

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.

Stacey Gerard
*Associate Administrator for
Pipeline Safety*