

I began reporting on the death of Donatus Okhomina shortly after learning that the city is being investigated by Cal/OSHA over possible violations. Because neither city officials nor Okhomina's family wanted to talk to me, I had to rely heavily on information that I obtained through numerous Public Records Act requests, which I submitted both to the City of Palo Alto and to the state Department of Industrial Relations, which includes the Division of Occupational Safety and Health (also known as Cal/OSHA).

The documents I obtained included the case file from the Cal/OSHA investigation, which was launched immediately after the Nov. 16, 2019, accident and which concluded in May 2020, when the watchdog issued eight citations against the city. The case file, which included notes from Cal/OHA interviews with crew members and other officials, was the primary document that I used to determine and describe what happened on the day of the accident. The citations that Cal/OSHA issued against the city provided insight into what the agency viewed were the causes of the accident and gave me avenues to explore for future inquiries with the city. Because the city released very little information about the case, to learn more about the city's response, I relied heavily on email exchanges that I obtained through a Public Records Act request as well as on public statements made by city officials about the incident. It was only at the very end of the reporting process that I was able to land interviews with the top two City Hall supervisors, City Manager Ed Shikada and Utilities Director Dean Batchelor, though both had declined to comment on the ongoing investigation and focused primarily on improvements to city policies after the accident. I had also reached out to members of Okhomina's utility crew but they did not respond to my requests for interviews. The city also denied my formal request to interview members of the crew who were with Okhomina.

Throughout the interviews and inquiries, the city consistently declined to comment on both the OSHA investigation and its own internal investigation of the accident. To get past this obstacle and gain insights about the city's position, I relied on various documents, including the city's appeals of the citation as well as its settlement document with the family of Donatus Okhomina.

To date, there have not been any objections to my reporting or any requests for corrections, clarifications or retractions.