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Public Service Commission Votes to Assess Forfeiture to Contractor in Sun Prairie Natural Gas Explosion

VC Tech Inc. ordered to pay \$25,000 forfeiture, \$2,500 surcharge, and attend an educational course

MADISON, WI - On Thursday, the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (Commission), unanimously voted to assess a forfeiture of \$25,000 to VC Tech Inc. The Commission found that probable cause exists to believe that VC Tech Inc. violated Wisconsin's "One Call" law when its workers failed to request utility locating and marking before beginning excavation work in Sun Prairie, WI on July 10, 2018.

As VC Tech Inc. carried out its excavation, a natural gas main was struck and damaged at the intersection of Main and Bristol Streets in Sun Prairie. The ensuing leak and subsequent explosion in adjoining buildings resulted in loss of life, personal injury, and significant property damage.

"The requirements related to utility locating and marking prior to digging or excavating are in place in order to try and prevent exactly what happened in Sun Prairie a year ago," said Commission Chairperson Rebecca Cameron Valcq. "Let this be a warning to all parties involved in the practice of excavation that we view the "One Call" law as a vital matter of public safety."

Additionally, the Commission required VC Tech Inc. to pay a \$2,500 surcharge to the "One Call" system, and attend an educational course.

Under Wisconsin law, an excavator is required to have underground utilities located and marked before beginning work. Wisconsin's "One Call" system allows excavators to arrange for the locating and marking of those utilities. 2017 Wisconsin Act 136 created a process for handling complaints against people who violate the law. A panel of industry experts can refer the complaint to the Commission, for its review, where there is probable cause that a violation has occurred. The Commission then decides on whether or not to take action; require the respondent to take an educational course, assess a forfeiture, or both assess the forfeiture and require attendance at the educational course. This is the first such case brought before the Commission under the new law.

Documents for the case can be found under docket 9300-PLI-100 on the Commission's website at <https://psc.wi.gov/>.

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