



**City of Toppenish**  
**Fire Department**  
514 West Second Avenue  
Toppenish, WA 98948  
Ph (509) 865-3111/Fax (509)865-3332



**UPDATED PRESS RELEASE 09-26-23**

At this time, I still do not have any information on the employee that passed away while in the Harborview Brun Unit. The only way we knew he passed was the phone call from the King County Medical Examiner's Office asking for the name of his John Doe that was transported from our incident scene. We put him in touch with the company that he worked for so they could release his name. He worked for Sapphire Gas Solutions out of Conroe, Texas. As far as the cause of the accident, it is still under investigation. I can say that it was not an equipment failure or an intentional act. Washington Department of Labor & Industries, Cascade Natural Gas, Sapphire Gas Solutions, and other regulatory agencies are all investigating this incident.

Cascade Natural Gas (CNG) has really stepped up their relight and restore process. During the initial stage of the accident on Friday, everybody who had gas from CNG lost gas as the system went dry when the temporary pumping station went offline because of the accident. An armada of CNG Supervisors and Technicians were summoned from other CNG divisions from Bellingham, WA to Bosie, Idaho. Over 65 employees converged at a temporary staging area at the Zillah Community Center. That evening they started turning off every gas meter in the Wapato, Toppenish, Granger, Zillah, and parts of Outlook, 2386 meters in all. Meters had to be turned off so that the system could be purged. They reintroduced gas into the system early Saturday morning. Slowly they started turning on gas meters and relighting pilot lights in gas appliances. Priority for restoring gas was hospitals, nursing homes, water treatment plants, large Industrial facilities, restaurants, multifamily facilities, apartment complexes, and then single-family residents.

As of the evening on 9-25-2023, they had less than 300 gas meters to address. To get your gas turned back on you need to be home because they will not turn on the meter unless they can get inside to address the pilot lights on all your gas appliances. If they showed up at your residence or business and you were not there, they should have left a door tag giving you instructions to call. CNG officials estimate that everyone should have gas restored by Tuesday afternoon. If you do not have your gas restored, you are instructed to call 1-888-522-1130 and schedule a time when you will be at the meter location to meet the technician. CNG wishes to express thanks to all their customers for their patience and understanding throughout this complicated process.

The temporary pumping station where the industrial accident and fire occurred will not be in operation until the investigation on the cause is complete and officials are completely satisfied that the plant is safe to resume pumping. Meetings between company and local officials will be held satisfying everyone's safety concerns. The temporary plant was only days away from being deconstructed as the project to repair and upgrade the permanent pumping station, valves, and lines north of Buena neared completion.

Timothy B. Smith  
Fire Chief, City of Toppenish

**FIRE CHIEF, TIMOTHY B. SMITH 509-865-3111**