



# New Jersey Board of Public Utilities

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **NJ Board of Public Utilities Concludes Investigation into Fatal Gas Explosion in Ewing Township**

- Henkels & McCoy and PSE&G fined for alleged violations of the Underground Facility Protection Act -

**TRENTON, N.J.** - Today, the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (Board) took action to protect New Jersey residents and enhance pipeline safety while concluding its investigation of a natural gas explosion at Ewing Township's South Fork housing development in which a woman perished. The Board directed implementation of corrective actions to pipeline safety procedures by both Henkels & McCoy, Inc. and Public Service Electric & Gas (PSE&G) and approved the largest penalty payments of their kind in Board history.

"The tragic loss of life from such an incident and the impact upon the lives of many families, some still not back in their homes, is felt by me and my fellow commissioners," said Richard S. Mroz, President of the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities. "The Board takes pipeline safety very seriously and is dealing aggressively with violations of the Underground Facility Protection Act and related regulations."

Board staff has conducted a detailed and comprehensive investigation of the natural gas incident that occurred on March 4, 2014, in Ewing Township, N.J., including the circumstances surrounding the incident and the procedures and actions taken by Henkels & McCoy and PSE&G. During the course of its investigation, Board pipeline safety inspectors identified specific concerns with certain actions taken by Henkels & McCoy and/or PSE&G. The Board ordered corrective actions to be taken by Henkels & McCoy including increased training and simulations, documentation, and cooperation with emergency public safety officials. Corrective actions to be taken by PSE&G include enhanced call center and dispatch operations, additional training and drills, first responder tracking, and the reinforcement of mark-out procedures and standards among others.

As a result of that investigation, the Board's staff entered into stipulations of settlement with Henkels & McCoy and PSE&G requiring the companies to make respective payments of \$600,000 and \$725,000 while also implementing new safety measures and amending procedures to ensure compliance with all laws and their ongoing safe operation in New Jersey. The settlements will not prevent private litigation related to the explosion.

Additionally, PSE&G agreed to pay \$275,000 for alleged violations of the Underground Facilities Protection Act that were found during Board staff's investigation, but that were not causally related to the explosion in Ewing Township. PSE&G agreed to make amendments to company procedures in order to comply with the Underground Facility Protection Act.

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