''violation rate'' is equal to or greater than .5 percent but less than one percent, and it will be raised to 50 percent if the ''violation rate'' is one percent or greater for any one year. (''Violation rate'' means the number of covered employees found during random tests given under part 654 to have an alcohol concentration of .04 or greater, plus the number of employees who refuse a random test required by part 654, divided by the total reported number of random alcohol tests conducted under part 654, plus the total number of refusals of random tests, required by part 654.)

FTA has received and analyzed the 1997 data from large and small transit employers. The ''positive rate'' for random drug tests was 1.21 percent and the ''violation rate'' for random alcohol tests was 0.14 percent; therefore, for 1999, transit employers will continue to be required to conduct random drug tests at a rate equivalent to at least 50 percent of the total number of their ''safety-sensitive'' employees for prohibited drugs. In 1998, the FTA lowered the random alcohol testing rate to 10 percent. Because the random alcohol violation rate was lower than .5 percent for two consecutive years (0.21 percent for 1996 and 0.19 percent for 1997), the random alcohol testing rate will remain at 10 percent for 1999.

FTA will be publishing in December a detailed report on the 1997 data collected from large and small employers. This report may be obtained from the Office of Safety and Security, Federal Transit Administration, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Room 9301, Washington, DC 20590, (202) 366–2896.

Issued: December 8, 1998.

**Gordon J. Linton,**

*Administrator.*

[FR Doc. 98–33113 Filed 12–11–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–57–U

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Research and Special Programs Administration

**[Notice 98–12]**

### Safety Advisory; High Pressure Composite Cylinders

**AGENCY:** Research and Special Programs Administration (RSPA), DOT.

**ACTION:** Safety advisory notice.

**SUMMARY:** RSPA is alerting persons who own, use or are responsible for the maintenance of composite cylinders to a hazard. Damage may occur when a composite cylinder comes in contact with strong cleaners or other strong corrosive agents. RSPA is aware of ruptures involving two DOT–E 8059 composite cylinders made with aluminum liners and wrapped with ''S glass'' fibers. The probable cause of both cylinder failures was stress-corrosion cracking of the fiberglass overwraps as a result of exposure to a strong corrosive agent.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Cheryl West Freeman, Office of Hazardous Materials Technology, Research and Special Programs Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, 400 Seventh Street, SW, 20590–0001, Telephone (202) 366–4545.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** RSPA investigated two failures involving self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) cylinders manufactured by EFI Corporation under exemption, DOT E–8059. The first failure occurred in March 1996 at the Humboldt (California) Fire Protection District. The second failure occurred this year at the Hawthorne (Florida) Volunteer Fire Department. Both cylinders failed while stored in fire trucks. Exponent-Failure Analysis Associates (FaAA) in Menlo Park, California, analyzed the cylinders. In its reports, FaAA concluded that the failures were caused by stress-corrosion cracking of the fiberglass wraps resulting from exposure to a strong corrosive agent. Fiberglass composite cylinders are particularly at risk for stress-corrosion cracking because the fibers are under constant tension due to the internal pressure. When the structural integrity of the overwrap is weakened, a catastrophic failure of a cylinder can occur that may result in serous injury or death.

Persons responsible for the care of composite cylinders should take measures to ensure that they do not come in contact with strong corrosive agents, that the cylinders are washed only with a mild soap and water solution, and that all recommendations of the cylinder manufacturer or distributor in regard to maintenance, requalification and use are carefully followed.

Issued in Washington, DC on December 8, 1998.

**Alan I. Roberts,**

*Associate Administrator for Hazardous Materials Safety.*

[FR Doc. 98–33098 Filed 12–11–98; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Research and Special Programs Administration

**[Docket No. RSPA–98–4523; Notice 1]**

### Pipeline Safety: Request for System Integrity Inspection Pilot Program Applications

**AGENCY:** Office of Pipeline Safety, DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice of Request for Letters of Application.

**SUMMARY:** The Office of Pipeline Safety (OPS) is initiating a new program with interstate pipeline operators to evaluate an approach to improve the effectiveness of the inspection process. The System Integrity Inspection Pilot Program is designed to enhance the inspection practices currently in use by focusing on a broad set of pipeline integrity issues instead of conducting inspections only from a regulatory compliance perspective. OPS invites eligible pipeline operators to submit Letters of Application expressing interest in participating in the Pilot Program. This notice begins the solicitation process by specifying a deadline and address for Letters of Application and by providing guidance for operators interested in participating.

**DATES:** Letters of application will be accepted until February 12, 1999.

**ADDRESSES:** Interstate pipeline operators interested in participating in the System Integrity Inspection Pilot Program should send their letters of application to Richard B. Felder, Associate Administrator for Pipeline Safety, Research and Special Programs Administration, Department of Transportation, Room 7128, 400 7th Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Donald Moore (816) 426–2654 or any of the five OPS Regional Directors: William Gute (202) 366–4580, Frederick Joyner (405) 562–3530, Ivan Huntoon (816) 426–2654, Rodrick Seeley (713) 718–3746, or Christopher Hoidal (303) 231-5701.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

#### I. Introduction

The Office of Pipeline Safety (OPS) is in the process of improving its regulatory programs to assure greater levels of safety, environmental protection, and service reliability. An important part of this effort is re-examining the approach OPS uses to conduct inspections of interstate pipeline operators and searching for more effective processes. Traditionally, OPS inspections have focused strongly