estimates to build a new fence for a Metro Vancouver home.

Despite being asked directly about the risk of hitting underground gas or electric pipes — only two of the seven said they would call and check before they started digging.

"When we make a hole, we're just careful, you know," one of the contractors told CBC's investigative team.

But when *Marketplace* had professional locator Andrew Mark check the property with specialized equipment, he determined there was a gas line just 50 centimetres below where the contractors were planning to dig holes for the fence.

"When you are putting in a post you are looking at between two and three feet [60 cm to 90 cm]," said Mark, "As they're excavating for the fence posts, they're definitely going to be in that danger zone."

7 dead in 2003 explosion

Natural gas is lighter than air, and in the open it will rise and disperse, but in a building it can collect and a simple spark can lead to disaster.

Prosecuting those who hit a gas pipeline has cut incidents by 60 per cent, says Massoud Tahamtani of the Virginia State Corporation Commission.

(CBC)

On April 24, 2003, seven people were killed after a contractor in Toronto hit a gas line at the corner of Bloor Street West and Poplar Avenue and levelled a shopping plaza.

Other pipes can be hazardous as well. Numerous services are buried under suburban neighbourhoods, including electrical cables, fibre optics, sewage, water and even crude oil.

In B.C. this past July, a road crew digging with an excavator on Inlet Drive near the intersection of the Barnet Highway and Hastings Street in Burnaby ruptured a Kinder Morgan pipeline carrying crude oil from a refinery to a refuelling facility.

A stream of black crude shot 30 metres into the air like a geyser for 25 minutes before the pipeline was shut down. About 50 homes were evacuated and almost 240,000 litres of crude oil eventually spilled into Inlet Drive and Burrard Inlet.

The case is still before the courts and it's not yet clear who was at fault. Meanwhile, some residents have still been unable to return to their homes.

Education or enforcement?

Prosecutors in Ontario say education, not enforcement, is the key to compliance, and admit to having only prosecuted one case in 2007.

In fact, during most cases in Canada, the only consequence of striking a gas line is a letter or a visit from an inspector ordering the offenders to "cease and desist" from hitting gas lines. Fines are rare.

In the case of the Toronto explosion, the contractor, Warren Bitulithic, was fined \$280,000, one of the largest fines ever in Canadian history.

Critics say that has to change, and they point to the United States as an example of how things should be. In Virginia, for example, anyone who hits a gas line has to appear in a special court, even if nobody is harmed.

"We review every single damage that has come to us for the previous months and present the result to the committee in pursuing enforcement action," said Massoud Tahamtani, a utilities manager at the Virginia State Corporation Commission.

That's led to remarkable drop in incidents — 60 per cent — according to Tahamtani.

"We believe it is the right approach, to let people know that there is someone enforcing the law."

The state makes it simple for them by providing an 811 telephone service that gathers all the information anyone would need about underground pipes and wire with a single phone call, often while callers wait on the line.

Users can even send in GPS co-ordinates to get precise information.

"We encourage everyone, including the homeowners, to call even if they are digging to plant a tree," said Tahamtani.

Homeowners need to be aware

In Canada, five provinces, B.C., Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario and Quebec offer a similar service, but it's not mandatory for utilities to belong, so homeowners still might need to make more calls to make sure they get all the information they need.

In B.C., the local gas company, Terasen Gas, expects homeowners and contractors to locate the pipes themselves with maps they send out.

In other provinces, it can take up to a dozen phone calls and several days to get that information, the *Marketplace* investigation found.

Ultimately, homeowners need to make sure for themselves that they know where any pipelines might be buried before anyone starts digging, *Marketplace* investigators advise.

Up to 70 per cent of gas line hits in BC would be prevented by phoning BC One Call

Source: *Canada Newswire* March 12, 2008

Text:

SURREY, BC, March 12 /CNW/ - Classes were well underway at the Broadway Campus of Vancouver Community College one morning last month, when more than 3,000 students were told to evacuate because an excavator had struck an underground natural gas pipeline.

The needed repairs meant students and staff lost most of the school day and 77 Terasen Gas customers had their service temporarily interrupted. However, if excavators had used safe excavation practices as set out by B.C. provincial safety regulations - including the practice of hand digging within one meter of the gas line - this incident would not have happened.

"Unfortunately the Vancouver Community College incident is not isolated. In 2007, Terasen Gas experienced 1,739 incidents affecting our pipeline system and totalling more than \$1.3 million in repairs," said Dwain Bell, Terasen Gas, vice president of distribution. "Terasen Gas tracks and reviews every one of these incidents to better understand the cause of system damage. Each year we provide the findings to our safety regulators and use the information to plan and implement our public awareness activities encouraging safe excavation practices and reminding people to call BC One Call. Callers not only receive gas line locate information, but also underground infrastructure information of all BC One Call members for their dig area."

Each time a gas line is hit, Terasen Gas arrives on site to ensure public safety and make repairs. Of the hit lines we responded to last year:

- 70 per cent happened because people failed to call BC One Call for gas line information
- 20 per cent did call and had the location information for a gas line, but failed to use safe excavation practices such as hand digging
- 10 per cent called, had location information and hand dug, but other construction activity resulted in damage
- less than one per cent of incidents occurred because of incorrect gasline location information.
- As well, Terasen Gas responded to 250 emergency calls province-wide that resulted from leaks to a home or business owners' piping, car accidents, storm damage or fire.

The rise in excavation-related incidents from 2006 to 2007 can be attributed to an increase in construction activity. This is partly measured by Terasen Gas' new service installations and housing starts but the cause of incidents has not changed.

"We've long supported BC One Call," said Bell. "As a founding member of the Common Ground Alliance, we work with other members to ensure the digging community uses the best practices when digging around all underground utilities."

Being safe means getting underground gas line information at least three days before digging. Call BC One Call at 1-800-474-6886 or (*)6886 on your cellular. BC One Call will contact all member organizations with underground utilities, including Terasen Gas, in the dig area. Call at least three business days in advance. This is a requirement of provincial gas safety regulations. The call and the information are free.

Once you have the location information, keep it on site during excavation. Use the information to locate the gas line and then hand dig to expose the line before using any mechanical equipment. If you hand dig and can't find the buried gas line, or need further clarification, call Terasen Gas at 1-888-822-6555.

So always Call Before You Dig to avoid the dangers and costs of hitting an underground line. For more information, visit www.terasengas.com or visit www.bconecall.bc.ca.

Terasen Gas is mainly composed of the operations of Terasen Gas Inc. and Terasen Gas (Vancouver Island) Inc., both indirect wholly owned subsidiaries of Fortis Inc. Fortis Inc., the largest investor-owned distribution utility in Canada, serves two million gas and electric customers and has more than \$10 billion of assets. Its regulated holdings include Terasen Gas and electric utilities in five Canadian provinces and three Caribbean countries. Fortis Inc. owns non-regulated hydroelectric generation assets across Canada and in Belize and upper New York State. It also owns hotels and commercial real estate in Canada. Fortis Inc. shares are listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange and trade under the symbol FTS. Additional information can be accessed at <http://www.fortisinc.com/> or <http://www.sedar.com/>.

Backgrounder with Vancouver Island regional information attached.

Vancouver Island system damage.

In 2007 throughout Vancouver Island, Terasen Gas experienced 268 incidents of damage to our system, as compared to the 243 incidents in 2006. The increase in damages can be attributed to an increase in construction activity, which can be partially measured by the increase in housing starts for Vancouver Island.

Capital Regional District

When we break out statistics from Vancouver Island as a whole, the Capital Regional District actually saw a decrease in the number of excavation damages - 93

in 2007 over 97 which occurred in 2006. This decrease occurred despite an increase in construction activity. It can also be attributed to greater awareness of excavator responsibility, as is reflected by a number of requests from municipalities for locate and/or excavator safety training sessions from Terasen Gas. Of the 93 damages in 2007:

- 58 per cent happened because people failed to call BC One Call for gas line information
- 20 per cent did call and had the location information, but failed to use safe excavation practices such as hand digging
- 22 per cent called, had location information and hand dug, but other construction activity resulted in damage
- less than one per cent was due to incorrect gas line location information

North Island region

The North Island region, which includes Nanaimo, Courtenay, Parksville, Powell River, Sechelt, Campbell River, Port Alberni, Comox Valley and Duncan, saw an increase in excavation damages to 175 in 2007 over 146 which occurred in 2006. The increase can be attributed to:

- a relatively greater increase in construction activity in the North Island than the CRD
- a broader geographic area with a greater number of excavators
- less awareness of excavator responsibility, and
- fewer requests for training

Of the 175 damages in 2007:

- 56 per cent happened because people failed to call BC One Call for gas line information
- 29 per cent did call and had the location information, but failed to use safe excavation practices such as hand digging
- 15 per cent called, had location information and hand dug, but other construction activity resulted in damage
- less than one per cent was due to incorrect gas line location information/Change in line locate process

Since January 2006, Terasen Gas has worked with Vancouver Island/Sunshine Coast municipalities and contractors regarding our change in line marking practice to providing locate information. This process has been in place throughout the rest of the province for many years. Municipalities in BC's Lower Mainland have always worked from maps to locate natural gas distribution lines.

The difference in statistical data, with respect to damages, between the mainland and Vancouver Island and the Sunshine Coast appears to reflect a gap in excavator awareness of safe excavating procedures. Terasen Gas offers this training on a

regular basis to the excavating community and particularly municipal operations staff.

In 2007, Terasen Gas physically marked 792 buried gas lines on Vancouver Island. The company performs physical locations (marking the gas line location) for distribution lines in the following circumstances:

- If the caller expresses uncertainty with the maps provided
- the excavator has been unsuccessful in locating the natural gas line by hand digging
- an emergency situation

If digging is planned near our large transmission lines, Terasen Gas will locate the line and remain on site during the excavation.

Terasen Gas supports providing locate information as a best practice that protects worker and public safety. Our practice mirrors the policy in place for telephone, cable, electrical and municipal services such as sewage and water locates in many areas.

Two workers injured in northern B.C. natural gas fire

Source: CBC News June 27, 2012

Text:

Two workers have been injured after a natural gas leak and flash fire at a pipeline compressor station in northern B.C., the Transportation Safety Board confirms.

Spectra Energy, which owns and runs the pipeline and station northwest of Fort St. John, said Wednesday that the incident occurred on Saturday.

One of the injured workers has been released from care in Fort St. John, while the other has been transferred to Vancouver General Hospital for further treatment, according to the BC Ambulance Service.

"The facility was undergoing what we term "turn-around activity," which is annual maintenance of the [compressor station]," said Spectra Energy spokeswoman Rosemary Silva.

In a written statement, the TSB said one of their investigators has been dispatched to the scene of the incident, approximately 160 kilometres north of Fort St. John, and is expected to arrive Thursday.

Gas floods sewer line prompting evacuation

Author: Christine Van Reeuwijk

Source: *Oak Bay News* July 9, 2012

Fortis B.C. workers respond to a gas leak after traffic was shut down on Beach Drive today (July 9).

Oak Bay public works was cleaning out a sewer line when workers inadvertently hit the gas line inside which then flooded the sewer with gas. The gas backed up into a building in the 1100-block of Beach Dr. The building was evacuated and no injuries were reported.

Crews evacuated after natural gas leak at Tolko mill

Source: *Vernon Morning Star* (Vernon, BC) June 22, 2012

Authorities continue to deal with what could have been an explosive situation at a Spallumcheen business.

The RCMP received reports at about 8 a.m. of a natural gas leak at the Tolko plant.

Employees from the plywood mill were evacuated after excavation led to a gas line being ruptured.

Terasen crews are on site and traffic on Otter Lake Cross Road has been restricted.

Canada

Broken gas line closes Woodroffe

Source: *Barrhaven-Ottawa South This Week* (Barrhaven, Ottawa) May 19, 2011

Text:

Work on the Woodroffe Avenue water main hit a snag on May 19 when construction crews hit a gas pipe.

Woodroffe was closed from Hunt Club Road to Slack Road into the afternoon. The Nepean Sportsplex remained open even though traffic couldn't access the facility.

During the road closures, there was an information technology career fair at the Sportsplex. Organizers were anticipating more than 1,000 job seekers to attend.

Ottawa Police were recommending commuters avoid the road.

Underground gas line hit

Source: *Leader-Post* (Regina, SK) June 30, 2012

A SaskEnergy gas line was hit on McMurchy Avenue on Friday afternoon. The incident was reported shortly before 1 p.m., according to SaskEnergy. A third party was installing underground cable to a garage at 93 McMurchy Ave. and hit the line with a trencher.

SaskEnergy shut off the gas at approximately 2:30 p.m. and began work to repair the line.

SaskEnergy reminds people to get the lines on their property located before starting any projects.

Alberta pipeline oil spills, gas emissions stain Canada's green rep

Three oil spills in a month. Missing greenhouse gas reduction targets. What's happening to the US' nice green neighbor?

Author: Sandra Contenta

Source: *Global Post* July 9, 2012

Text:

TORONTO, Canada — Three oil spills in a month isn't the track record Alberta wanted while peddling a major tar sands pipeline to Americans.

The spills have the provincial government and the oil industry scrambling to control the damage to both the environment and their credibility.

As many as 400,000 gallons of oil have leaked in three separate incidents from the end of May to the end of June. The worst has been a pipeline rupture near Sundre in central Alberta in mid-June, when some 132,000 gallons spilled into the Red Deer River and tainted a reservoir that provides drinking water to thousands of people.

The spills come as the Alberta and federal governments are lobbying for US approval of the KeystoneXL pipeline, which would transport up to 900,000 more barrels of Alberta's tar sands oil a day to US refineries in the Gulf of Mexico.

Both governments are also pushing to build the Northern Gateway pipeline. That would bring tar sands oil to a proposed supertanker port on the Pacific coast of British Columbia, and from there to markets in Asia and the United States. The pipeline would be built by Enbridge, which owns a pumping station where one of the Alberta spills occurred.

The proposed pipelines already face determined opposition from environmentalists on both sides of the border. They denounce Alberta's massive tar sands development — bitumen collected from open pit mines that destroy huge tracts of forests, produce millions of gallons of toxic sludge and increase greenhouse gas emissions — as "dirty oil." The Alberta spills give opponents further ammunition to describe pipelines as unsafe, and government oversight as lax.

"When it comes to pipelines the question is not if they will spill but when they will spill and create the next ecological disaster," argues Mike Hudema, of Greenpeace Canada.

Alberta's premier, Alison Redford, is considering a safety review of the province's almost 250,000 miles of pipelines. She insists spills are rare. But the government agency regulating Alberta's oil industry reported 687 pipeline failures in 2010. All but 43 of them leaked either "produced water" or liquid hydrocarbons.

Credibility has taken a greater beating at the federal level, ever since the ruling Conservative government announced last December that Canada would pull out of the Kyoto international accord to fight greenhouse gases. Prime Minister Stephen Harper's government has since waged war against what it calls environmental "radicals." At the Rio+20 conference in Brazil last month, environmentalists sharply criticized Canadian officials, accusing them of undermining international efforts to fight climate change.

At home, the Harper government has been accused of pandering to the oil industry with changes that speed up the approval process for pipelines, reduce the monitoring of Canada's air and water, and cut the government emergency staff that deals with oil spills.

Perhaps most embarrassing is a report last month by the federally appointed National Roundtable on the Environment and the Economy, an independent group of academics, environmentalists and business leaders mandated by Parliament to advise governments since 1988.

Prepared at the request of Environment Minister Peter Kent, the report analyzed federal and provincial policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It concluded that "Canada is not on track to achieve the federal government's 2020 reduction target of 17 percent below 2005 levels." That lower target was adopted after it became clear Canada would fail to meet its Kyoto target of a 6 percent reduction from 1990 levels by 2012.

The report noted that Alberta — Canada's most populous prairie province with more than 3.6 million people — has the highest greenhouse gas emissions in the country. Moreover, Alberta's provincial targets would see it produce more greenhouse gases in 2020 than it did in 2005. For Canada to hit its target, Alberta's oil and gas industry must reduce its emissions, the report said.

"The analysis shows that Canada's 2020 target is a challenging goal that will require significant and more stringent policies to drive increasingly high cost reductions," the report said.

"A gradual process of trying to capture only the lowest cost emission reductions will not be successful," it concluded.

The report noted that provincial policies have been far more effective at reducing greenhouse gas emissions than federal ones. And it urged the Harper government to do more.

In May, shortly before the report was released, the Harper government announced it was abolishing the agency. In the House of Commons, Foreign Minister John Baird was blunt: the agency is being shut down, he said, because the government doesn't like its advice on climate change.