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NTSB Issues Eight Recommendations to Atmos Energy after its 2024 Explosions in Jackson, MS Kill One, Injure Another and Blow Up Three Houses

In recent years, Atmos Energy's gas distribution pipeline network has experienced a slew of home explosions. The recommendations from the NTSB come on the heels of yet another Atmos-related explosion on March 19 in Lake Dallas, Texas that destroyed a home and critically injured the homeowner.

Bellingham, WASHINGTON - [April 7, 2026] – The troubling National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigation report found that unrepaired leaks previously known to the operator are what caused the Jackson home explosions. Because it waited too long to fix its infrastructure, Atmos let a preventable incident claim the life of 82-year-old Clara Barbour and destroy two homes. In its report, the NTSB also noted that Atmos had determined the leaks as "nonhazardous," eight weeks prior to them exploding, despite the fact that poor soil conditions had loosened its distribution pipeline's underground connections allowing the gas to leak.

Over time, gas began to migrate into the two Jackson, Mississippi homes located only 0.7 miles away from each other. Then, on Jan. 24, and Jan. 27, 2024 the homes blew up as a result of the accumulation and ignition of the gas. The NTSB pointed out that Atmos's inadequate leak management program was a major culprit, as the operator did not on a regular basis reevaluate leaks that it knew experienced "adverse soil conditions."

When natural gas migrates through soil and into a home, the odorant that gives gas its distinctive smell can be stripped away, leaving residents with no warning before gas accumulates to dangerous levels. This is precisely why natural gas alarms, which function like

smoke detectors but detect gas, are so critical, and why the NTSB recommended Atmos make them available to all customers in its service areas.

In fact, this is the second time in a year that the NTSB has issued a recommendation regarding either the installation or distribution of natural gas alarms. In April 2025, in response to the RM Palmer Chocolate Factory Explosion in West Reading, PA that killed seven, the NTSB recommended all 50 states, Washington D.C., and Puerto Rico require the installation of natural gas alarms in businesses, residences and other buildings that could be impacted by a gas leak.

“Requiring natural gas alarms is a common-sense and much-needed safety recommendation from the NTSB. They should be required in all buildings with or near gas service,” Pipeline Safety Trust Executive Director Bill Caram said. “Many lives could be saved almost immediately if every structure with or near gas service had a natural gas alarm.”

The NTSB’s investigation also found that Atmos had missing information and incomplete records for many of its Mississippi gas distribution lines. This practice of incomplete record-keeping limited Atmos’s ability to determine which of its service lines were at a higher risk of failure.

Atmos’s distribution network continues to show that not only is it under-maintained, but it is full of leaks. According to the NTSB report, neighbors had complained repeatedly about the smell of gas, but lacked clear instructions from Atmos on what to do in the event of a natural gas leak. In light of this, the report recommends the operator improve both its public and emergency response education.

This is not the first time the NTSB has told Atmos to address these failures. Following a fatal gas explosion in Dallas, Texas in 2018, the NTSB issued recommendations to Atmos on integrity management, leak investigation procedures, and emergency responder training — the same categories of failure that appear in this Jackson report. The NTSB's recommendation to PHMSA on improving gas distribution integrity management guidance, first issued after the Dallas explosion, was formally reiterated in this Jackson investigation, indicating that neither Atmos nor federal regulators have adequately acted on it. The NTSB's Jackson findings also explicitly note that emergency response officials in Jackson were insufficiently trained despite Atmos having been put on notice by prior accidents in both Dallas and Avondale, Louisiana.

In its Jackson, MS Investigation Report, the NTSB recommends the following to Atmos Energy:

- Make natural gas alarms available to residents that use its gas distribution systems
- Check known leaks on its systems more frequently
- Train Atmos employees on how to deal with leaks in “adverse-soil conditions”
- Improve public education about its pipeline systems
- Improve emergency responder training and monitor success of the training
- Maintain complete records for its service lines and improve its tracking methods
- Improve its ability to assess risk on its pipeline assets

- Replace all vulnerable pipe connections within its inventory

"After Atmos's fatal explosion in Dallas, the NTSB told the company to fix its integrity management program, improve leak investigation procedures, and train emergency responders," Caram said. "Now we have two more homes destroyed and Clara Barbour dead in Jackson, Mississippi, and the NTSB is issuing the same recommendations again. Widespread issues from Atmos pipelines that lead to death and injury continue to happen in nearly every state the company operates in. Failing to learn from fatal accidents isn't a management problem. It's a moral one."

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About Pipeline Safety Trust: The Pipeline Safety Trust is a nonprofit public watchdog promoting pipeline safety through education and advocacy by increasing access to information, and by building partnerships with residents, safety advocates, government, and industry, that result in safer communities and a healthier environment.