BYLAWS

U.S. Department of Transportation
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration
Voluntary Information-Sharing System Working Group

Section I: Purpose

The purpose of the Voluntary Information-Sharing System (VIS) Working Group is to consider the development of a voluntary information-sharing system to encourage collaborative efforts to improve inspection information feedback and information sharing with the purpose of improving gas transmission and hazardous liquid pipeline facility integrity risk analysis.

The VIS Working Group is a Department of Transportation (DOT) advisory committee. As the VIS Working Group's sponsor, the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) provides support to the working group.

Section II: Authority

The VIS Working Group is established in accordance with section 10 of the Protecting Our Infrastructure of Pipelines and Enhancing Safety (PIPES) Act of 2016 (Public Law 114-183), the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) of 1972 (5 U.S.C., App. 2, as amended), and 41 C.F.R. § 102-3.50(a).

Section III: Membership Selection and Appointment

The committee membership size will be in accordance with the VIS Working Group charter and will be large enough to promote deliberations, but will include only the number necessary to achieve the breadth and balance of expertise required to accomplish its mission. Appointments are personal to the member and are not transferrable to another individual. Members may not designate someone to attend in their stead, participate in discussions, or vote.

The advisory committee should have a fairly balanced membership that will be defined by several factors, including: the advisory committee's mission; the geographic, ethnic, social, economic, or scientific impact of the advisory committee's recommendations; the types of specific perspectives required; the need to obtain divergent points of view on the issues before the committee; and the relevance of state, local, or tribal governments to the development of the advisory committee's recommendations.

Membership is voluntary; however, members are expected to attend and participate in meetings, including those held via teleconference or through another electronic medium. Additionally, members may be required to provide written input for reports and recommendations.

The Secretary of Transportation (Secretary) appoints all members for terms of three years. The Secretary may reappoint serving members for additional terms, if warranted. If a vacancy occurs, PHMSA will take action to fill the vacancy. When the VIS Working Group terminates, all appointments to the VIS Working Group will terminate.

Section IV: Meeting Procedures

A. Agenda
- Committee staff will develop the committee meeting agenda with input from the chairperson.
- The Designated Federal Officer (DFO) will approve the agenda for all committee meetings. PHMSA will distribute the draft agenda to committee members prior to each meeting and will publish a summary of the agenda in the Federal Register meeting notice. Non-members, including members of the public, may suggest agenda items.

B. Minutes and Records
- The DFO is responsible for ensuring that minutes of each meeting are taken and copies are distributed to each committee member. If transcription services are used for a meeting, an individual still must take minutes for the meeting. The chairperson must certify the accuracy of the minutes for each meeting. The DFO must ensure that minutes are certified within 90 calendar days of the meeting to which they relate.
- The meeting minutes must include:
  - The time, date, and place of the advisory committee meeting;
  - A list of the people present at the meeting, including advisory committee members and staff, agency employees, and members of the public who presented oral or written statements;
  - An accurate description of each matter discussed and the resolution, if any, made by the advisory committee regarding such matters; and
  - Copies of each report or other documents received, issued, or approved by the advisory committee at the meeting.
- Reports, transcripts, minutes, agendas, handouts, and other documents made available to, prepared for or prepared by the advisory committee for open meetings will be posted on the public docket and on the PHMSA website.

C. Open Meetings
- Unless otherwise determined in advance, all meetings will be open to the public and announced in a notice published in the Federal Register at least 15 calendar days before the meeting. All committee meetings will be held at a reasonable time and in a manner or place reasonably accessible to the public.
- Members of the public may attend any meeting or portion of a meeting that is not closed to the public and, at the determination of the chairperson and DFO, may offer oral comment at such meeting. Meetings will include a period for oral comments unless it is impracticable to do so. The chairperson may decide in advance to exclude oral public comment during a meeting, in which case the meeting announcement published in the Federal Register will note that oral comments from the public are excluded and will invite written comments as an alternative. Members of the public may submit written statements at any time.

D. Closed Meetings
- All or parts of the committee meeting may be closed in limited circumstances and in accordance with applicable law. No meeting may be partially or fully closed unless the request for the closed meeting is approved by DOT's Office of General Counsel

(OGC) 30 calendar days before publication of the Federal Register meeting notice. The meeting notice must cite the specific exemption or exemptions of the Government in the Sunshine Act (GISA), 5 U.S.C. § 552b(c), that justify the closure.

- Detailed minutes for closed or partially closed meetings must also be kept. Minutes from closed meetings will not be posted on the public docket or on the PHMSA website.

Section V: Voting

When a decision or recommendation of the VIS Working Group is required, the chairperson will request a motion for a vote. Any member, including the chairperson, may make a motion for a vote. A quorum is required for a vote. In other words, a majority of the current members of the VIS Working Group must be present – whether attending in person, by teleconference, or through another electronic medium – at a meeting to perform the committee's statutory duties. The DFO will assure there is adequate representation of members to ensure a fair and comprehensive vote.

Section VI: Roles

A. Chairperson
- Designated by the DFO, is an appointed committee member, and is the presiding officer of the committee who guides efforts to complete assigned tasks.
- May establish subcommittees subject to the DFO's approval.
- Works with the DFO to establish priorities, identify issues that must be addressed, and determine the level and types of staff and financial support required.

B. DFO
- Serves as the government's agent for all matters related to the committee's activities.
- Must approve or call the committee meeting; approves meeting agendas; attends all meetings; adjourns the meetings when adjournment is in the public interest; serves as chairperson when directed by the committee's sponsor, PHMSA; and monitors the committee's meetings and progress.
- Ensures there is office space, equipment, supplies, adequate staff support for the committee, and that the following functions are performed: (1) members are notified of the time and place for each meeting; (2) records are maintained for all meetings, including those of subcommittees; (3) the roll is maintained; (4) the minutes are prepared, including those for subcommittees; (5) official correspondence is addressed; (6) official committee records are maintained and papers and submissions are filed and prepared for or by the committee, including those items generated by subcommittees; (7) vouchers for pre-approved expenditures are collected validated and paid; and (8) reports are prepared, including those required under 41 C.F.R. § 102-3.175.

C. Advisory Committee Manager
- Serves as the communication link between the pipeline safety office and the committee members.
- Manages committee meetings and the maintenance of committee records.
- Provides support services for the operation of the committee.

- Responsible for organizational and logistical issues.

D. Committee Member
- An appointed individual to the committee who attends and participates in committee meetings.
- Gathers information as necessary to discuss issues presented.
- Deliberates and provides verbal or written consensus advice to the Secretary.

E. Committee Staff
- Any Federal employee, private individual, or other party (whether under contract or not) who is not a committee member, and who supports the committee and/or any subcommittees that may be established.

Section VII: Compensation and Expense Reimbursement

Committee members are not compensated for their services. In compliance with FACA, members, while engaged in the performance of their duties away from their home or regular places of business, may be allowed travel expenses, including per diem.

Section VIII: Creating Subcommittees

As deemed necessary, the chairperson may establish subcommittees with PHMSA's approval. It is recommended that all subcommittee members be members of the parent committee. If this is not feasible, at least some members, including the chairperson must be members of the parent committee. Subcommittees of a continuing nature must be listed in the VIS Working Group charter and updated at renewal time. Subcommittee reports must be submitted to the parent committee for review and approval.

Subcommittees may not provide advice or work products or report directly to PHMSA or the Secretary or otherwise act independently of the VIS Working Group.