



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Pipeline and
Hazardous Materials Safety
Administration**

8701 South Gessner, Suite 1110
Houston, TX 77074

NOTICE OF AMENDMENT

CERTIFIED MAIL - RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

July 9, 2010

Mr. Randy Ziebarth
President
Torch Energy Services, Inc.
1331 Lamar, Suite 1450
Houston, TX 77010

CPF 4-2010-1004M

Dear Mr. Ziebarth:

On December 17, 2009 through December 30, 2009, and on January 29, 2010, a representative of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) inspected Torch Energy Services, Inc.'s Mardi Gras pipeline system in Bogalusa, LA, pursuant to Chapter 601 of 49 United States Code.

On the basis of the inspection, PHMSA has identified apparent inadequacies within Torch's plans or procedures, as described below:

1. §191.7 Addressee for Written Reports.

Each written report required by this part must be made to Office of Pipeline Safety, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, the Information Resources Manager, PHP-10, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE., Washington, DC 20590-0001. However, incident and annual reports for intrastate pipeline subject to the jurisdiction of a State agency pursuant to a certification under section 5(a) of the Natural Gas Pipeline Safety Act of 1968 may be submitted in duplicate to that State agency if the regulations of that agency require submission of these reports and provide for further transmittal of one copy within 10 days of receipt for incident

reports and not later than March 15 for annual reports to the Information Resources Manager. Safety-related condition reports required by §191.23 for intrastate pipeline transportation must be submitted concurrently to that State agency, and if that agency acts as an agent of the Secretary with respect to interstate transmission facilities, safety-related condition reports for these facilities must be submitted concurrently to that agency.

Torch's O&M Manual still maintained the previous address and did not add updates to the new DOT address. Torch must replace the old address with the new address according to Amdt. 191-18, dated March 28, 2008.

During the December 2009 manual and records review, draft revisions to Torch's manual were observed. Torch must provide a copy of the corrected section, as final edition.

2. §192.614 Damage Prevention Program.

(c) The damage prevention program required by paragraph (a) of this section must, at a minimum:

(1) Include the identity, on a current basis, of persons who normally engage in excavation activities in the area in which the pipeline is located.

(2) Provides for notification of the public in the vicinity of the pipeline and actual notification of the persons identified in paragraph (c)(1) of this section of the following as often as needed to make them aware of the damage prevention program:

(i) The program's existence and purpose; and

(ii) How to learn the location of underground pipelines before excavation activities are begun.

(3) Provide a means of receiving and recording notification of planned excavation activities.

(4) If the operator has buried pipelines in the area of excavation activity, provide for actual notification of persons who give notice of their intent to excavate of the type of temporary marking to be provided and how to identify the markings.

(5) Provide for temporary marking of buried pipelines in the area of excavation activity before, as far as practical, the activity begins

(6) Provide as follows for inspection of pipelines that an operator has reason to believe could be damaged by excavation activities:

(i) The inspection must be done as frequently as necessary during and after the activities to verify the integrity of the pipeline; and

(ii) In the case of blasting, any inspection must include leakage surveys.

Torch's Damage prevention plan does not address the required leakage survey as part of the system inspection after blasting occurs which may affect the integrity of the pipeline and, Torch must modify its current procedure to include this item.

3. §192.616 Public Awareness

(a) Except for an operator of a master meter or petroleum gas system covered under paragraph (j) of this section, each pipeline operator must develop and implement a written continuing public education program that follows the guidance provided in the American Petroleum Institute's (API) Recommended Practice (RP) 1162 (incorporated by reference, see § 192.7).

Torch has a Public Awareness Plan that meets the requirements of this part as a separate manual. Several manuals are allowed by code but they must be cross referenced. Torch must cross reference this plan to their existing O&M manual.

4. §192.605 Procedural manual for operations, maintenance, and emergencies

Each operator shall include the following in its operating and maintenance plan:

(a) General. Each operator shall prepare and follow for each pipeline, a manual of written procedures for conducting operations and maintenance activities and for emergency response. For transmission lines, the manual must also include procedures for handling abnormal operations. This manual must be reviewed and updated by the operator at intervals not exceeding 15 months, but at least one each calendar year. This manual must be prepared before operations of a pipeline system commence. Appropriate parts of the manual must be kept at locations where operations and maintenance activities are conducted.

(b) Maintenance and normal operations. The manual required by paragraph (a) of this section must include procedures for the following, if applicable, to provide safety during maintenance and operations.

(1) Operating, maintaining, and repairing the pipeline in accordance with each of the requirements of this subpart and Subpart M of this part.

(2) Controlling corrosion in accordance with the operations and maintenance requirements of Subpart I of this part.

(3) Making construction records, maps, and operating history available to appropriate operating personnel.

(4) Gathering of data needed for reporting incidents under Part 191 of this chapter in a timely and effective manner.

(5) Starting up and shutting down any part of the pipeline in a manner designed to assure operation within the MAOP limits prescribed by this part, plus the build-up allowed for operation of pressure-limiting and control devices.

(6) Maintaining compressor stations, including provisions for isolating units or sections of pipe and for purging before returning to service.

(7) Starting, operating and shutting down gas compressor units.

(8) Periodically reviewing the work done by operator personnel to determine the effectiveness and adequacy of the procedures used in normal operation and maintenance and modifying the procedure when deficiencies are found.

(9) Taking adequate precautions in excavated trenches to protect personnel from the hazards of unsafe accumulations of vapor or gas, and making available when needed at the excavation, emergency rescue equipment, including a breathing apparatus and, a rescue harness and line.

(10) Systematic and routine testing and inspection of pipe-type or bottle-type holders including

(i) Provision for detecting external corrosion before the strength of the container has been impaired;

(ii) Periodic sampling and testing of gas in storage to determine the dew point of vapors contained in the stored gas which, if condensed, might cause internal corrosion or interfere with the safe operation of the storage plant; and,

(iii) Periodic inspection and testing of pressure limiting equipment to determine that it is in safe operating condition and has adequate capacity.

(11) Responding promptly to a report of a gas odor inside or near a building, unless the operator's emergency procedures under §192.615(a)(3) specifically apply to these reports.

192.605(b)(7) Torch placed the Florida Gas Compressor Station in operation one month prior to this inspection. Torch's O&M manual addressed general start-up, operations and shut-down procedures, with a statement that specific procedures would be available on site. Torch must modify the local operating procedures to be more specific for the local system operators.

Response to this Notice

This Notice is provided pursuant to 49 U.S.C. § 60108(a) and 49 C.F.R. § 190.237. Enclosed as part of this Notice is a document entitled *Response Options for Pipeline Operators in Compliance Proceedings*. Please refer to this document and note the response options. Be advised that all material you submit in response to this enforcement action is subject to being made publicly available. If you believe that any portion of your responsive material qualifies for confidential treatment under 5 U.S.C. 552(b), along with the complete original document you must provide a second copy of the document with the portions you believe qualify for confidential treatment redacted and an explanation of why you believe the redacted information qualifies for confidential treatment under 5 U.S.C. 552(b). If you do not respond within 30 days of receipt of this Notice, this constitutes a waiver of your right to contest the allegations in this Notice and authorizes the Associate Administrator for Pipeline Safety to find facts as alleged in this Notice without further notice to you and to issue a Final Order.

If, after opportunity for a hearing, your plans or procedures are found inadequate as alleged in this Notice, you may be ordered to amend your plans or procedures to correct the inadequacies (49 C.F.R. § 190.237). If you are not contesting this Notice, we propose that you submit your amended procedures to my office within 90 days of receipt of this Notice. This period may be extended by written request for good cause. Once the inadequacies identified herein have been addressed in your amended procedures, this enforcement action will be closed.

In correspondence concerning this matter, please refer to **CPF 4-2010-1004M** and, for each document you submit, please provide a copy in electronic format whenever possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. M. Seeley', with a stylized, cursive script.

R. M. Seeley
Director, Southwest Region
Pipeline and Hazardous
Materials Safety Administration