

Feedback from Webcast Participants in the June 2013 Pipeline Safety Public Awareness Program Workshop

The following comments and questions were received via email from various webcast participants in the June 2013 Public Awareness Program Workshop.

Subject: Getting stakeholders engaged

From: Pipeline operator

Every year Operators beg excavators and emergency responders to attend our RP 1162 meeting. We entice with meals and giveaways. Our attendance still is low.

Operators are required by law to perform public awareness activities. How can the emergency responders and excavators do their part in attending our meetings?

Can PHMSA or State Regulators help us get these stakeholders engaged? We are all partners in public safety.

What about requiring these stakeholders to get on board and become accountable??

Subject: Three Suggestions

From: State regulator

I have three suggestions regarding PHMSA's public awareness meetings.

(1) Since pipelines carrying tar sands crude rupture more frequently than pipelines carrying conventional crude, and since tar sands crude is more hazardous than conventional crude, PHMSA needs to create a different reporting category specifically for tar sands pipelines. Currently, there is little awareness of the risks from these pipelines and specific emergency response appropriate for accidents. In the ruptures that have occurred recently, we have seen that public awareness efforts are led by informed individuals, while local governments and sometimes even federal agencies have told the public that the affected areas pose no risks to health and safety. A reporting category specific to tar sands crude would highlight the higher frequency of disasters and the serious risks and specific emergency response actions for these pipelines.

(2) Land developers near Katy TX and Royce City Texas continue developing sub-divisions within 500 feet of the 38-year old Seaway tar sands pipeline, a very risky situation for future homeowners. These developers and future home buyers are not aware of the threat this tar sands pipeline poses to those neighborhoods. PHMSA needs to publicize these risks so we reduce the likelihood of future disasters like Marshall MI and Mayflower AR.

Feedback from webcast participants in Public Awareness Workshop June 19-20, Dallas, TX

(3) PHMSA mentioned that API requirements cover monitoring of natural gas gathering lines. Yet TX completely ignores these lines, and they leak and make people sick all the time. PHMSA needs to force Texas to protect citizens from leaking gathering lines.

Subject: Question about Inspections
From: Public Stakeholder

Is the inspections database accessible to the public?

Subject: Availability of Webcast
From: Industry

Will this workshop be available to watch later? There are different topics I would like to go back and watch again – specifically, the margin of error topic. This is a topic that would be very beneficial to have more detailed discussions

Subject: Confidence level for Small Operators
From: Pipeline Operator

Does PHMSA make any allowances for small operators as far as accepting a lower confidence level or higher margin of error?

Subject: Master Meter Operators
From: Public Stakeholder

How you expect to measure Master Meter facility's PAP effectiveness? Do you have any example of good work available?

Subject: address database
From: Public Stakeholder

Is there address database available of residents/business located near a pipelines by state?

Subject: 811 Calls
From: Pipeline Operator

I have had some issues with companies using a secretary or receptionist to make the 811 call. Their contact info is used on the 811 ticket we receive. There have been instances where we need to contact the excavator and use this contact info to do so. One in particular did not have any information about the proposed excavation and asked us to contact the field worker. We did that and got no response.

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When going back to the original caller for updates or information they seem to not want to participate in the effort to get this information to us.

My question: How can we effectively enforce the excavating company's responsibility of providing accurate information to us? How can we enforce their responsibility of maintaining a communication network until the ticket has been completed?

Subject: Re NAS Study
From: Public Stakeholder

The NAS [National Academies] is NOT studying health impacts related to tar sand spills. It was requested at the hearing in DC but it was refused by PHMSA to expand the study. The NAS is merely studying the corrosiveness in the pipe only.

Subject: Margin of Error
From: Industry

How does an operator get better guidance on what PHMSA is looking for with measuring Effectiveness (Protocol, Section 4)?

Subject: Question on Math Formulas
From: Pipeline Operator (Municipal Gas Distribution)

What are the standard formulas used for

- Sample size
 - Margin of error
 - Level of confidence
-

Subject: PAP Audience Surveys
From: State Pipeline Safety Regulator

Let's say I am a small gas operator with 2 or 3 hundred customers, how often am I REQUIRED to survey my four (4) audiences.

Subject: Comment/Question
From: State Environmental Program Manager (Department of Fish & Wildlife)

Regarding getting the word out there, if not done already, would it be possible to have PHMSA sponsored Technical Advisory Group consisting of representatives consisting of:

1. Federal government
2. State government
3. Academia

4. Industry
 5. NGO
 6. Natural resource trustee
 7. Others?
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Subject: Group 1

From: Industry

As to PIPA being included with operator communications concerning land planning, client companies are already taking a proactive position on this subject by including information to Public Officials (Elected & Regulatory) concerning land planning and community development.

As part of RP 1162, this type of communication should already be included in the type of message content that needs to be communicated to this Stakeholder Audience Group.

Subject: Operator Trust

From: Pipeline Operator

If I were there I would ask how those who said they don't trust operators – what could we do to gain their trust? How do they want to be engaged? We receive many questions through our website and return calls and have face to face meetings.

Subject: Answering the question

From: Pipeline Operator

In the last Public Awareness Survey taken of residents and businesses along our pipeline right of way, they told us that direct mail was one of their preferred methods of receiving information, so mailing our landowner safety mailout to them directly with their name on it was the most effective.

The second, more important feedback was the importance a visit makes. We visit landowners on a regular basis and go over Pipeline safety, call before you dig messaging, emergency preparedness and response, and collect their contact information. The feedback we got was that when any of this information was given in combination with a physical visit, the landowner learned more, read more, cared more and found the information more effective. So, when a visit is combined with the information, then the content of the information is getting embedded in a positive, long term way.

Subject: Maps

From: Pipeline Operator

National Pipeline Mapping System is one way to start the approach with emergency responders and the public for transmission pipeline information.

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Subject: Group 1 - Messaging & Forms of Communication - Compliance Perspective
From: Industry

The utilization of many forms of communications is great to get the message out to enhance public awareness to Stakeholders. However, from a compliance point of view, QR codes, smart phones, cell phones, tweets, Facebook, and other similar communications are NO LONGER tied to a physical location and lack a level of confirmation or verification of coverage.

Therefore, proving compliance (to PHMSA) using these forms of communications by an Operator would be questionable or next to impossible.

Support the utilization but Operators must recognize that traditional communication tools (Bill stuffers, USPS Mail, TV, Newspapers, Radio) are of great value and provide higher levels of proven documented compliance.

Subject: Maps
From: Pipeline Operator

The available maps for the public are typically are "slow or clunky" by design for security reasons, 811 and Operator contact can resolve concerns when contacted

Subject: Information
From: Pipeline Operator

The NPMS tutorial can help with all the information mentioned so far in this section of the workshop, the information provided is product and contact information of the operator

Subject: Land Development
From: Pipeline Operator (Municipal Gas Distribution)

Yes, it's the responsibility of the pipeline to mark their right of ways. But many of the pipelines were in place first before the subdivisions came in. The developers and planners need to work with the pipelines at the planning stage of the subdivisions. The planner of the subdivisions should let the potential buyers know that the land has a pipeline located in the area.

Subject: Public Awareness Workshop Question
From: Pipeline Operator

Will the second edition of API RP1162 ever be referenced in the code? The new version reduces the number of key messages that are required which will make for more effective communication. The secondary message can be posted on the company's website.