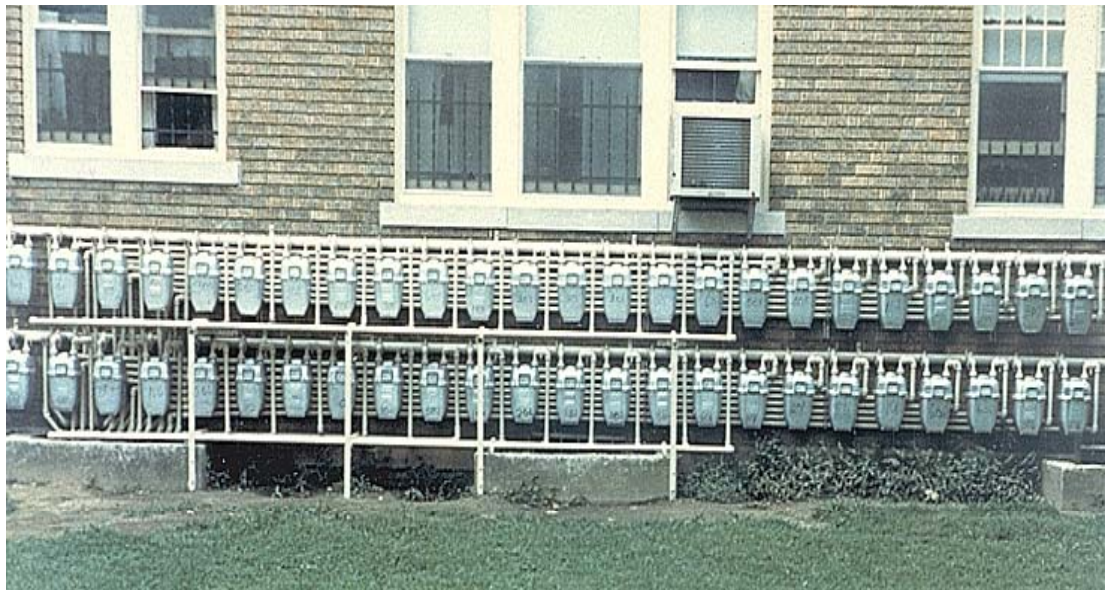


# Guidance Manual for Operators of Small Natural Gas Systems



**June 2002**



US Department of Transportation  
**Research and Special Programs Administration**  
**Office of Pipeline Safety**

**Operators of Small Natural Gas Systems**

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## TO THE READER

The U.S. Office of Pipeline Safety promotes the safe transportation of natural gas by pipeline. This guidance manual for operators of small natural gas systems is part of our commitment to pipeline safety. This manual was developed to provide an overview of pipeline compliance responsibilities under the federal pipeline safety regulations. It is designed for the non-technically trained person who operates a master meter system, a small municipal system, or small independent system.

The federal government recognizes that most operators of small natural gas systems have not had extensive qualification in operation and maintenance of a gas system. In addition, many of the safety regulations are in technical language that addresses generic requirements for both large and small natural gas systems. This manual attempts to simplify the technical language of the regulations.

For certain critical regulations, this manual provides details of methods of operation and selection of materials that will satisfy the pipeline safety regulations. However, this is often only one of several allowable options. This manual provides a set of examples that operators of small natural gas systems can use to meet the minimum requirements of the pipeline safety regulations. For example, requirements for pressure testing vary throughout the pipeline safety regulations. The test pressure used in this manual is usually 100 pounds per square inch to provide clarity and consistency to small operators unfamiliar with the intricacies of natural gas pipeline operations. The operator is referred to 49 CFR Part 192 for additional details and other options for reaching and maintaining compliance.

Our aim is to provide basic information to operators of small natural gas distribution and master meter systems to ensure compliance with the federal gas pipeline safety regulations. It is hoped that this document will assist operators in achieving and maintaining a safe and efficient natural gas system. The result will enhance public safety – the essential goal of the Office of Pipeline Safety.

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The revision and publication of this manual is an example of constructive partnership among government, the pipeline industry, and industry and professional organizations.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE</u>
CHAPTER I – INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW	
Introduction.....	I-1
Overview.....	I-2
CHAPTER II – REGULATOR AND RELIEF DEVICES	
Basic Concept .....	II-1
Pressure and Force .....	II-2
Flow and Throttling .....	II-3
Basic Names and Terms.....	II-7
Overpressure Protection.....	II-9
Pressure Relief .....	II-12
Monitoring .....	II-13
Automatic Shutoff.....	II-14
CHAPTER III – CORROSION CONTROL	
Federal Requirements .....	III-1
Principles and Practices of Cathodic Protection.....	III-5
Fundamental Corrosion Theory .....	III-15
Types of Cathodic Protection .....	III-16
Initial Steps in Determining the Need to Cathodically Protect a Small Gas Distribution System.....	III-18
Criteria for Cathodic Protection.....	III-21
Coatings .....	III-23
Common Causes of Corrosion in Gas Piping Systems.....	III-25

## CHAPTER IV – LEAK DETECTION

Methods of Detecting a Leak.....	IV-1
Description of Leak Detection Equipment .....	IV-3
Recommended Method for Surface Gas Detection Survey with FI Unit (Natural Gas System Only) .....	IV-7
Odorization Equipment.....	IV-9
Records .....	IV-14
GPTC – Guide Material for “Leak Classification and Action Criteria” .....	IV-14
Follow-up Inspection .....	IV-14

## CHAPTER V – UNACCOUNTED FOR GAS

## CHAPTER VI – REPAIRS AND NEW CONSTRUCTION

Planning Ahead.....	VI-1
Excavation .....	VI-2
Emergency Excavation .....	VI-2
Precautions to Avoid Damage .....	VI-2
Excavation: Repair of Damage .....	VI-2
Recommendation .....	VI-3
Pipe Installation, Repair, and Replacement: General Comments.....	VI-3
Metallic Pipe Installation.....	VI-3
Plastic Pipe Installation.....	VI-4
Repair Methods – Plastic and Metal.....	VI-17
Materials and Equipment Qualified for Use in Natural Gas Systems .....	VI-19
Pipe .....	VI-19
Valves .....	VI-22
Flanges and Flange Accessories .....	VI-22
Regulators and Overpressure Protection Equipment.....	VI-23
Other Equipment.....	VI-23
Welding Requirements.....	VI-24
Common Construction Practices.....	VI-28

CHAPTER VII – PROPER LOCATION AND DESIGN OF CUSTOMER METER AND REGULATOR SETS

Customer Meters and Regulators: Location .....	VII-1
Customer Meters and Regulators: Protection From Damage .....	VII-2
Customer Meters Installations: Operating Pressure .....	VII-2
Service Lines: Location of Valves.....	VII-3
Common Problems at Service Riser and House Regulators.....	VII-7

CHAPTER VIII – PLANS AND REPORTS REQUIRED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Plans Required by the Federal Government .....	VIII-1
Operations and Maintenance Plans.....	VIII-1
Operations and Maintenance Plans Must Contain the Following Components:.....	VIII-2
Emergency Plans.....	VIII-16
Reports Required by the Federal Government .....	VIII-26
Incident Report .....	VIII-26
Safety-Related and Condition Reports .....	VIII-27
Annual Reports .....	VIII-28

APPENDIX A – GLOSSARY AND ACRONYMS	A-1
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APPENDIX B – SAMPLE FORMS	B-1
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APPENDIX C – STATE AND FEDERAL REGULATORY AGENCIES	C-1
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