

Natural Gas Incident Follow-Up Review
Town of Lexington Senior Management Team
May 18, 2006

On November 9, 2005 a near catastrophic event occurred with the natural gas distribution system in the Town of Lexington. The events that led up to this situation are still under investigation by the Department of Telecommunications and Energy (DTE) and other agencies. However, we do know that an engineering mishap occurred, resulting in a cross connection of Keyspan's 60 lb distribution system with their 2 lb distribution system, which caused an over pressurization within a large area of Town.

Town's emergency response:

Immediately, Town officials agreed upon and implemented a course of action to protect the lives and property of over 1600 households in town that included:

- Identifying the affected area or areas of the Town.
- Discontinuing the service to these affected areas.
- Implementing a safe procedure to regassify the system.
- Turning off service to all affected customers.
- Testing all service customer regulators to insure that no damaged regulators were left in-service (approximately 160 suspicious regulators were located and replaced).
- Pressurizing the system at low levels and performing leak surveys, then making repairs as needed.
- Increasing the pressure and relighting each service customer's appliances.
- Returning the system to normal.

Many Keyspan customers had their natural gas services discontinued, affecting heat, hot water and the ability to cook over the next 7 to 10 days. Keyspan worked closely with the Town to restore services as quickly as possible.

Corrective action plan:

Once the immediate danger was removed, a plan for corrective action was necessary. The Lexington Fire Department Chief, concerned with public safety and confidence in the delivery system, issued a directive with several date-specific items for correction and action. Thus far, Keyspan has complied with this directive and more. It should be noted that Town officials and Keyspan representatives meet on a regular basis to discuss any and all related issues.

The following actions have been taken, or agreed upon, by Keyspan:

- Keyspan has cooperated with the investigation of the events of November 9, 2005, which is being conducted in conjunction with Town of Lexington's Fire Investigation Unit, the State Fire Marshal's Office and DTE. Much of this information is still in the investigational stages, and is not yet available for public review.
- Keyspan has provided the Fire Department with the available call rates for leaks and other incidents within the Town. They have also provided preliminary information

regarding the type and condition (pre 11-09-05) of the existing underground supply piping.

- Keyspan has provided the plumbing inspector with all of the information he requires and cooperated fully and continues to cooperate with the Town's inspectional departments.
- Keyspan has agreed to a hazard analysis of the entire natural gas system within Lexington and to provide a replacement/repair plan of the natural gas infrastructure in the town. At this time the firm Iomosaic, from Salem NH, has been contracted to perform this system-wide analysis. This analysis is in its infancy with a deadline of mid to late summer for completion.

Keyspan continues to perform both walking and riding leak surveys throughout the affected areas on a regular basis.

Keyspan payment of Town costs:

The Town has submitted bills for staff overtime and police details to Keyspan for reimbursement. Keyspan will continue to repair damaged or suspicious infrastructure and has acknowledged responsibility to correct all damage, as a result of this situation, to our roadways. The Public Works Department had videotaped the condition of all Town streets prior to the incident as part of their ongoing street condition analysis. The streets that were dug up have been videotaped again to document conditions after the incident.

- Keyspan has reimbursed the Town for \$70,000 to date, and the outstanding balance of \$140,000 is expected by the end of June.
- Street restoration costs and repairs schedules are now being discussed and negotiated between the Town's Department of Public Works and Keyspan.

Evaluation of incident response:

As with all major incidents this one has been subjected to much scrutiny: what did we do right, what did we do wrong, and of course, what could we do better? Two physicians from the Harvard School of Public Health, Center for Public Health Preparedness, facilitated a staff debriefing on January 6, 2006. In addition, staff continues to discuss issues needing follow-up.

The following strengths of the response process were identified:

- All agencies (within Lexington and from other towns) were deployed rapidly, and the combined public safety dispatch system functioned well.
- The incident command hierarchy was effective in managing the emergency response, and key decisions were made and communicated on a timely basis.
- The Town communicated a clear public message, and the media were allies in getting the information out. Frequent briefings helped keep the staff, the Selectmen, and the public informed.

- Staff had the necessary training and expertise to manage the incident, and people worked well together.

Improvements as the result of this incident:

1. Town Procedures

- All gas calls are responded to by the Fire Department and a Keyspan representative. When the incident is transferred to Keyspan, it is noted which representative takes charge of that incident.
- All fire department units are equipped with natural gas/CO detection units, and all personnel have been trained on the use of this equipment.
- The Town of Lexington has a direct contact person at Keyspan for all issues relating to their operations within Lexington.

2. Keyspan Procedures

- Changes within their primary operations include mandatory gauging for pressure and signoff on all cross connections by engineering supervisors.

3. All-hazards Approach

The procedures and changes mentioned above are specific to gas-related calls. The Town is also in the process of addressing Emergency Management for all hazards. The following changes are currently in the process of being implemented and should be functioning in the near future:

- The initiation of a community notification, or “reverse 911,” system. The Public Safety Communications Committee, made up of representatives from the Police, Fire, DPW, and MIS departments, has made a recommendation to the Town Manager on this item, with implementation in the next 6 to 8 months expected. This system will enhance the town’s capabilities to communicate and update the residents of Lexington during emergencies.
- It is recommended that Lexington’s Emergency Operations Center (EOC), which is activated during certain levels of emergencies, be located within the new DPW facility. In the interim, however, a temporary location is being set up at the Bedford Street pumping station.
- A thorough review and update of the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan is being done to incorporate the lessons learned from the Keyspan incident. The Senior Management Team continues to discuss essential links within the organization and ways to improve interdepartmental communication. Pre-planning information and training will be provided to all appropriate staff.