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News

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PHMSA Reminds Pipeline Operators to Preserve and Verify Records

WASHINGTON – In an advisory bulletin issued today, the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration reminded gas pipeline facilities to preserve and verify records related to maximum allowable operating pressure (MAOP) and informed hazardous liquid operators that they should adhere to the same standards for maximum operating pressure (MOP).

“Collecting good data about pipelines is essential to keeping the people living near them safe,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood. “This is just the latest in the Department of Transportation’s efforts to improve pipeline safety, including adding more pipeline inspectors and educating both the industry and communities nationwide about the role they can play.”

The revisions reflect new requirements for reporting procedures in the recently-signed Pipeline Safety, Regulatory Certainty, and Job Creation Act of 2011, provide key safety data to assist PHMSA in addressing National Transportation Safety Board recommendations, and make other minor changes to improve overall data quality for industry professionals as well as the general public.

“Traceable, verifiable and accurate recordkeeping in the pipeline world is crucial,” said PHMSA Administrator Cynthia Quarterman. “It enables us to respond more quickly in the event of an emergency, as well as gives us a more accurate snapshot of the overall infrastructure.”

The advisory informs operators that records supporting MAOP and MOP should be traceable, verifiable, complete and clearly linked to original information about a pipeline segment or facility. These records must also be verified by complimentary, but separate, documentation. The advisory informs operators that to be complete, pipeline records must display a signature, date, or other appropriate marking to show the operator considers it to be a final document.

The advisory also notifies the public of PHMSA’s intent to gather public input about eliminating a grandfather clause that allowed gas transmission operators to establish the MAOP of pipe installed before 1970 by relying upon historical records. If the grandfather clause were eliminated, these operators would be required to reestablish MAOP using hydrostatic pressure testing. The NTSB recommended the elimination of the grandfather clause.

Today's advisory follows a [Notice](#) issued by PHMSA on April 13, 2011 outlining the agency's proposals to make several minor updates to accident and incident reporting forms for hazardous liquid, gas transmission, and gas gathering pipeline systems. The Notice also explains PHMSA's consideration of a number of changes to the annual report form used by operators of natural gas transmission and gathering pipeline systems.

After reviewing the Notice, individuals or entities interested in submitting formal comments can do so by visiting the [Federal Register](#). All comments must be submitted by June 12, 2012 and should include the agency name and docket number "PHMSA-2012-0024" at the beginning of each comment submitted.

Comments are also being accepted by fax at 202-493-2251, and by hand delivery, at Docket Operations in Room W12-140 on the ground floor of the West Building, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E., Washington, DC 20590, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. Mailed comments should be addressed to: Docket Operations, U.S. Department of Transportation, West Building, Ground Floor, Room W12-140, Routing Symbol M-30, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E., Washington, DC 20590.

Pipeline Safety Initiatives

The President's [Fiscal Year 2013 budget request](#) includes a 60 percent increase above Fiscal Year 2012 for PHMSA's pipeline safety program to improve safety and increase accountability by hiring more inspectors, increasing coordination with states and educating the public. These safety initiatives build upon Secretary LaHood's [Call To Action](#), in which he asked pipeline operators to repair, replace or rehabilitate aging pipelines.

The effort to collect more pipeline data is part of PHMSA's push to improve pipeline safety, including increased [enforcement actions](#), proposed data collection initiatives, and aggressive public education efforts such as the recently issued [Call 811 Before You Dig public service announcement](#). PHMSA also has several pipeline safety proposals out for comment, including one that addresses [excavation damage prevention](#). Visit PHMSA's [Pipeline Safety Awareness](#) website and access the [state pipeline profiles](#) to learn more.

The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) develops and enforces regulations for the safe, reliable, and environmentally sound operation of the nation's 2.5 million mile pipeline transportation system and the nearly 1 million daily shipments of hazardous materials by land, sea, and air. PHMSA is one of ten agencies within the U.S. Department of Transportation. Visit PHMSA online at <http://phmsa.dot.gov>.

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