

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION****Research and Special Programs  
Administration****49 CFR Part 192****[Docket No. RSPA-00-7666; Notice 4]****RIN 2137-AD54****Pipeline Safety: Pipeline Integrity  
Management in High Consequence  
Areas (Gas Transmission Pipelines)****AGENCY:** Office of Pipeline Safety (OPS),  
Research and Special Programs  
Administration (RSPA), DOT.**ACTION:** Notice of proposed rulemaking.

**SUMMARY:** This document proposes to establish a rule to require operators to develop integrity management programs for gas transmission pipelines that, in the event of a failure, could impact high consequence areas (HCAs). These integrity management programs would focus on requiring operators to comprehensively evaluate their pipelines, and take measures to protect pipeline segments located in high consequence areas. RSPA/OPS recently finalized the definition of high consequence areas by a separate rulemaking. This proposed rule proposes to expand the definition of HCAs by adding consideration of people living at distances greater than 660 feet from large diameter high pressure pipelines. The current HCA definition only requires consideration of people living at distances up to 660 feet from pipelines.

**DATES:** Interested persons are invited to submit written comments by March 31, 2003. Late-filed comments will be considered to the extent practicable.

**ADDRESSES:***Filing Information*

You may submit written comments by mail or delivery to the Dockets Facility, U.S. Department of Transportation, Room PL-401, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590-0001. It is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. All written comments should identify the docket and notice numbers stated in the heading of this notice. Anyone desiring confirmation of mailed comments must include a self-addressed stamped postcard.

*Electronic Access*

You may also submit written comments to the docket electronically. To submit comments electronically, access the following Internet Web address: <http://dms.dot.gov>. Click on

"Help & Information" for instructions on how to file a document electronically.

**Privacy Act Information**

Anyone is able to search the electronic form of all comments received into any of our dockets by the name of the individual submitting the comment (or signing the comment, if submitted on behalf of an association, business, labor union, etc.). You may review DOT's complete Privacy Act Statement in the **Federal Register** published on April 11, 2000 (Volume 65, Number 70; Pages 19477-78) or you may visit <http://dms.dot.gov>.

**General Information**

You may contact the Dockets Facility by phone at (202) 366-9329, for copies of this proposed rule or other material in the docket. All materials in this docket may be accessed electronically at <http://dms.dot.gov/search>. Once you access this address, type in the last four digits of the docket number shown at the beginning of this notice (in this case 7666), and click on search. You will then be connected to all relevant information.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Mike Israni by phone at (202) 366-4571, by fax at (202) 366-4566, or by e-mail at [mike.israni@rspa.dot.gov](mailto:mike.israni@rspa.dot.gov), regarding the subject matter of this proposed rule. General information about the RSPA/OPS programs may be obtained by accessing RSPA's Internet page at <http://RSPA.dot.gov>.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** RSPA/OPS believes it can best assure pipeline integrity by requiring each operator to: (a) Implement a comprehensive integrity management program; (b) conduct a baseline assessment and periodic reassessments focused on identifying and characterizing applicable threats; (c) mitigate significant defects discovered in this process; and (d) monitor the effectiveness of their programs so appropriate modifications can be recognized and implemented. This approach also recognizes that improving integrity requires operators to gather and evaluate data on the performance trends resulting from their programs, and to make improvements and corrections based on this evaluation. This proposed rule does not apply to gas gathering or to gas distribution lines. This proposed rule will satisfy Congressional mandates for RSPA/OPS to prescribe standards that establish criteria for identifying each gas pipeline facility located in a high-density population area and to prescribe standards requiring the periodic

inspection of pipelines located in these areas, including the circumstances under which an inspection can be conducted using an instrumented internal inspection device (smart pig) or an equally effective alternative inspection method. The proposed rule also incorporates the required elements for gas integrity management programs recently mandated in the Pipeline Safety Improvement Act of 2002, which was signed into law on December 17, 2002.

**Background**

RSPA/OPS is in the midst of promulgating a series of rules intended to require pipeline operators to develop integrity management programs for their entire systems, and to conduct baseline and periodic assessments of pipeline segments the failure of which could imperil the health and safety of nearby residents and cause significant damage to their property. These integrity management programs, written differently for the liquid and natural gas pipeline systems, are designed with the goal of identifying the best method(s) for maintaining the structural soundness (i.e., integrity) of transmission pipelines operating across the United States. RSPA/OPS began this series of integrity management rulemakings by issuing requirements pertaining to hazardous liquid operators. A final rule applying to hazardous liquid operators with 500 or more miles of pipeline was published on December 1, 2000 (65 FR 75378). The hazardous liquid rule applies to pipeline segments that can affect high consequence areas (HCAs), which under the liquid rule criteria include populated areas defined by the Census Bureau as urbanized areas or places, unusually sensitive environmental areas, and commercially navigable waterways. RSPA/OPS issued a similar rule for hazardous liquid operators with less than 500 miles of pipeline (66 FR 2136; January 16, 2001).

Earlier this year, RSPA/OPS explained in the **Federal Register** that we were beginning the integrity management rulemakings for gas transmission lines by first proposing a definition of HCAs (67 FR 1108; January 9, 2002). We also described our plan to propose integrity management program requirements for gas transmission pipelines affecting those areas. In that proposed rule on HCAs (January 9, 2002), we also said we had decided first to propose the definition of HCAs and then to propose the gas integrity management rule. We chose to propose the regulation in two separate steps for a number of reasons. For example, operators already have good information