



PRESS RELEASE

City of Visalia Fire Department

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Speeding Vehicle Severs Gas Line and Strikes Social Security Building

On Saturday evening at 11:15 p.m. the Visalia Fire Department responded to a report of a vehicle that had severed a gas line before hitting a building. Visalia Police were the first to arrive and confirmed that there was a large gas leak caused by a vehicle that severed a gas line leading into the Social Security Administration building located at 1901 E. Noble Avenue. It was unknown if there were any occupants still inside of the vehicle. Visalia Police then set up a perimeter blocking all traffic in the area and also shut down the eastbound lanes of Highway 198 near the incident. The first fire unit arrived and confirmed that there were no occupants in the vehicle and then started to direct incoming fire units to assist with the mitigation of the major above ground gas line that had been severed. The Gas Company and Southern California Edison were requested to respond to the incident to assist with the securing of the leaking gas and electricity to the building. A total of 3 fire engines, 1 truck, and two Chief officers responded for a total of 15 fire personnel.

Once the Gas Company arrived the vehicle was removed from the building utilizing a tow truck and then the exposed gas line was crimped utilizing hydraulic extrication tools provided by the fire department. Once the leak was slowed down Gas Company representatives dug up the gas line near Noble Avenue and completely shut off the gas leading to the building. A representative from the Social Security Administration arrived and was present when the interior of the building was checked for any damage. An estimate of the damage to the building was approximately \$5,000.

According to the Visalia Police department two vehicles were traveling eastbound on Noble Avenue at a high rate of speed and one of the vehicles tried to make a right turn into the Wal-Mart parking lot, but went straight and struck the gas line and building. There were two occupants in a black 2007 Honda Civic who were not injured in the crash. Speeding was determined to be cause of the accident and alcohol was not involved. The driver of the vehicle was identified as 22 year old Juan Rodriguez.

Approved By: Darrin Hughes, Battalion Chief

Release To: Media City Admin City Wide

