

# CITY OF VICTORVILLE



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December 20, 2017

Mrs. Kim West  
Acting Director, Western Region  
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration

Reference: **CPF 5-2017-0016**

Dear Ms. West,

This letter is in response to the "Notice of Probable Violation and Proposed Compliance Order" letter dated November 22, 2017, which was received by this office on November 28, 2017. After reviewing said letter, the City of Victorville has determined that it will not contest the violations listed. Immediately after the inspection on May 8-10, 2017, the City of Victorville staff began to address the violations that were discussed with the inspector. Listed below are the four items that are subject to the Proposed Compliance Order and the corrections implemented by staff:

**1. § 192.16 Customer Notifications**

**(b) Each operator shall notify each customer once in writing of the following information:**

- (1) The operator does not maintain the customer's buried piping.**
- (2) If the customer's buried piping is not maintained, it may be subject to the potential hazards of corrosion and leakage.**
- (3) Buried gas piping should be –**
  - (i) Periodically inspected for leak;**
  - (ii) Periodically inspected for corrosion if the piping is metallic; and**
  - (iii) Repaired if any unsafe condition is discovered.**
- (4) When excavating near buried gas piping, the piping should be located in advance, and the excavation done by hand.**
- (5) The operator (if applicable), plumbing contractors and heating contractors can assist in locating, inspecting and repairing the customer's buried piping.**

The Proposed Compliance Order requires the City of Victorville to:

- A. Revise its General Gas Service Information to include the information required in 192.16(b) and send that revised notification to all of its customers. Records and documentation showing compliance with this requirement must be submitted to PHMSA within 60 days after receipt of the Final Order.**

- B. Revise its procedure, Public Awareness and Damage Prevention to include a detailed process for notifying customers once in writing of the following information:
1. The operator does not maintain the customer's buried piping.
  2. If the customer's buried piping is not maintained, it may be subject to the potential hazards of corrosion and leakage.
  3. Buried gas piping should be –
    - (i) Periodically inspected for leaks:
    - (ii) Periodically inspected for corrosion if the piping is metallic: and
    - (iii) Repaired if any unsafe condition is found.
  4. When excavating near buried gas piping, the piping should be located in advance and the excavation done by hand.
  5. The operator (if applicable), plumbing contractors and heating contractors can assist in locating, inspecting and repairing the customer's buried piping.

The revised written procedure must be submitted to PHMSA within 60 days after receipt of the Final Order letter.

## **Response**

The Victorville Municipal Utility Services (VMUS) is the City of Victorville's department charged with operating the city's electrical and natural gas distribution systems. The VMUS staff has made the necessary changes to the General Natural Gas Service Information form VMA-112, which includes all information as required by 49 C.F.R. § 192.16(b) as shown in Exhibit A. This revised notice was sent to all VMUS customers on December 12, 2017 as shown in Exhibit B. Also attached is Exhibit C, the VMUS service application that is given to every new customer. In the section entitled Supplemental Documentation Required for Service, every new customer is required to initial indicating they received the General Gas Service Information.

VMUS staff has also updated paragraph C on page 3 of 5 in its procedure for Public Awareness and Damage Prevention as shown in Exhibit D. This procedure was updated on May 24, 2017, as indicated in the top right corner of the page.

*Please consider this item for closure.*

2. **§ 192.615 Emergency Plans**
  - (c) **Each operator shall establish and maintain liaison with appropriate fire, police and other public officials to:**
    - (1) **Learn the responsibility and resources of each government organization that may respond to a gas pipeline emergency;**
    - (2) **Acquaint the officials with the operator's ability in responding to a gas pipeline emergency.**

- (3) Identify the types of gas pipeline emergencies of which the operator notifies the officials; and**  
**(4) Plan how the operator and officials can engage in mutual assistance to minimize hazards to life or property.**

The Proposed Compliance Order requires the City of Victorville to:

Conduct liaison with appropriate fire, police and other public officials to: (a) Learn the responsibility of and resources of each government organization that may respond to a gas pipeline emergency; (b) Acquaint the officials with the operator's ability in responding to a gas pipeline emergency; (c) Identify the types of gas pipeline emergencies of which the operator notifies the officials; and (d) Plan how the operator and officials can engage in mutual assistance to minimize hazards to life or property. The City of Victorville must schedule a meeting with appropriate fire, police and other public officials, and notify PHMSA in writing within 30 days of the scheduled liaison meeting so that PHMSA may attend the meeting in person. Records and documentation showing compliance with this requirement must be submitted to PHMSA within 180 days after receipt of the Final Order Letter.

## **Response**

As noted in your letter, the City of Victorville held an airport safety meeting in 2016 and pipeline safety was not addressed. In fact, the meeting did address many, but not all, of the items required under § 192.615. Most notably, a liaison was established with the various first responder agencies and specific communication regarding natural gas hazards were addressed. In order to ensure VMUS satisfied all of these requirements for 2017, another Airport Emergency Plan Tabletop Exercise was conducted on October 4, 2017 that addressed pipeline safety and satisfied the Public Awareness requirements.

Enclosed is a DVD which contains a power point presentation of the Airport Emergency Plan Tabletop Exercise/public official liaison meeting. Page 9 was created specifically for VMUS to discuss the information required in 49 C.F.R. § 192.615. During this section the various points concerning liaison, roles, responsibilities and mutual assistance were discussed and questions were fielded.

Exhibit E is a sign in sheet for the Airport Emergency Plan Tabletop exercise /public official liaison meeting. Among the various attendees were: Sue Jones, the City of Victorville Public Information Officer; Richard Falzone, the Airport Maintenance Supervisor; and myself, the Airport Director. These 3 attendees represented the public officials required in § 192.615 (c). The numerous SCLA and VMUS attendees represent the City of Victorville staff that can be counted upon as first responders to any Airport emergency, including those emanating from the natural gas system. Lines 20 and 21 are attendees from the San Bernardino County Fire Dept. and lines 10 and 11 are attendees from the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Dept. These four attendees, and two others that apparently failed to sign in, represented the fire and police officials

required in § 192.615 (c). The meeting also had attendees from the FBI, United States Air Force and at least one Airport tenant and VMUS gas customer.

Per Federal Aviation Administration regulation, the Airport Department (the SCLA) is required to have an annual safety meeting that is significantly similar in scope and nature to that required by § 192.615. Given the synergies of these two federal requirements, combining the liaison meeting with the Airport Emergency Plan Tabletop Exercise is the most effective method to garner the greatest participation needed to satisfy the requirements of 49 C.F.R. § 192.615. As a function of VMUS's continuing effort to make improvements to its Public Awareness Program, the role of the natural gas system will receive greater emphasis in the subsequent Airport Emergency Plan Tabletop Exercise/public liaison meetings.

*Please consider this item for closure.*

### **3. § 192.616 Public Awareness**

**(c) The operator must follow the general program recommendations, including baseline and supplemental requirements of API RP 1162, unless the operator provides justification in its program or procedural manual as to why compliance with all or certain provisions of the recommended practice is not practical and not necessary for safety.**

The Proposed Compliance Order requires the City of Victorville to:

Communicate to local public officials, emergency officials and excavators regarding the information required in API RP 1162 Section 2.2.2, Section 2.2.3 and Section 2.2.4. Records and documentation showing compliance with this requirement, including inclusion of the relevant API 1162 recommended practices in its written continuing public education program, must be submitted to PHMSA within 60 days of the Final Order Letter.

### **Response**

VMUS staff has updated Section B-13.2 of its procedure for Public Awareness and Damage Prevention as shown in Exhibit D, to include provisions for API 1162, Recommended Practices for local public officials, emergency officials and excavators. The Procedure has also been updated to include program evaluation as depicted on Section B-13 paragraphs F and G (page 4 of 5) of the attached Exhibit D.

Exhibits F, G, H, I and J represent the notices that were sent to customers and non-customers, public officials, emergency officials and excavators as recommended by API 1162 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3 and 2.2.4.

The attached Exhibits K, L, M, N and O are records showing compliance with API 1162 recommended practices.

*Please consider this item for closure.*

4. **§ 192.619 Maximum allowable operating pressure: Steel or plastic pipelines.**  
**(a) No person may operate a segment of steel or plastic pipeline at a pressure that exceeds a maximum allowable operating pressure determined under paragraph (c) or (d) of this section, or the lowest of the following:**

**(1) The design pressure of the weakest element in the segment, determined in accordance with subparts C and D of this part. However, for steel pipe in pipelines being converted under §192.14 or uprated under subpart K of this part, if any variable necessary to determine the design pressure under the design formula (§192.105) is unknown, one of the following pressures is to be used as design pressure:**

**(i) Eighty percent of the first test pressure that produces yield under section N5 of Appendix N of ASME B31.8 (incorporated by reference, *see* §192.7), reduced by the appropriate factor in paragraph (a)(2)(ii) of this section; or**

**(ii) If the pipe is 12¾ inches (324 mm) or less in outside diameter and is not tested to yield under this paragraph, 200 p.s.i. (1379 kPa).**

**(2) The pressure obtained by dividing the pressure to which the segment was tested after construction as follows:**

**(i) For plastic pipe in all locations, the test pressure is divided by a factor of 1.5.**

**(ii) For steel pipe operated at 100 p.s.i. (689 kPa) gage or more, the test pressure is divided by a factor determined in accordance with the following table:**

Class location	Factors <sup>1</sup> , segment—		
	Installed before (Nov. 12, 1970)	Installed after (Nov. 11, 1970)	Converted under §192.14
1	1.1	1.1	1.25
2	1.25	1.25	1.25
3	1.4	1.5	1.5
4	1.4	1.5	1.5

<sup>1</sup>For offshore segments installed, uprated or converted after July 31, 1977, that are not located on an offshore platform, the factor is 1.25. For segments installed,

updated or converted after July 31, 1977, that are located on an offshore platform or on a platform in inland navigable waters, including a pipe riser, the factor is 1.5.

(3) The highest actual operating pressure to which the segment was subjected during the 5 years preceding the applicable date in the second column. This pressure restriction applies unless the segment was tested according to the requirements in paragraph (a)(2) of this section after the applicable date in the third column or the segment was updated according to the requirements in subpart K of this part:

Pipeline segment	Pressure date	Test date
—Onshore gathering line that first became subject to this part (other than §192.612) after April 13, 2006	March 15, 2006, or date line becomes subject to this part, whichever is later	5 years preceding applicable date in second column.
—Onshore transmission line that was a gathering line not subject to this part before March 15, 2006		
Offshore gathering lines	July 1, 1976	July 1, 1971.
All other pipelines	July 1, 1970	July 1, 1965.

(4) The pressure determined by the operator to be the maximum safe pressure after considering the history of the segment, particularly known corrosion and the actual operating pressure.

(b) No person may operate a segment to which paragraph (a)(4) of this section is applicable, unless over-pressure protective devices are installed on the segment in a manner that will prevent the maximum allowable operating pressure from being exceeded, in accordance with §192.195.

(c) The requirements on pressure restrictions in this section do not apply in the following instance. An operator may operate a segment of pipeline found to be in satisfactory condition, considering its operating and maintenance history, at the highest actual operating pressure to which the segment was subjected during the 5 years preceding the applicable date in the second column of the table in paragraph (a)(3) of this section. An operator must still comply with §192.611.

(d) The operator of a pipeline segment of steel pipeline meeting the conditions prescribed in §192.620(b) may elect to operate the segment at a maximum allowable operating pressure determined under §192.620(a).

The Proposed Compliance Order requires the City of Victorville to:

Calculate and determine how the maximum allowable operating pressure was established for its pipeline system as per 49 C.F.R. § 192.619. Records and written procedure showing compliance with this requirement must be submitted to PHMSA within 60 days after receipt of the Final Order Letter.

## **Response**

VMUS staff has created a written procedure for determining the maximum allowable operating pressure of its distribution system as shown in Exhibit P. The City of Victorville acquired the natural gas distribution system from the United States Air Force upon the closure of the former George Air Force Base. The VMUS staff has determined that any and all existing facilities that were operating at 20 PSI while under the ownership of the Air Force will remain at 20 PSI for the remainder of its lifetime. This is noted in paragraph A of the exhibit.

Any and all pipe and components that were installed after January 1, 2005 while under the responsibility of the City of Victorville will have a maximum allowable operating pressure of 60 PSI. This is noted in paragraph B of the exhibit.

Exhibits Q, R and S are various records from the past 11 years showing pressure test data that corresponds with the VMUS maximum allowable pressure determination.

*Please consider this item for closure.*

Although Items 5 and 6 are not subject to additional enforcement action or penalty assessments, the VMUS staff is actively addressing these matters and anticipates a successful resolution in short order. The response for Items 5 and 6 are detailed below.

### **5. § 192.227 Qualification of welders and welding operators**

- (a) Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, each welder or welding operator must be qualified in accordance with section 6, section 12, or Appendix A of API Std 1104 (incorporated by reference, see § 192.7), or section IX of ASME Boiler and Pressure Vessel code (BPVC) (incorporated by reference, see § 192.7). However, a welder or welding operator qualified under an earlier edition than the edition listed in § 192.7 may weld but may not re-qualify under that earlier edition.**

The City of Victorville could not demonstrate that the person who welded on several above ground pipeline installations completed in 2016 was qualified in accordance with Section 6 of API 1104 or section IX of the ASME Boiler and Pressure Vessel Code (BPVC) pursuant to 49 C.F.R. § 192.227(a). Specifically, three regulator stations (#10, #11, and #12) and one meter set

were installed in August 2016 which involved a welding process. At the time of the inspection, the City of Victorville provided a contractor OQ record to PHMSA that showed the expiration date of the qualification of the welder. However, the City of Victorville could not provide records that demonstrated that each welder or welding operator was qualified in accordance with Section 6, Section 12, or Appendix A of API Std 1104 or section IX of ASME BPVC.

The proposed warning has requested the City of Victorville promptly correct this item.

## **Response**

The welding operation referenced above was performed by a contractor as a function of the recent Natural Gas Upgrading Project that was completed late in 2016. The contractor provided wallet OQ cards for all staff working on the project in order to demonstrate the appropriate qualifications. The VMUS staff believed this individual to be fully qualified and was not aware of the need to also obtain more formal training documentation. VMUS staff will meet with the contractor in order to obtain additional welding qualification documentation for the welder that performed the work in question. Upon receipt, your office will be notified of the successful resolution of this item.

Since becoming aware of this matter during the recent inspection, VMUS staff has required a subsequent contractor to provide both wallet cards and the formal training documents before allowing any construction to commence. This will be standard policy henceforth.

- 6. § 192.285 Plastic pipe: Qualifying persons to make joints.**
- (a) No person may make a plastic pipe joint unless that person has been qualified under the applicable joining procedure by:**
- (1) Appropriate training or experience in the use of the procedure: and**
  - (2) Making a specimen joint from pipe sections joined according to the procedure that passes the inspection and test set forth in paragraph (b) of this section.**

The City of Victorville could not demonstrate that the persons who made joints by fusion on several underground plastic main and service pipelines completed in 2013-2016 were qualified under the applicable joining procedures pursuant to 49 C.F.R. § 192.285(a). The City of Victorville's joining procedure, section C-1, states in part:

Individuals performing polyethylene pipe joining must be qualified in the procedure being utilized or directly observed by an individual that is qualified. Individuals must be requalified if during any 12 month period there are no fusions made or has 3 joints or 3% of the joints made that are unacceptable.



Thirteen services and five main plastic pipelines ranging from 1 inch to 6 inch had been fused together from 2013 to 2017. Records or other substantiating evidence were not available at the time of inspection to demonstrate that the person who made the joints had been qualified in polyethylene plastic pipe fusion pursuant to 49 C.F.R. § 192.285(a).

The proposed warning has requested the City of Victorville promptly correct this item.

## **Response**

The pipe fusion operations referenced above were performed by a combination of contractors and the VMUS Gas Coordinator between 2013 and early 2017. Most of the pipe fusion was performed by contractors that provided wallet OQ cards for their staff in order to demonstrate the appropriate qualifications. The VMUS staff believed these individuals to be fully qualified and was not aware of the need to also obtain more formal training documentation. VMUS staff will meet with the contractors in order to obtain additional pipe fusion qualification documentation for the work in question. Upon receipt, your office will be notified of the successful resolution of this item.

Since becoming aware of this matter during the recent inspection, VMUS staff has required a subsequent contractor to provide both wallet cards and the formal training documents before allowing any construction to commence. This will be standard policy henceforth.

Some of the pipe fusion operations were performed by the VMUS Gas Coordinator, who was on a three year training cycle. Being unaware of the change to 49 C.F.R. § 192.285 in March 2015, the last three line services constructed by the VMUS Gas Coordinator were not in compliance with said regulation. To remedy the matter, and as depicted on the attached Exhibit T, VMUS staff has updated Section C-1 of its procedures to accommodate the current regulatory requirements. Additionally, several members of the VMUS staff are scheduled for pipe joining training to be conducted in April 2018. In the meanwhile, only properly credentialed contractors will be utilized to perform fusions, if a need arises before the training is completed. Upon completion of said training, your office will be notified of this item's successful resolution.

It is important to note that the qualifications, technical competency, and quality of work product produced by the VMUS Gas Coordinator was unaffected as a result of the regulatory change that caused this inspection item. In fact, Exhibits U, V, and W (the Service Installation Reports) are attached hereto as a testament to the quality of workmanship and pipe integrity.

In closing, I would like to express a debt of gratitude to your office for the recent inspection and assisting the VMUS staff meet its regulatory obligations. Given my short tenure as the Director of this small utility, I take great comfort in knowing that the gas system is being successfully operated with only a few minor operational discrepancies noted. As is evident in the expeditious manner that these discrepancies were corrected, the VMUS will continue to strive for excellence in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C. Eric Ray". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping "C" and "R".

C. Eric Ray  
Airport Director  
Southern California Logistics Airport

CC: Keith Metzler, Interim City Manager  
Sophie Smith, Economic Development Director  
Robert Denny, Gas Coordinator