



NEWS RELEASE January 18, 2013

Methane Levels Detected, Evaluated in Sloan Terrace Neighborhood

The City of Santa Maria this week investigated a report of concentrations of field gas (methane) detected in the soil under 19 homes along the 800 and 900 block of Sloan Terrace, a neighborhood in the southeast section of the City.

The methane most likely resulted from degradation of organic material in over-watered heavily compacted soil, according to experts consulted by the City.

City Utilities Department staff did air monitoring tests Friday, January 18 in all manholes on Sloan Terrace and two other streets, and no gas was detected, indicating the source is not from the municipal sewer lines. The City will monitor the situation with further testing.

The Gas Company (Sempra Energy) detected the gas on Tuesday, January 15 during the course of a routine inspection of its pipeline facilities. The crew found gas indications at foundations of the homes and performed tests inside and outside the homes. A pressure test showed no leakage from the gas pipeline. On Wednesday, January 16, The Gas Company's lab took underground samples and found that the methane under the soil surface had different characteristics from the gas in the pipeline. The Gas Company notified the City and all residents on Sloan Terrace. No methane was detected inside the homes, and residents were notified.

The company's laboratory analysis determined the gas is field gas, composed primarily of methane, which is a colorless, odorless, non-toxic flammable gas.

The Fire Department established a voice mailbox for questions/concerns regarding this situation. Questions may be directed to the Fire Department, 925-0951 ext. 120.

Department: Fire Department
Telephone Number: (805) 925-0951 ext. 120