

Updated Compendium Details State Actions on Pipeline Safety

WASHINGTON--A newly released updated compendium of gas pipeline regulations around the country reveals that States implement stricter rules and laws than required by the federal government. The updated report identifies nearly 210 new regulations initiated at the State level previously undocumented.

The “Compendium of State Pipeline Safety Requirements & Initiatives Providing Increased Public Safety Levels—Second Edition” [report](#), authored by the National Association of Pipeline Safety Representatives (NAPSR) and sponsored by the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, demonstrates that the large majority of State agencies enforce requirements above and beyond those mandated by federal policies.

Originally published in November 2011 and updated in September 2013, this detailed and thoroughly researched resource presents applicable State pipeline safety regulations and demonstrates where they exceed federal code. The vast majority of State pipeline safety agencies are enforcing numerous actions that surpass federal requirements to enhance gas and hazardous liquid pipeline safety in response to local needs.

“Our nation owes a debt of gratitude to the State pipeline inspectors who work tirelessly to ensure pipeline owners are operating their system safely and reliably,” said NARUC President Philip Jones of Washington. “While pipeline safety is everyone’s responsibility, the owners and operators of the system must make sure they are in compliance with applicable laws. As this report shows, States are leading the way in adopting commonsense, State-specific regulations that suit the needs of the public. I would like to thank NAPSR for compiling this information and for performing such crucial work.”

“For State regulators, the safe and reliable operation of our nation’s utility infrastructure is our first priority,” said NARUC First Vice President Colette Honorable of Arkansas. “This report demonstrates the commitment not only of our pipeline inspectors but also our regulators as well. We are continuing our leadership in developing practical, tailored safety regulations. Pipeline safety is everyone’s responsibility, and clearly the States are out in front.”

“The rules and regulations contained in this report literally save lives,” said NARUC Subcommittee on Pipeline Safety Chair Paul Roberti of Rhode Island. “I am proud of the work NAPSR and its members perform on a daily basis, and I am proud that NARUC and NAPSR have solidified a true partnership together. As any State regulator will tell you, the safe and reliable operation of the utilities they regulate is Job No. 1. This report spells out how seriously we take our work.”

"As this report proves, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to pipeline safety," said NARUC Committee on Gas Chair Barry Smitherman of Texas. "Each State has its own unique characteristics, geography, and necessities. This means pipeline safety is a never-ending task, and it is up to all of us to make it work."

More than 1,300 separate State provisions are identified in this document as being tailored to

particular local conditions in the lower 48 States, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. These provisions are grouped into 23 separate categories, of which the top three are Enhanced Reporting, with 23% of the initiatives; followed by Design/Installation Requirements, with 14% of the initiatives; and, Leak Survey/Leak Response with 10%.

The document also confirms most States exceed federal requirements on pipeline operations, maintenance, and reporting provisions.

“The purpose of this report is to highlight the hundreds of areas where actions have been taken to improve pipeline safety improvements throughout the country and to showcase the many different areas of focus,” said NAPS National Chair Randy Knepper of New Hampshire. “While numerous efforts are underway already, States continue to look for reasonable ways to enhance pipeline safety in their regions. The consequences for not maintaining continuous improvement are simply too high.”

Mr. Knepper, who led a team of NAPS members in compiling the report, also serves as chair of the NARUC Staff Subcommittee on Pipeline Safety and Director of the New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission Safety Division. “All States must adhere with the federal standards, but each determines whether their own situation and conditions demand additional safety measures,” he said.

The report lists many reasons for maintaining a variety of pipeline safety initiatives, including the following:

- Certain States may have a history of a specific problem or incident that prompted the initiation of rulemaking, statutory amendments or issuance of Commission orders, such as a pipeline explosion or the discovery of a material defect in a particular pipeline system;
- Pipeline operator practices differ with respect to materials selected, methods of installation, and operational and maintenance approaches;
- In some areas of the country, there has been no need for certain initiatives within a state; and
- In other areas of the country, the landscape or geography has prompted specialized rules.

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NARUC is a non-profit organization founded in 1889 whose members include the governmental agencies that are engaged in the regulation of utilities and carriers in the fifty States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. NARUC's member agencies regulate telecommunications, energy, and water utilities. NARUC represents the interests of State public utility commissions before the three branches of the Federal government.

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