

OPS Notice of Proposed Rulemaking

**“Pipeline Integrity Management in High Consequence Areas”
(Hazardous Liquid Operators with Less than 500 Miles of Pipelines)**

Docket No. RSPA-00-7408

Summary:

The proposed rule covers the protection of populated areas, commercially navigable waterways, and areas unusually sensitive to environmental damage from hazardous liquid pipeline spills. The rule applies to hazardous liquid pipeline operators who own or operate less than 500 miles of pipeline.

(Note: On December 1, 2000, the Office of Pipeline Safety (OPS) issued a final rule to establish the same new requirements for the protection of these areas that was applicable to hazardous liquid (H/L) pipeline operators with 500 miles or more of pipeline, representing approximately 87 percent of all H/L pipeline miles in the US. After further review by OPS, it was determined that the same requirements should be extended to the remaining regulated H/L pipeline operators covering approximately 5,400 miles of pipeline. One hundred twenty-eight H/L operators will be subject to this rule.)

The proposed rule requires pipeline operators to develop and follow an integrity management program that continually assesses pipeline segments that could affect areas defined by OPS as “high consequence areas”. High consequence areas include populated areas, areas unusually sensitive to environmental damage (e.g. drinking water and other ecological resources), and commercially navigable waterways. Pipeline assessment is to be conducted through the use of internal inspection (smart pigs), pressure tests, or use of other technology capable of equivalent performance.

Baseline assessments must be completed within seven years after the final rule becomes effective. Following this assessment, operators would be required to periodically re-assess and evaluate pipeline segments within a five-year interval. The proposed rule allows operators to seek a variance in limited situations from the required five-year re-assessment interval if they can provide the necessary justification and supporting documentation.

OPS expects operators to comprehensively evaluate the entire range of threats to pipeline integrity by analyzing all available information about the pipeline and consequences of a failure. This would include information on the potential for damage due to excavation, data gathered through the required integrity assessment (e.g. internal inspections or hydro tests), results of other inspections and tests required by the pipeline safety regulations, including corrosion control

monitoring and cathodic protection surveys, and information about how a failure could affect the high consequence area, such as location of water intakes.

The proposed rule will require an operator to take prompt action to address the integrity issues raised by their assessment and analysis. This means an operator must evaluate and repair all defects that could reduce a pipeline's integrity according to specified risk criteria.

Comments to OPS:

Interested persons are invited to submit comments by May 21, 2000.

Comments may be submitted by one of the following methods:

1. By mail to the Docket Management Facility, US Department of Transportation, 400 Seventh Street SW., Nassif Building, Room PL-401, Washington, DC 20590-0001;
2. By fax to the Docket Management Facility at 202-493-2251; or
3. Electronically through the Docket Management website at <http://dms.dot.gov/> and by clicking the "ES Submit" button located at the top and bottom of the screen.