

# Process Safety Forum

Learning Brief #12 – Issued on 14 November 2014

## 10 year anniversary of Europe's worst High Pressure Pipeline incident

**On 30th July 2004 at Ghislenghien, Belgium – 24 people died, 120+ injured when 1000mm dia high pressure pipeline ruptured.**



Emergency services were attending and investigating a report of a gas escape at ~8.30am. Whilst they were on site at ~9.00am the high pressure gas pipeline ruptured.

Construction work on site involved levelling the ground using excavator which resulted in reduced cover above the pipe. The pipe was damaged during work (75% reduced wall thickness).



Prior to starting the work on the 16<sup>th</sup> July the construction company had contacted the pipeline operator, who located and marked the pipeline, however sometime between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> of July the pipeline was damaged.

During July the pipeline was operating pressure had been reduced to 50 Barg for maintenance and shortly before the 30<sup>th</sup> July the pressure was increased to 80 Barg.



Pipe section found 155m from the crater

### Lesson learnt

1. When working near a pipeline then ensure advice and guidance provided by the pipeline operator is followed including fencing off and signage as required.

For more information See - UK Onshore Pipeline Association <http://www.ukopa.co.uk/> and Linesearch- <http://www.linesearch.org/>

2. Any damage to a pipeline however small should be reported to the pipeline operator without delay so it can be assessed and repaired; even small damage to coating may lead to a failure over time.
3. Pipeline Operators should consider the frequency of surveillance visits to known construction work to ensure all protection measures are being applied correctly.
4. Emergency Plans for high pressure pipelines should include advice on exclusion zones and the pressure in a pipeline should not be increased if damage or a leak has been reported.

*The Process Safety Forum has been set up to provide an industry association platform whereby initiatives, best practice, lessons from incidents and process safety strategy can be distilled and shared across sectors, to influence our stakeholders (including the Regulators), and to drive the process safety management agenda. The Process Safety Forum consists of representatives from UKPIA, TSA, CIA, OGUk, CBA, RSSB, ENA, ECIA, UKLPG, BAMA, EIG, UKOPA, SWA and SDF. For further details contact: [PSF.Secretary@gmail.com](mailto:PSF.Secretary@gmail.com).*