



PG&E eyes corrosion in San Bruno

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SAN FRANCISCO, Sept. 17 (UPI) -- Compressor oil in a California gas pipeline may have led to corrosion that led to a natural gas explosion, company documents suggest.

Pacific Gas and Electric Co. is under scrutiny following a massive gas explosion in San Bruno, Calif., last week that destroyed dozens of homes and left at least four people dead.

A document filed by PG&E and submitted to the California Public Utilities Commission suggests "significant amounts" of liquid in the form of compressor oil may have led to the corrosion that caused the pipeline to fail, the San Francisco Chronicle said in its review of the document.

Separators were installed on the pipeline in November and a company spokesman told the Chronicle no liquids have appeared in filtration systems since then.

"These liquids present an ongoing concern for internal corrosion," the document read.

Officials believe internal pipeline corrosion was a potential cause for the Sept. 9 blast. Robert Bea, a former Shell executive teaching engineering at the University of California, Berkeley, told the newspaper the document shows "that PG&E was alert to the problem."

The Chronicle reported that PG&E wanted to sink \$8.5 million into work on its natural gas pipelines, though the California utility commission hasn't sanctioned the request.

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