

for which direct assessment is used, § 192.925 (external corrosion), § 192.927 (internal corrosion), or § 192.929 (stress corrosion cracking).

(e) A procedure to ensure that the baseline assessment is conducted in a manner that minimizes environmental and safety risks.

#### *Section 192.921 How Is the Baseline Assessment To Be Conducted?*

The rule requires an operator assess the integrity of the line pipe in each covered segment by using one or more of the allowable assessment methods. An operator has to select the method or methods best suited to address the threats identified for each covered segment. Threat identification requirements are in § 192.917. The methods the rule allows are:

(1) Internal inspection tool or tools capable of detecting corrosion, and any other threats to which the covered segment is susceptible. An operator must follow Section 6.2 of ASME/ANSI B31.8S in selecting the appropriate internal inspection tools for the covered segment.

(2) Pressure test conducted in accordance with Subpart J of 49 CFR Part 192;

(3) Direct assessment for the threats of external corrosion, internal corrosion, and stress corrosion cracking. An operator must conduct the direct assessment in accordance with the requirements listed in § 192.923 and with, as applicable, the requirements specified in §§ 192.925, 192.927 or 192.929. Requirements depend on the threat the operator is using direct assessment to address.

(4) Other technology that an operator demonstrates can provide an equivalent understanding of the condition of the line pipe. An operator intending to use other technology must notify the Office of Pipeline Safety (OPS) in accordance with the notification requirements in § 192.949, 180 days before conducting the assessment, so that OPS has an opportunity to review those intentions.

The rule requires an operator to prioritize the covered pipeline segments for the baseline assessment according to a risk analysis that considers the potential threats identified for each covered segment. The risk analysis must comply with the requirements in § 192.917. To choose an assessment method for the baseline assessment of each covered segment, an operator must take the actions required to address particular threats that it has identified. These actions are set forth in § 192.917.

The rule sets time periods for the baseline assessment. These time periods were set by statute. The statute requires

that the baseline be completed not later than ten years after date of enactment (December 17, 2002) and at least 50% of the facilities assessed no later than five years after date of enactment. Thus, the rule requires an operator to assess at least 50% of the covered segments beginning with the highest risk segments, by December 17, 2007, and complete the baseline assessment of all covered segments by December 17, 2012.

The rule allows prior assessments conducted before the date the act mandating integrity management programs for gas operators was signed into law (December 17, 2002) to be used as baseline assessments. An operator may use a prior integrity assessment as a baseline assessment for the covered segment, if the integrity assessment meets the baseline requirements in Subpart O and the operator has taken subsequent remedial actions to address the conditions that are listed in § 192.933. However, if an operator uses this prior assessment as its baseline assessment, the operator must reassess the line pipe in the covered segment according to the reassessment requirements of §§ 192.937 and 192.939. The reassessment of the covered segment must be done no later than December 17, 2009.

The rule requires that when an operator identifies a new high consequence area, the baseline assessment of the line pipe in that area be completed within 10 years from the date the area is identified.

On newly-installed pipe, a baseline assessment has to be done within ten years from the date the pipe is installed. If a post-installation pressure test has been conducted on the new pipe in accordance with Subpart J, that pressure test satisfies the baseline assessment requirement.

For plastic transmission pipelines an operator has to conduct a baseline assessment of a covered segment if the operator has identified a threat, other than third-party damage to the segment. The operator will have to justify the assessment method the operator intends to use.

#### *Section 192.923 How Is Direct Assessment Used and for What Threats?*

The rule allows an operator to use direct assessment either as a primary assessment method or as a supplement to the other assessment methods allowed under this subpart. If used as the primary assessment method, it can only be used to address the identified threats of external corrosion (ECDA), internal corrosion (ICDA), or stress corrosion cracking (SCCDA).

The rule requires an operator to have a direct assessment plan. The requirements for the plan depend on the threat being addressed. If addressing external corrosion, the plan must comply with the requirements in Section 6.4 of ASME/ANSI B31.8S; NACE RP0502–2002; and § 192.925. If addressing internal corrosion, the plan must comply with Section 6.4 and Appendix B2 of ASME/ANSI B31.8S, and § 192.927. And if direct assessment is used to address stress corrosion cracking, the plan must comply with Appendix A3 of ASME/ANSI B31.8S, and § 192.929.

If direct assessment is used as a supplemental assessment method the plan must follow the requirements for confirmatory direct assessment in § 192.931.

#### *Section 192.925 What Are the Requirements for Using External Corrosion Direct Assessment (ECDA)?*

This section specifies requirements an operator must follow in using External Corrosion Direct Assessment (ECDA). The rule defines ECDA as a four-step process that combines preassessment, indirect inspections, direct examination, and post assessment to evaluate the impact of external corrosion on the integrity of a pipeline.

The rule requires the operator to follow Section 6.4 of ASME/ANSI B31.8S, and NACE RP 0502–2002. The Supplement to ASME/ANSI B31.8 is an industry standard that specifically addresses system integrity of gas pipelines. The NACE standard is an industry recommended practice that addresses methodology for a pipeline external corrosion direct assessment. The rule requires an operator's direct assessment plan to have procedures addressing preassessment, indirect inspections, direct examination, and post-assessment. For all four steps, the procedures must provide for applying more restrictive criteria when conducting ECDA for the first time on a covered segment.

The preassessment procedures must follow the requirements in Section 6.4 of ASME/ANSI B31.8S and Section 3 of NACE RP 0502–2002, and also include the basis on which the operator selects at least two different, but complementary indirect assessment tools to assess each ECDA Region. If an operator utilizes an indirect inspection method that is not discussed in Appendix A of NACE RP0502–2002, the operator must demonstrate the applicability, validation basis, equipment used, application procedure and utilization of data for the inspection method.