
In Kamchatka Territory, final charges pressed against workers of Kamchatskenergo branch Kamchatka Heat and Power Plants involved in death of three children

The Kamchatka Territory Office of the Investigative Committee has pressed final charges against workers of the Kamchatka Heat and Power Plants, a branch of Kamchatenergo, a public company – chief of the 1 section of heat networks who was in charge of the work and responsible for the technical state of the heating main at the affected section, other workers of the repair team who repaired the main but not ensured that the section is isolated from the public: a foreman, two pipe-fitters, chief of the heat networks of the affiliate. They are charged with a crime under Part 3 of Article 216 of the RF Penal Code (safety breach during operations that entailed death of two or more people by negligence).

According to investigators, on 28 January 2016, at 4:45 PM, children left school No 1 in the city of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, but never got home. Their bodies were found at 10 PM in a chamber of the heat network located underground near building No 30/1 in Pogranichnaya Street and half-filled with hot water. The cause of the death was overheating. At the moment when the bodies were found, the chamber was half-filled with hot water that had got there from the leak in a hot water pipe. The said leak had appeared no later than 24 January 2016, when the local emergency service started getting complaints about vapor billowing from underground.

Repair teams of Kachatskenergo arrived on 24 and 26 January 2016 to repair the heat main. The investigators revealed that the repair was done poorly. Although they had put a rubber patch on the leak on 26 January, hot water continued to get into the chamber. In addition, the chamber had not concrete cover, so the repair men blocked the hole with the material they had at hand, parts of a woodchip board and metallic plates, which made it unsafe.

The investigators have made requests to the branch of Kamchatskenergo to eliminate the causes and conditions that contributed to the crime. 19 workers have been disciplined and 4 more, including the 3 accused were discharged.

Following instructions of the investigator in order to prevent similar tragedies workers of Kamchatskenergo Kamchatka Heat and Power Plants have checked 3,927 heat supply facilities paying special attention to those located near schools, playgrounds or other sites for children. 61 facilities were repaired.

On the initiative of the regional investigative authority some preventive steps were taken in schools in Kamchatka Territory. Off-schedule briefing on safe conduct of children on their way to schools and back home were held, maps of safe routes to school and back and an instruction regulating the conduct and actions of teachers in case of a situation that can be dangerous for children or school staff were made.

The investigators have questioned over 200 witnesses, run over 10 forensic inquiries, including those run outside Kamchatka Territory in central forensic institutions in Moscow. The crime scene, confiscated items and documents, records of phone talks, videos and other data have been examined multiple times. During the interviews the accused did not admit their guilt, except for the foreman of the first section of heat networks.

The parties to the case are going get the files for reading soon.

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