

On January 23, 2017, the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) published the Final Rule, Operator Qualification, Cost Recovery, Accident and Incident Notification, and Other Pipeline Safety Changes.¹ The effective date of this Final Rule is March 24, 2017.

Through this Final Rule, PHMSA has amended the Federal pipeline safety regulations in 49 C.F.R. Part 192 to add a new section, § 192.740, to cover regulators and overpressure protection equipment for an individual service line that originates from a transmission, gathering, or production pipeline (i.e., a farm tap), and to revise § 192.1003 to exclude farm taps from the requirements of the Distribution Integrity Management Program (DIMP).

§192.740: Pressure regulating, limiting, and overpressure protection – Individual service lines directly connected to production, gathering, or transmission pipelines.

(a) This section applies, except as provided in paragraph (c) of this section, to any service line directly connected to a production, gathering, or transmission pipeline that is not operated as part of a distribution system.

(b) Each pressure regulating or limiting device, relief device (except rupture discs), automatic shutoff device, and associated equipment must be inspected and tested at least once every 3 calendar years, not exceeding 39 months, to determine that it is:

- (1) In good mechanical condition;
- (2) Adequate from the standpoint of capacity and reliability of operation for the service in which it is employed;
- (3) Set to control or relieve at the correct pressure consistent with the pressure limits of § 192.197; and to limit the pressure on the inlet of the service regulator to 60 psi (414kPa) gauge or less in case the upstream regulator fails to function properly; and
- (4) Properly installed and protected from dirt, liquids, or other conditions that might prevent proper operation.

(c) This section does not apply to equipment installed on service lines that only serve engines that power irrigation pumps.

§192.1003 What do the regulations in this subpart cover?

(a) General. Unless exempted in paragraph (b) of this section this subpart prescribes minimum requirements for an IM program for any gas distribution pipeline covered under this part, including liquefied petroleum gas systems. A gas distribution operator, other than a master meter operator or a small LPG operator, must follow the requirements in §§ 192.1005 through 192.1013 of this subpart. A master meter operator or small LPG operator of a gas distribution pipeline must follow the requirements in § 192.1015 of this subpart.

(b) Exceptions. This subpart does not apply to an individual service line directly connected to a transmission, gathering, or production pipeline.

New Pipeline Safety Requirements for “Farm Taps”

Although PHMSA states that it is amending the Federal pipeline safety regulations to include safety requirements for “farm taps,” PHMSA has not provided a regulatory definition of “farm tap.” Instead, PHMSA describes a “farm tap” as an “individual service line that originates from a transmission, gathering, or production pipeline in the regulation.”² The new safety requirements found in § 192.740 generally apply to “any service line directly connected to a production, gathering, or transmission pipeline that is not operated as part of a distribution system.”³ The terms “service line,” “gathering line,” and “transmission line” all have regulatory definitions found in 49 C.F.R. § 192.3.

Exceptions to Inspection Requirements

Section §192.740(a) states that the section “applies, except as provided in paragraph (c) of this section, to any service line directly connected to a production, gathering, or transmission pipeline that is not operated as part of a distribution system.”

¹ 82 Fed. Reg. 7,972 (Jan. 23, 2017).

² 82 Fed. Reg. 7973.

³ 49 C.F.R. 192.740(a).

- Section § 192.740(c) excludes from applicability “equipment installed on service lines that only serve engines that power irrigation pumps.”
- Section § 192.740(a) excludes services lines connected to “a production, gathering, or transmission pipeline operated as *part of a distribution system*.” PHMSA has not codified a definition of “distribution system.” Operators should consider relevant and applicable federal and state guidance and their unique pipeline operations when evaluating whether a pipeline operates as a part of a distribution system.

Devices and Components to be Inspected and Tested

PHMSA has finalized new pipeline safety regulations requiring the inspection and testing of each “pressure regulating or limiting device, relief device (except rupture discs), automatic shutoff device, and associated equipment.” The pipeline safety regulations do not elaborate on what is meant by “associated equipment.” Depending on an operator’s unique circumstances and operating conditions, “associated equipment” could include valves, odorization equipment, gas dehydrating equipment, and any other equipment that an operator considers to fall within the regulatory requirements.

Pressure at the Inlet of a Service Regulator on a Service Line Regulated under §192.740

On each applicable service line, the regulations require an operator to inspect and test each pressure regulating or limiting device, relief device (except rupture discs), automatic shutoff device, and associated equipment to determine that it is “set to control or relieve at the correct pressure consistent with the pressure limits of § 192.197; and to limit the pressure on the inlet of the service regulator to 60 psi (414kPa) gauge or less in case the upstream regulator fails to function properly.”⁴

Cycle for Completing Inspections

Section §192.740 requires the inspection of each applicable device or equipment “at least once every 3 calendar years, not exceeding 39 months.”⁵ The inspection requirement went into effect on March 24, 2017.

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⁴ *Id.* at § 192.740(b)(3).

⁵ *Id.* at § 192.740(b).

