

United States Department of Transportation

Title 49 Pipeline Safety Regulations

In 1996 the U. S. Department of Transportation passed a ruling requiring gas utilities to advise their customers who own property with underground gas piping, of the potential hazards resulting from corrosion and leakage. Property owners have always had the responsibility for maintenance of lines on property they own, both buried and above ground. Listed below are regulations the DOT has mandated regarding customer notification and leakage surveys on distribution systems.

Code of Federal Regulations 192.723 Distribution systems: Leakage surveys

- (a) Each operator of a distribution system shall conduct periodic leakage surveys in accordance with this section.
- (b) The type and scope of the leakage control program must be determined by the nature of the operations and the local conditions, but must meet the following minimum requirement:
 - (1) A leakage survey with leak detection equipment must be conducted in business districts, including tests of the atmosphere in gas, electric, telephone, sewer, and water system manholes, at cracks in the pavement and sidewalks, and at other locations providing an opportunity for finding gas leaks, at intervals **not exceeding 15 months, but at least once each calendar year.**

Code of Federal Regulations 192.16 Customer notification

- (a) This section applies to each operator of a service line who does not maintain the customer's buried piping up to entry of the first building downstream, or, if the customer's buried piping does not enter a building, up to the principal gas utilization equipment or the first fence (or wall) that surrounds that equipment. For the purpose of this section, "customer's buried piping" does not include branch lines that serve yard lanterns, pool heaters, or other types of secondary equipment. Also, "maintain" means monitor for corrosion if the customer's buried piping is metallic, survey for leaks, and if an unsafe condition is found, shut off the flow of gas, advise the customer of the need to repair the unsafe condition, or repair the unsafe condition.
- (b) Each operator shall notify each customer once in writing of the following information:
 - (1) The operator does not maintain the customer's buried piping.
 - (2) If the customer's buried piping is not maintained, it may be subject to the potential hazards of corrosion and leakage.
 - (3) Buried gas piping should be:
 - (a) Periodically inspected for leaks;
 - (b) Periodically inspected for corrosion if the piping is metallic; and
 - (c) Repaired if any unsafe condition is discovered.
 - (4) When excavating near buried gas piping, the piping should be located in advance, and the excavation done by hand.
 - (5) The operator (if applicable), contractors can assist in locating, inspecting, and repairing the customer's buried piping.
 - (6) Each operator shall notify each customer not later than August 14, 1996, or 90 days after the customer first receives gas at a particular location, whichever is later. However, operators of master meter systems may continuously post a general notice in a prominent location frequented by customers.