

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
WASHINGTON, D.C.

ISSUED: February 29, 1976

Forwarded to:

Honorable William T. Coleman, Jr.
Secretary
Department of Transportation
Washington, D. C. 20590

SAFETY RECOMMENDATION(S)

P-76-5

At 9:45 p.m. on May 21, 1974, a 6-inch gas-gathering pipeline, owned by the Texas Oil and Gas Corporation, ruptured at the edge of a rural road south of Meridian, Mississippi. Three vehicles entered the area which contained the escaping gas and stalled near the rupture. The gas ignited at 10:05 p.m., and five persons died as a result. Three vehicles were destroyed and 40 acres of woodland were burned.

Although less than 4 years old, the 6-inch pipe had corroded internally and had been embrittled by hydrogen. The pipeline operator had not detected the corrosion although some corrosion test coupons had been installed. The pipeline had not been scraped internally often enough; consequently, liquids accumulated in the bottom of the pipe. The pipe ruptured at 300 psig - - well below its specified minimum yield strength - - at a weak point thinned by internal corrosion and further weakened by hydrogen embrittlement.

In addition to the accident near Meridian, two other recent accidents on unregulated rural gas-gathering lines claimed nine lives (Kilgore, Texas, on September 7, 1975, and Mooreland, Oklahoma, on January 7, 1976).

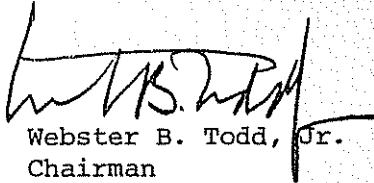
The design, construction, testing, operation, and maintenance of pipelines which transport and distribute natural gas have been federally regulated for several years. However, until Jan. 1975, there was no clear-cut Federal authority to regulate gas-gathering pipelines in rural areas.

PAR-76-1

Therefore, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the Department of Transportation:

Promulgate regulations under the Hazardous Materials Transportation Act for natural gas-gathering pipelines in rural areas, similar to the regulations promulgated for natural gas transmission and distribution pipelines in 49 CFR 192. (P-76-5) (Class II, Priority Followup.)

REED, Acting Chairman, McADAMS, THAYER, BURGESS, and HALEY, Members, concurred in the above recommendation.


By: Webster B. Todd, Jr.
Chairman

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20594

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE, \$300

POSTAGE AND FEES PAID
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION
SAFETY BOARD

