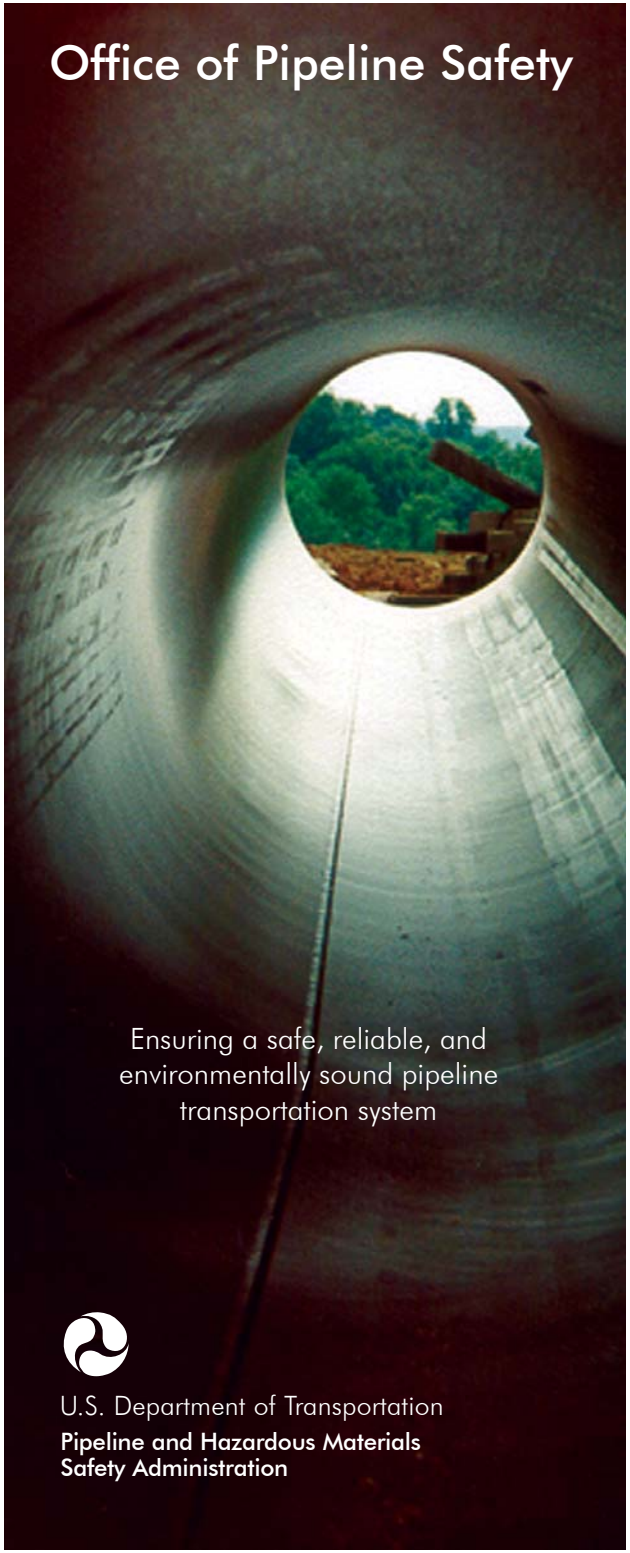
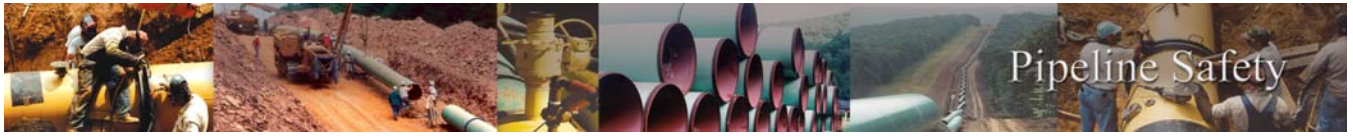
Office of Pipeline Safety



Ensuring a safe, reliable, and environmentally sound pipeline transportation system

U.S. Department of Transportation
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration



Who We Are

The Office of Pipeline Safety (OPS) is part of the US Department of Transportation's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA). Our programs are driven by our mission to ensure the **safe**, **reliable**, and **environmentally sound** operation of our nation's pipeline transportation system. The cornerstone of OPS programs is the inspection and enforcement of pipeline safety regulations by qualified inspectors located in five regional offices. OPS regulations include minimum safety requirements for all pipelines and more rigorous requirements for pipelines that pose a greater risk to populated and environmentally sensitive areas. OPS communication programs provide crucial knowledge about the pipeline system to various stakeholders, which enables them to share responsibility for **continuously improving pipeline safety**.

Pipeline Safety Stakeholders

OPS recognizes that our mission cannot be accomplished in isolation. We are committed to working with all pipeline safety stakeholders to find opportunities for safety improvements:

- Community Organizations
- Consensus Standards Organizations
- Emergency Responders
- Environmental Organizations
- Excavators
- Local Government Agencies
- Federal Government Agencies
- Pipeline Industry Trade Associations
- Pipeline Operators
- State Government Agencies
- Underground Facility Owners

Stakeholder collaboration has been vital during the development of the OPS programs described in this brochure.

Safety Regulations

OPS establishes pipeline safety regulations for hazardous liquid, natural gas, flammable gas, and toxic gas pipeline systems as well as liquefied natural gas facilities. These regulations are contained in Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Parts 190-199, and include requirements for pipeline design, construction, operation and maintenance, personnel qualification, public awareness, emergency response, oil spill response, and employee substance abuse testing.

State Pipeline Safety Partners

Through funding agreements with OPS, State agencies can assume safety jurisdiction for gas and hazardous liquid operators within the State (intrastate). To assume jurisdiction, States must publish regulations that meet or exceed the Federal safety regulations. State pipeline safety partners have formed the National Association of Pipeline Safety Representatives (NAPSR), which strives to strengthen state pipeline safety programs through promotion of improved pipeline safety standards, education, training, and technology. OPS frequently consults with NAPSR, especially for issues concerning intrastate pipelines.
http://www.napsr.org/

Consensus Standards

OPS works closely with several national consensus standards organizations, such as the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) and the National Association of Corrosion Engineers (NACE). These organizations include members from various stakeholder groups and produce accurate, balanced standards. OPS recognizes the value of the consensus process and appreciates the hard work required to publish technical safety standards. When these standards complement or enhance OPS regulations, the standards may be incorporated into the regulations.

Research and Development (R&D)

OPS uses technical review committees to identify R&D priorities and select projects for funding. The R&D program goal is to drive improvements in damage prevention, leak detection, operational control and monitoring, and material performance. The R&D program focuses on the rapid conversion of new technology into tools the pipeline industry can use to improve pipeline safety. Completed R&D projects often provide the technical basis for regulations and consensus safety standards. Other R&D projects summarize information necessary for well-informed decisions by pipeline safety stakeholders.
http://primis.phmsa.dot.gov/rd

Integrity Management

OPS regulations require gas transmission and hazardous liquid pipeline operators to conduct a risk assessment of the pipeline system to determine high consequence areas. Generally, areas where pipeline leaks would impact large populations or contaminate water supplies are classified as high consequence areas. Operators must conduct periodic integrity assessments within these areas. The assessments can include in-line inspections (smart pigs) and various surface testing methods. These assessments generate a large amount of data about the condition of the pipeline. The OPS R&D program continues to provide valuable information to organizations, such as ASME and NACE, as they improve standards for the collection and interpretation of the data. Integrity Management regulations require operators to repair pipeline defects in a timeframe commensurate with the severity of the defect. http://primis.phmsa.dot.gov/iim

Public Awareness Programs

OPS regulations require pipeline operators to implement public awareness programs in communities traversed by pipelines. The programs must inform stakeholders about indications of a pipeline leak and appropriate actions to protect life, property, and the environment. Stakeholders include the public, excavators, emergency responders, and local officials. The content, delivery method, and frequency of awareness communications are specific to the stakeholder audience. Operators must evaluate the effectiveness of the program to facilitate future improvements.
http://primis.phmsa.dot.gov/comm/PublicEducation.htm

Damage Prevention

The leading cause of gas distribution system incidents has been external force damage during excavation work near pipelines. OPS invests considerable resources in the Common Ground Alliance (CGA) to promote damage prevention. CGA members include all underground facility damage prevention stakeholders and CGA has assumed stewardship of these OPS initiatives:

Best Practices – In 1999, the OPS sponsored the Common Ground Study to develop "Best Practices" for preventing damage to pipelines and other underground facilities. A CGA committee ensures the Best Practices are updated to reflect new technology and practices.

Dig Safely – This educational campaign stresses damage prevention by encouraging excavators to participate in one-call programs. A CGA committee continues to develop educational materials for use in communities, work sites, and public forums. http://www.commongroundalliance.com

National Pipeline Mapping System (NPMS)

The NPMS is a geographic information system (GIS) that contains the locations and attributes of hazardous liquid and gas transmission pipelines, liquefied natural gas facilities, and breakout tanks. Federal, state, and local government agencies can request password-protected access to interactive online maps showing pipeline facilities and the areas they traverse. This information can be a valuable tool for planning community growth, emergency response, and homeland defense applications. Members of the public can query the NPMS to obtain contact information for pipeline companies operating in a county or postal code.
http://www.npms.phmsa.dot.gov

Education and Training

OPS and State pipeline safety inspectors are required to complete training at the Federal Transportation Safety Institute (TSI). Thirteen separate one week training sessions prepare inspectors to evaluate pipeline operators for compliance with Federal pipeline safety regulations. Classes are also offered for pipeline company personnel to learn about OPS programs. As OPS prepares to introduce new programs, Public Workshops are typically scheduled to provide information and solicit input.
http://www.tsi.dot.gov/divisions/pipeline/pipeline.htm

Stakeholder Communications

OPS has created a communications website tailored to various pipeline safety stakeholders. The main page for each stakeholder type provides information about OPS programs of direct interest to the stakeholder. The web site offers educational pages where the user can learn about all aspects of pipeline system construction, operation, and maintenance. OPS uses the communications web site to display information about each State, including pipeline mileage and accidents. http://primis.phmsa.dot.gov/comm

Community Assistance & Technical Services (CATS)

In order to improve communication with a variety of pipeline safety stakeholders, OPS implemented the CATS Program in 2002. CATS Managers are located in each OPS Region and work in concert with State Pipeline Safety Partners to identify opportunities for improving pipeline safety, especially in the area of damage prevention. CATS Managers are available for making public presentations or providing additional information about OPS programs.

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CATS Managers: Karen Butler & Harold Winnie
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Western Region Office
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