

FACT SHEET 18:**EMERGENCY PLANS FOR GAS PIPELINES – 49 CFR § 192.615****APPLICABILITY**

All businesses or individuals who operate segment of pipeline are subject to this rule unless exempted. Pipeline systems are exempt if they transport only petroleum gas or petroleum gas/air mixtures to:

- Fewer than 10 customers, and no portion of the system is located in a public place; or
- A single customer, if the system is located entirely on the customer's premises (no matter if a portion of the system is located in a public place).

PROCEDURAL MANUAL FOR OPERATIONS, MAINTENANCE, AND EMERGENCIES

Each pipeline operator unless exempted from this standard is required to prepare a manual of written procedures for conducting operations and maintenance activities and for emergency response and is required the manual. The manual is required to include procedures for both routine operations and handling abnormal operations. Regulations require that the manual be reviewed and updated by the operator at intervals not exceeding 15 months, but at least once each calendar year. This manual is required to be prepared and in place before operations of a pipeline system commence. Appropriate parts of the manual are required to be kept at locations where operations and maintenance activities are conducted.

ABNORMAL OPERATIONS

Recognition of abnormal operations is a key factor in preventing pipeline emergencies. This section of the manual is required to include the following procedures to provide for safety when operating design limits have been exceeded:

1. Response to, investigating, and correcting the cause of:
 - Unintended closure of valves or shutdowns
 - Increase or decrease in pressure or flow rate outside normal operating limits
 - Loss of communications
 - Operation of any safety device

- Any other foreseeable malfunction of a component, deviation from normal operation, or personnel error, which may result in a hazard to persons or property
2. Procedures for checking variations from normal operation after an abnormal operation has ended. This must be done at a sufficient number of critical locations in the system to determine continued integrity and safe operation.
 3. Notification of a responsible operator personnel any time that a notice of abnormal operation is received.
 4. Periodically review the response made by operations personnel to determine effectiveness of the procedures controlling abnormal operations and taking corrective action where deficiencies are found.
 5. The requirements for the abnormal operations component of the manual do not apply to natural gas distribution operators that are operating transmission lines in connection with their distribution system.

The plan must instruct employees who perform operation and maintenance activities to recognize situations that may be safety-related conditions subject to the reporting requirements of the gas pipeline regulations. Written procedures for surveillance, emergency response, and accident investigation are also required.

EMERGENCY PLANS

Each gas pipeline operator is required to establish written procedures to minimize the hazards associated with a gas pipeline emergency. At a minimum, the procedures must include the following elements:

1. Receiving, identifying, and classifying notices of events which require immediate response by the operator.
2. Establishing and maintaining an adequate means of communication with appropriate fire, police, and other public officials.
3. Prompt and effective response to a notice of each type of emergency, including the following:
 - Gas detected inside or near a building.
 - Fire located near or directly involving a pipeline facility.
 - Explosion occurring near or directly involving a pipeline facility.
 - Natural disaster.

4. The availability of personnel, equipment, tools, and materials, as needed at the scene of an emergency.
5. Actions directed toward protecting people first and then property.
6. Emergency shutdown and pressure reduction in any section of the operator's pipeline system necessary to minimize hazards to life or property.
7. Making safe any actual or potential hazard to life or property.
8. Notifying appropriate fire, police, and other public officials of gas pipeline emergencies and coordinating with them both planned responses and actual responses during an emergency.
9. Procedures for safely restoring any service outage.
10. Beginning actions for the investigation of failures as soon after the end of the emergency as possible.

DISTRIBUTION, TRAINING & REVIEW

Each pipeline operator is required to provide all supervisors responsible for emergency action with a copy of the portion of the latest edition of these emergency procedures. Appropriate training is required to be provided to operating personnel to assure that they are knowledgeable of the emergency procedures in the plan. The operator must also verify that the training is effective. Employee activities must be reviewed as part of the investigation to determine whether the plan was effectively followed in each emergency.

COORDINATION WITH EMERGENCY RESPONSE ORGANIZATIONS

Each operator of a gas pipeline is required to establish and maintain liaison with appropriate fire, police, and other public officials. The pipeline operator is required to:

1. Learn the responsibility and resources of each government organization that may respond to a gas pipeline emergency
2. Acquaint the emergency response officials with the operator's ability to respond to an emergency on the gas pipeline
3. Identify the types of gas pipeline emergencies that the operator will notify the emergency officials about
4. Plan how they and emergency response officials will engage in mutual assistance to minimize hazards to life or property.

PUBLIC AWARENESS

WRITTEN PROGRAM

Except for the operator of a master meter or petroleum gas system, each pipeline operator is required to develop and implement a written continuing public education program related to the unique attributes and characteristics of the operator's pipeline and facilities. This public awareness program is required to follow the guidance provided in the American Petroleum Institute's (API) Recommended Practice (RP) 1162.

The pipeline operator's program must specifically include provisions to educate the public, appropriate government organizations, and persons engaged in excavation related activities on:

- The use of a one-call notification system prior to excavation and other damage prevention activities
- Possible hazards associated with unintended releases from a gas pipeline facility
- Physical indications that a gas release may have occurred
- Steps that should be taken for public safety in the event of a gas pipeline release
- Procedures for reporting gas pipeline releases.

The awareness program must include activities to advise affected municipalities, school districts, businesses, and residents of pipeline facility locations. The program and the media used is required to be sufficiently comprehensive to reach all areas where the operator transports gas via the pipeline. The written program must be conducted in English and in other languages commonly understood by a significant number and concentration of the non-English speaking population in the operator's area.

PUBLIC AWARENESS MESSAGES

The operator of a master meter or petroleum gas system is not required to develop a public awareness program as described above unless the operator transports gas as a primary activity. Instead, the operator is required to develop and implement a written procedure to provide its customers public awareness messages at least twice annually. If the master meter or petroleum gas system is located on property the operator does not control, the operator must provide similar messages twice annually to persons controlling the property, such as landowners. The public awareness message is required to include:

- A description of the purpose and reliability of the pipeline
- An overview of the hazards of the pipeline and prevention measures used
- Information about damage prevention and how to recognize and respond to a leak
- How to get additional information.