



Position of the Gas Piping Technology Committee on Distribution Integrity Management

The Gas Piping Technology Committee (GPTC) writes consensus guidelines for complying with the 49 CFR Parts 191 & 192 natural gas pipeline safety regulations. The group is comprised of about 90 members with expertise and experience in the natural gas industry and includes distribution and transmission operators, federal and state regulators, manufacturers, and general interest persons. The primary work product of the committee is the GPTC Guide for Gas Transmission and Distribution Piping Systems. The American National Standards Institute accredits both the committee and the Guide under ANSI/GPTC Z380.

The GPTC believes it is uniquely qualified to provide the main reference source document for distribution integrity guidelines because:

1. Writing “how to” guidance for operators to use in complying with the performance-based federal gas safety regulations has been the committee’s primary responsibility since the regulations were created 35 years ago.
2. GPTC guidance material is currently available for the identified key distribution integrity focus areas including damage prevention, gas leakage control, cast iron pipe, and excess flow valves.
3. An ANSI Technical Report (designation “ANSI-GPTC-Z380-TR-1”) for managing the integrity of transmission pipelines has already been published by GPTC.

The GPTC has taken action to provide guidance for distribution operators in development of an integrity management program. The committee’s Executive Section established a special Distribution Integrity task group to identify currently published Guide Material and, where necessary, to develop additional “how to” guidance on distribution pipeline integrity management. This task group includes industry, regulatory and general interest persons.

The following course of action has been communicated to the task group:

1. GPTC integrity management guidance will assist the operator in developing a plan that will be proactive in reducing risk to their distribution pipelines.
2. Guidance will include integration of system data, identification and characterization of threats, determination of risk control practices, and identification of effective performance measures.
3. Task group will review and integrate integrity management information from the Distribution Integrity Quality Action team and other sources, including the American Gas Foundation study and the GPTC ANSI Technical Report for managing the integrity of transmission pipelines.
4. The diversity of operator systems will be considered while developing guidance.
5. This is a short time-frame project with an anticipated completion date of July, 2006

The Gas Piping Technology Committee intends to work cooperatively with the Distribution Integrity Management team and others in the development of guidance material to accompany a simple, flexible performance regulation issued by OPS in the area of distribution pipeline integrity management.

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