DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration

Pipeline Safety: Notice to Operators of Natural Gas and Hazardous Liquid Pipelines To Integrate Operator Qualification Regulations into Excavation Activities

AGENCY: Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice; issuance of Advisory Bulletin.

SUMMARY: PHMSA is issuing this advisory bulletin to pipeline operators to reinforce the need for safe excavation practices and recommend that pipeline operators integrate the Operator Qualification regulations into their marking, trenching, and backfilling operations to prevent excavation damage mishaps.

DATES: Submit comments on or before February 16, 2006.

ADDRESSES: Comments should refer to docket number MARAD–2006–23377.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Joy Kadnar, (202) 366–0568, or by e-mail at Joy.Kadnar@dot.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

In the past few years PHMSA has seen recurring similarities in pipeline incidents involving excavation. In November 2005, a pipeline company contractor struck a 2-inch tap off an 18-inch natural gas transmission pipeline that was operating at more than 800 pounds per square inch gauge (psig). In October 2005, near an elementary school in Chantilly, Virginia, pipeline operator personnel struck the pipeline while excavating it in a Class 3 populated area. This incident resulted in the evacuation of more than 850 school children and area residents. In June 2005, a pipeline company contractor knocked a 2-inch pipe nipple off a 30-inch natural gas transmission pipeline while uncovering it. The pipeline was operating at more than 800 psig. In January 2005, contractor personnel being supervised by a pipeline operator struck a six-inch valve on a hazardous liquid pipeline while modifying it in preparation for an inline inspection. This accident resulted in a release of about 700 barrels of crude oil.

II. Advisory Bulletin (ADB–06–01)

To: Owners and Operators of Natural Gas and Hazardous Liquid Pipeline Systems

Subject: Notification on Safe Excavation Practices and the use of Qualified Personnel to oversee all Excavations and Backfilling Operations

Advisory: Excavation damage continues to be one of the three leading causes of pipeline damage. PHMSA has seen an increase in pipeline operators damaging their own pipeline facilities. To protect excavators and private citizens from injury and to guard the integrity of buried pipelines and other underground facilities, PHMSA reminds operators to ensure all procedures and processes to perform excavation and backfilling are followed. Only qualified
personnel must oversee all marking, trenching, and backfilling operations.

Furthermore, PHMSA reminds pipeline operators that although excavation is not explicitly addressed in 49 CFR parts 192 and 195, excavation is considered a covered task under the pipeline operator qualifications regulations (49 CFR 192.801–809 and 195.501–509). These regulations require that pipeline operators and contractors be qualified to perform pipeline excavation activities. A qualified individual is one who has been evaluated and can perform assigned covered tasks and can recognize and react appropriately to abnormal conditions.

In particular, PHMSA recommends pipeline operators review the adequacy of covered tasks involving line locating, one-call notifications, and inspection of excavation activities. Operators should also review the adequacy of required training, evaluation and qualification methods for each of these covered tasks to ensure that each employee and contractor is qualified to perform that task.


Issued in Washington, DC, on January 10, 2005.

Theodore L. Willke,
Deputy Associate Administrator for Pipeline Safety.

3. Redemption payments for such bonds held in book-entry form, whether on the books of the Federal Reserve Banks or in Treasury Direct accounts, will be made automatically on May 15, 2006.

Donald V. Hammond,
Fiscal Assistant Secretary.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: You can request additional information or a copy of the collection from Mary Gottlieb, OCC Clearance Officer, or Camille Dixon, (202) 874–5090, Legislative and Regulatory Activities Division, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, 250 E Street, SW., Washington, DC 20219.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On November 7, 2005, the OCC published in the Federal Register (70 FR 67536) a notice concerning the revision of this information collection. The OCC received no public comments and is now submitting its request to OMB for approval.

Title: Community and Economic Development Entities, Community Development Projects—12 CFR part 24.

OMB Number: 1557–0194.

Description: This submission covers an existing regulation and involves no change to the regulation or to the information collection requirements. The OCC requests only that OMB approve its revised estimates and extend its approval of the information collection.

Section 24.5(a) provides that an eligible bank may make an investment without prior notification to, or approval by, the OCC if the bank submits an after-the-fact notification of an investment within 10 days after it makes the investment.

Section 24.5(a)(4) provides that a national bank that is not an eligible bank but that is at least adequately capitalized may submit a letter to the OCC requesting authority to self-certify investments.

Section 24.5(b) provides that if a national bank does not meet the requirements for after-the-fact notification, the bank must submit an investment proposal to the OCC.

Type of Review: Revision of a currently approved collection.

Affected Public: Individuals; Businesses or other for-profit.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 250.

Estimated Total Annual Responses: 250.


Comments are invited on:
(a) Whether the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information has practical utility;
(b) The accuracy of the agency’s estimate of the burden of the collection of information;