

section. However, if an operator uses this prior assessment as its baseline assessment, the operator must reassess the line pipe according to the requirements of paragraph (k) of this section.

(6) *Newly identified areas.* When the operator has information that the area around a pipeline segment satisfies any of the definitions in § 192.761, the operator must incorporate the area into its baseline assessment plan as a high consequence area within one year from the date the area is identified. An operator must complete the baseline assessment of any line pipe in the newly identified high consequence area within 10 years (7 years if direct assessment is being used) from the date the area is identified.

(h) *When can direct assessment be used and under what conditions?*

(1) *General.* (i) An operator may use direct assessment as a supplement to the other assessment methods allowed under this section. However, an operator may use direct assessment as a primary assessment method for external corrosion, internal corrosion, or stress corrosion cracking only when the operator can demonstrate one of the following conditions applies—

(A) The operator demonstrates that other assessment methods allowed under this section can not be applied to the pipeline segment for economic or technological reasons;

(B) The operator demonstrates that other assessment methods allowed under this section would result in a substantial impact on gas customers, as for example, when only one pipeline delivers gas to homes or local businesses, and service would be completely shut down during the assessment;

(C) The operator will excavate and conduct a direct examination of the entire covered pipeline segment in accordance with the requirements of this paragraph; or

(D) The covered pipeline segment operates at a maximum allowable operating pressure below 30% SMYS.

(ii) An operator using direct assessment as a supplemental assessment method must have a plan that follows the requirements for confirmatory direct assessment in paragraph (h)(6) of this section. An operator using direct assessment as a primary assessment method must have a plan that complies with the requirements for use of direct assessment in ASME/ANSI B31.8S, section 6.4 and in this section.

(2) *Specific threats.* An operator may only use direct assessment as a primary assessment method for external

corrosion, internal corrosion, and stress corrosion cracking. An operator may use direct assessment as the primary assessment method for third party damage only if no other assessment method is feasible, and the operator uses it in combination with data collection and integration to evaluate the segment's susceptibility to third party damage.

(3) *External corrosion direct assessment (ECDA).* An operator that uses direct assessment as the primary method to assess external corrosion must follow the requirements in this section and in ASME/ANSI B31.8S, Section 6 and Appendix SP-B.

(i) *ECDA plan.* An operator using External Corrosion Direct Assessment (ECDA) must prepare a plan that includes—

(A) A process that provides, according to the requirements of this paragraph, for Pre-Assessment, Indirect Examination, Direct Examination, and Post-Assessment.

(B) Data requirements for using ECDA. These must, at a minimum, include the data requirements for external corrosion specified in Appendix SP-A1 to ASME/ANSI B31.8S.

(C) Criteria for evaluating ECDA feasibility, in accordance with paragraph (h)(3)(ii)(A) of this section.

(D) Criteria for defining ECDA Regions, in accordance with paragraph (h)(3)(ii)(B) of this section.

(E) The basis on which an operator selects two complementary assessment tools to assess each ECDA Region. Guidance on selecting tools is found in Appendix E of this part.

(F) Criteria for identifying and documenting those indications that must be considered for direct examination. Minimum criteria include the known sensitivities of assessment tools, the procedures for using each tool, and the approach to be used for decreasing the physical spacing of indirect assessment tool readings when the presence of a defect is suspected.

(G) Criteria for characterizing indications identified in the ECDA process. These criteria must define how an operator will characterize an indication as severe, moderate or minor (See paragraph (h)(3)(iv) of this section).

(H) Criteria for defining the urgency of excavation and direct examination of each indication. These criteria must specify how an operator will define the urgency of excavating the indication as immediate, scheduled or monitored. Monitored indications are defects that are not serious and may or may not require direct examination.

(I) Criteria for scheduling excavation of each urgency level of indication, in

accordance with paragraph (h)(3)(v) of this section.

(J) Criteria for data gathering associated with each excavation.

(K) Criteria for the qualification of persons who carry out and interpret the results from the direct assessment process (See paragraph (d)(2)(ii) of this section).

(L) Criteria and measures for evaluating the long-term effectiveness of the ECDA process (See paragraph (h)(3)(vii) of this section).

(ii) *Pre-assessment.* An operator using ECDA must conduct a pre-assessment, in which the operator analyzes and integrates the data and information required in paragraph (f) of this section to carry out the following—

(A) *Feasibility.* An operator will use the data to determine whether any of the following conditions exists that is likely to preclude the effective use of ECDA. If any of the listed conditions is present, the operator must demonstrate why the use of ECDA would be a more effective method to assess external corrosion than the other assessment methods allowed under this section and specify the provisions the operator will implement to ensure ECDA effectiveness.

(1) The presence of a coating that causes electrical shielding;

(2) Backfill around the pipe with significant rock content or the presence of rock ledges;

(3) Situations impeding timely above-ground data gathering;

(4) Locations with adjacent buried metallic structures;

(5) Inaccessible areas.

(B) *ECDA Region.* An operator must use the data gathered to define all ECDA regions within the covered pipeline segment. ECDA regions are those portions within a pipeline segment, not necessarily contiguous, that have similar physical characteristics, operating and corrosion history, expected future corrosion conditions, and which are suitable for the same indirect assessment methods. An operator may redefine ECDA regions at any time the information the operator develops in conducting justifies a redefinition. If a condition, such as those specified in paragraph (h)(3)(vi)(C) of this section, exists for which ECDA is ineffective at assessing, an operator must select an alternate assessment technology allowed under this section.

(iii) *Indirect examination.* An operator's ECDA plan must provide for indirect examination of the ECDA regions. In carrying out the indirect examination, an operator must follow ASME/ANSI B31.8S, Appendix SP-B2 and the requirements of this section.