

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE
STATE FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE
AUSTIN, TEXAS

State Fire Marshal Directive

Pursuant to the authority of Texas Government Code § 417.008, the State Fire Marshal is directing that your agency, or university, take immediate steps to insure that:

1. All master-metered natural gas piping systems owned, operated and controlled by a State Agency or State Higher Education Campus are designed, constructed, maintained and operated in accordance with the Minimum Safety Standards for Natural Gas, 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 192, as required by 16 TAC §8.
2. All interior gas piping in structures and buildings is installed, operated, tested, and repaired in accordance with National Fire Protection Association Fuel Gas Code, NFPA 54. In a single-metered building where the gas meter is located remote from the building, any underground piping from the meter to the point of building entry shall also be in compliance with NFPA 54, *Fuel Gas Code*.
3. A pressure test is completed on all interior gas piping in all buildings containing sleeping facilities by December 31, 2005 and retesting shall be conducted at least every two years after completion of the initial test.
4. A leakage survey shall be completed on all interior gas piping in all buildings not containing sleeping facilities by September 1, 2006. Leakage surveys shall be conducted first on those buildings where the occupancy load is 300 or more people and in those buildings considered to be high-hazard or with multiple gas piping installations or appliances.

Once leakage surveys have been completed in a building, gas piping and appliances shall be installed, tested, repaired, and maintained in accordance with NFPA 54, *Fuel Gas Code*.

5. All underground piping between the gas meter and the building shall be leak surveyed in accordance with 49 CFR 192.723 (b) (2).

Pressure Testing Criteria: A pressure test to determine if the natural gas piping in each facility will hold at least normal operating pressure shall be performed as follows:

1. For systems on which the normal operating pressure is less than 0.5 pounds per square inch gauge (psig), the test pressure shall be 5.0 psig and the time interval shall be 30 minutes.
2. For systems on which the normal operating pressure is 0.5 psig to 4.9 psig, the test pressure shall be 1.5 times the normal operating pressure or 5.0 psig, whichever is greater, and the time interval shall be 30 minutes.

3. A pressure test using normal operating pressure shall be utilized only on systems operating at 5.0 psig or greater, and the time interval shall be one hour.

Any interior piping failing the pressure test shall be repaired and retested or the piping shall be disconnected from the gas supply.

The testing shall be conducted by:

1. A licensed plumber;
2. A qualified employee or agent of the facility who is regularly employed as or acting as a maintenance person or maintenance engineer; or
3. A person exempt from the plumbing license law as provided in Texas Civil Statutes, Article 6243-101, §3. Documentation of training and experience for these exempt personnel shall be maintained by the agency.

Equivalent methods of compliance that meet the intent of this directive may be acceptable. Requests are to be submitted under the signature of the Executive Director of the Agency or University President to the State Fire Marshal for approval.

All facilities should take immediate action to insure compliance. All facilities should be in compliance no later than the dates listed herein. Documentation of compliance shall be maintained in the facility safety department and be available for inspection by the State Fire Marshal, Railroad Commission, or other state officials.

This directive does not release any facility from requirements of the Texas Railroad Commission or Federal law or regulations.

Any questions can be directed to Wayne Smith, Director of Fire Safety Inspections, State Fire Marshal's Office, Texas Department of Insurance. Mr. Smith can be reached at (512) 305-7911 or by E-mail at wayne.smith@tdi.state.tx.us.

Issued February 4, 2005, by the authority of the State Fire Marshal.



Paul W. Maldonado
State Fire Marshal