



TOWNSHIP OF CHESTERFIELD **BURLINGTON COUNTY, NEW JERSEY**

February 26th Transco Incident - UPDATE:

As a result of the February 26th incident at the Transco station, on March 1st Transco officials and Township staff discussed what occurred in more detail. From that conversation the Township learned there is a very small natural gas pipe which feeds the building heaters and the site backup power generator. This small pipe is connected to the main fuel supply line for the building. The natural gas on the pipe connected to the building heating system has a pressure sensing valve. As system pressure fluctuates, the pressure valve changes to keep the pressure low enough that the heater in the building can function properly. The heater is like heaters in our own homes and it operates at a fraction of a pound-per-square-inch (PSI) pressure. When the pressure sensing/regulating device malfunctioned and the gas pressure was higher than the heater would operate it sent the excess pressure to be vented outside the building through a one inch (1") pipe inside a vent stack above the roof. The height of the vent stack outlet is designed to allow the lighter-than-air natural gas to quickly dissipate into the atmosphere well above any possible ignition sources that could be located at ground level or inside the building. When the device opened and allowed the excess pressure to escape it would normally re-close when the normal pressure level was achieved. However in this case it stuck open and allowed the continued low-pressure release of natural gas.

Subsequent to the incident on February 26th, the device was inspected and Transco staff worked with the device manufacturer and it is believed there was simply some dust inside the workings of the device which made an O-ring stick. In order to safeguard against such an occurrence repeating itself, Transco worked with the device manufacturer and they have now implemented a policy that will require periodic inspection and cleaning of the device.

As we know, a call for a natural gas odor was what initiated the response by personnel. The arriving fire/police officials then made notifications which were received by the Transco dispatch center who then sent the company's local supervisor and service crew. The first Transco employee arrived 47 minutes later. When asked by Township officials in the past about what the response time would be for an incident at the compressor station, the Transco team indicated they have a 20-45 minute physical response time and that is typical for all of their stations across the country. However, Transco did explained how the station has a very advanced system in place which has various monitoring devices that automatically shut down the station if a device is activated. In addition to the automated system, the company dispatch center can remotely shut down and render safe the entire station if they learn of an incident which could put the public, first responders, or the station at risk. In the case of the recent incident none of the internal sensors would have picked up any of the conditions that would automatically shut down the station.

At the present time, in order to obtain more information and to impress upon the company just how serious Chesterfield takes the incident and potential impacts from the compressor station, the Township Committee has requested a public meeting with officials from Transco. We look forward to that taking place during one of the upcoming Township Committee meetings. Please continue to monitor our website, social media outlets, and the meeting agendas to be sure you are up-to-date with what is occurring in our Township.