

## PROCEDURES

### PUBLIC AWARENESS and DAMAGE PREVENTION

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#### 13.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this section is to define the Operator's program directed at raising the affected public's awareness of the presence of the gas pipeline facilities in their community and to understand the steps that should be taken to prevent and to respond to potential pipeline emergencies.

The program goal is to eliminate damages and the uncontrolled release of gas from its system which may adversely affect the safety of the general public.

#### 13.1 SCOPE

Public awareness is an essential ingredient in the overall pipeline integrity and safety. This program is intended to enhance the part that the public plays in the prevention of and response to potential pipeline emergencies. Included are the following program guidelines:

- A. Public Awareness
- B. Damage Prevention

#### 13.2 PUBLIC AWARENESS: (192.616)

The City of Victorville VMUS manager, Joe Flores, is accountable for the development, monitoring, implementation, and documentation of the program for public awareness, however each gas utility employee and contract employee share in the responsibility to maintain a safe system. (**Reference API Recommended Practice 1162**)

Key stakeholders include:

- Landowners adjacent, within 330 linear feet, of the operator's rural pipeline route.
- Residents and businesses within the local distribution system service area (Customers and non-customers).
- Places of congregation within service area or adjacent to the rural pipeline route (Both structures and outside gathering areas).
- Emergency response officials who may respond to an emergency affecting the Operator's system.
- Local public officials.
- Excavators known to perform excavation within the Operator's service area or advertising locally to do so, i.e. phone book or other local publications.

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- A. The Operator has established the following methods for educating the public about the utility and about recognizing gas pipeline emergencies and reporting them to the Operator. These may include but are not limited to the following:
- Media advertisement i.e. newspaper(s), TV, radio and other information pieces shall occur at a minimum of twice annually.
  - Utility bill stuffers or bill messages shall contain public awareness message at a minimum of twice annually.
  - Participation annually at the local events that may be well attended by local residents, business operators, and public officials.
  - School education programs for students and educators shall be conducted annually.
  - Direct mail to affected landowners, excavators, and others as may be necessary.
  - Conduct annual public liaison sessions with emergency response agencies / first responders annually.
- B. The Operator's Community Education programs will include but not be limited to the following messages:
- An odor, similar to that of "rotten eggs", is added to both natural gas and propane gas so that the smell is easily recognizable.
  - Natural gas is a very safe form of energy but must be handled with care and respect. The safe and efficient operation of the natural gas system is a public concern.
  - Incidents are rare but may occur including leaks, ruptures, and ignition.
  - Potential hazards may include construction or excavation near the gas facilities, land movement due to earthquakes, flooding, or landslides, and other events that may cause damage to the gas facilities.
  - Other indications of a leak or rupture may include the sound of escaping gas, dust or other occurrences located near the gas facilities.
  - Potential hazards should not be disregarded. The public should report to the utility any potential hazards they may see.
  - Anyone who notices suspicious activity around our system should immediately notify the utility.
  - Inform the public that the utilities and their contractors are highly trained and qualified to recognize and react to any abnormal operating conditions that may occur.
  - Any excavating requires that the excavator call 811 before digging.

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- C. At the time of customer sign up or transfer, customers should be notified of the above information plus:
- The utility owns and operates and maintains the gas facilities up to and including the service regulator and gas meter at or near the residence or structure.
  - Only the utility's employees or contractors authorized and qualified by the utility may work on the gas facilities.
  - The customer is responsible for maintaining the pipe from the meter to the individual gas appliances, including any buried pipe after the meter.
  - Only qualified service persons should be utilized for making installations, repairs and/or alterations on the gas appliances or pipes after the meter.
  - Pipeline warning signs are there for the public's safety and should not be damaged or removed.
  - The customer may have installed an Excess Flow Valve at the time of installation or replacement of the gas service line.
- D. The utility has established its Emergency Response Plan:
- The utility regularly reviews and exercises this plan.
  - Upon conclusion each incident, the actions of the individuals involved including those of outside responders and other that may have been involved are reviewed / debriefed.
  - Any material failures, training needs, or necessary changes to the plan that are identified during this process are documented and addressed to the attention of the Manager of Gas Operations.
  - Appropriate changes to the plan or procedures will be initiated by the Manager of Gas Operations.
- E. Records of each of the above events shall be maintained in a central file location for review annually. These records shall be maintained for a minimum of three years or until the operator performs a regularly scheduled analysis of the effectiveness of the program
- F. The Operator's Public Awareness Program shall be reviewed at a minimum of once annually at the time of the annual O&M Plan review.
- G. From time to time, but not to exceed 3 years, the Operator will arrange to have conducted an audit of this program by a qualified individual or consultant, knowledgeable in the pipeline safety regulations and effective emergency response.

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Included will be:

- Documentation of actual messages and frequency
- A random survey of or meeting with key stakeholders
- Measurement of program effectiveness:
  - Reaching intended audience
  - Effectiveness of message, is the consumer aware
  - Reduction in actual incidents
  - Interview utility personnel
- Recommendations for change or enhancements

#### 13.3 DAMAGE PREVENTION: (192.614)

The Operator has established a damage prevention program which is closely related to the Public Awareness Program, and is designed to eliminate damages to the Operator's gas system caused by third parties.

- A. The primary ingredient is to participate in the local One Call System.
  - The Operator shall maintain active participation in the local area **One Call System**.
  - Appropriately respond and document all calls for line locations within allotted time established by the state's one call law.
  - The Operator shall follow all rules and guidelines set down by state and local statutory requirements
- B. Customer Notification at time of sign-up including the following:
  - Excess Flow Valve
  - "Call Before You Dig".
  - One-Call System brochures and handouts
  - Identify contractors and excavators know to perform excavation within the area
  - Pipeline markers and Warning signs
- C. Identify and Inform Excavators and Contractors:
  - Annually, direct mail to each, notification of state law, line location services, and one call center phone number.
  - Phone book or other local publications shall be utilized in identifying the individuals, companies, and entities.

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- D. The Operator shall place warning signs wherever it is deemed necessary to reduce the possibility of damage to the Operator's facilities.
- Aboveground facilities in Class 1 & 2 Locations.
  - Railroad and public roadway crossings in Class 1 & 2 locations.
  - Inform the public of the importance of these signs and that the pipeline warning signs are there for the public's safety and should not be damaged or removed.
- E. The Operator shall place caution tape above all newly installed and replacement gas mains and services. **Refer to Section E-8.**
- F. Operator Continuing Surveillance Program **Section B-9.3.**
- G. At the time of the annual O&M Plan review, the Operator shall evaluate the effectiveness of this program and make changes/enhancements as may be necessary.
- H. Also Refer to **Section B-12, System Integrity**, for additional actions complementing this program.