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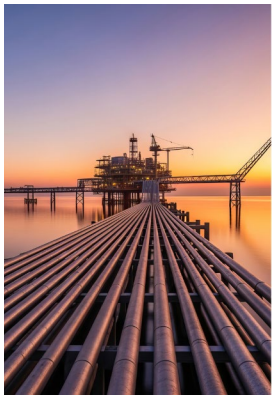

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PHMSA Issues Multiple Rulemakings to Update, Clarify, or Amend the Federal Pipeline Safety Regulations and to Incorporate Updated Industry Standards

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By Joseph Hainline, Susan Olenchuk, and Jedrick Kim

On April 24, 2026, the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) issued a total of 40 notices of proposed rulemakings (NPRM), final rules and direct final rules to update, clarify, or amend Part 191, Part 192 and Part 195 of the federal pipeline safety regulations (49 C.F.R. Parts 190-199). PHMSA also issued direct final rules to incorporate by reference into Part 192 and Part 195 updated editions of a number of industry standards. These rulemaking issuances affect operators of gas pipelines, hazardous liquid and carbon dioxide (CO_2) pipelines, underground natural gas storage facilities, and liquefied natural gas (LNG) facilities.

Comments on the NPRMs and the direct final rules are due by June 23, 2026. Each direct final rule becomes effective January 1, 2027, unless PHMSA receives an adverse comment. PHMSA will withdraw any direct final rule that receives an adverse comment and publish an NPRM to provide additional opportunity for public comment.

Most of the final rules become effective on August 3, 2026. Final rules codifying a PHMSA procedure already in place or mandated by statute became effective April 24, 2026.

Notices of Proposed Rulemaking

PHMSA's NPRMs propose to (1) change the deadline for submitting annual reports for gas pipelines and LNG facilities; (2) increase the monetary thresholds for requiring notification to PHMSA of construction activities; (3) eliminate certain limitations for welders; (4) extend the interval for inspecting valves on hazardous liquid pipelines; (5) allow the use of remote sensing technologies for rights-of-way patrols; (6) increase the property damage threshold for determining if a release is an "accident" or "incident" under the regulations; (7) allow remote monitoring of rectifiers on hazardous liquid pipelines; (8) modify procedures governing petitions for reconsideration of a final rule issued by the Office of Pipeline Safety (OPS); (9) eliminate a redundant requirement to perform material properties verification when reconfirming maximum allowable operating pressure (MAOP); and (10) extend the required timeframe for making rupture-mitigation valves operational.

Adjust Annual Report Deadline. PHMSA proposes to amend §§ 191.11 and 191.17 to extend to June 15 the deadline for operators of gas distribution pipelines, gas transmission pipelines, regulated gas gathering pipelines, Type R gas gathering pipelines, underground natural gas storage facilities and LNG facilities to submit annual reports. The current deadline is March 15. The NPRM also would amend § 191.29 to extend until June 15 the deadline for operators of gas transmission pipelines and LNG facilities to submit geospatial data to the National Pipeline Mapping System (NPMS). The NPRM aligns the filing date for submitting natural gas and LNG annual reports with the existing filing date applicable to operators of hazardous liquid pipelines.

Adjustment to OPID Notification for Construction. PHMSA proposes to amend §§ 191.22(c) and 195.64(c) to (1) increase from $10 million to $20 million the monetary threshold for requiring an operator to notify PHMSA of certain construction activities on natural gas and hazardous liquid pipelines and (2) increase from $200,000 to $300,000 the monetary threshold triggering the requirement to notify PHMSA when performing certain

maintenance tasks on underground natural gas storage facilities. PHMSA also proposes to revise the annual property damage threshold inflation indexing formula in Appendix A to Part 191 to broaden it and to include inflation adjustments for construction and maintenance activities under §§ 191.22(c) and 195.64(c).

Eliminating Limitations on Welders and Welding Operators. PHMSA proposes to amend § 192.229(a) to remove language prohibiting a welder or welding operator from welding compressor station pipe and components if the welder's qualification is based on nondestructive testing. The amended regulation would permit welders who are qualified through nondestructive testing to perform those tasks. The NPRM explains that the restrictive language which was adopted in 1970 has been rendered obsolete by advancements in radiographic and ultrasonic technology.

Hazardous Liquid Valve Maintenance Schedule. PHMSA proposes to amend § 195.420(b) to extend the interval at which operators of hazardous liquid and carbon dioxide pipelines must inspect each mainline valve to determine that it is functioning properly. The new inspection interval of at least once each calendar year, but not to exceed 15 months, replaces the current interval of at least twice each calendar year, but at intervals not exceeding 7½ months. The NPRM explains that the new interval aligns with the mainline valve inspection interval applicable to gas transmission pipelines in § 192.745(a).

Integration of Innovative Remote Sensing Technologies for Right-of-Way Patrols on Gas and Hazardous Liquids Pipelines. PHMSA proposes to amend §§ 192.705)(c) and 195.412(a), to allow operators of natural gas transmission pipelines, hazardous liquid pipelines and carbon dioxide pipelines to patrol rights-of-way using remote sensing technologies, such as unmanned aerial systems and satellites, in addition to current methods of walking, driving and flying.

Property Damage Definition for Reporting Incidents on Gas Pipelines and Accidents on Hazardous Liquid and Carbon Dioxide Pipelines. PHMSA proposes to amend the definition of an "incident" in § 191.3 and the definition of an "accident" in § 195.50 by increasing to $149,700 the estimated property damage threshold for reporting a release. (Note that PHMSA has recently announced that the estimated property damage threshold will increase to $153,600 effective July 1, 2026.) The NPRM also seeks to (1) clarify that the estimate excludes the costs associated with acquiring permits and removing and replacing non-operator infrastructure not damaged by the release, (2) amend § 195.52 so that the estimated property damage amount triggering the requirement to notify the National Response Center (NRC) is the same as the amount reflected in § 195.50, and (3) amend Appendix D to Part 195 to provide that the estimated property damage threshold under § 195.50 will be subject to an annual inflation adjustment.

Remote Monitoring of Hazardous Liquid Pipeline Rectifiers. PHMSA proposes to amend § 195.573 to allow operators of hazardous liquid or carbon dioxide pipelines to conduct periodic checks of rectifiers and similar devices for adequate amperage and voltage by using remote methods, as long as the devices are physically inspected at least once each calendar year at intervals not to exceed 15 months. The NPRM explains that the proposed amendment will align § 195.573 with a comparable requirement in § 192.465(b) applicable to gas transmission pipelines. The NPRM requests comments on whether language in existing hazardous liquid pipeline enforcement guidance stating that remotely monitored devices be "periodically calibrated or checked for accuracy" is a more clear alternative than existing language in § 192.465(b).

Regulatory Procedures. PHMSA proposes to amend §§ 190.335 and 190.337 to streamline and simplify the process for filing a petition for reconsideration of final rules issued by OPS. The NPRM provides that the process for seeking reconsideration would be the same for "substantive" and "procedural" final rules and eliminates procedures that

contemplate a second round of "appeals" to the PHMSA Administrator if a petition for reconsideration of a final rule is denied. The proposal would align OPS's procedures for post-issuance challenges of final rules with existing procedures of the Office of Hazardous Materials Safety.

Removing Unnecessary Provision for Material Properties Verification During MAOP Reconfirmation. PHMSA proposes to amend § 192.624(c)(1)(iii) to remove the requirement that an operator test pipe materials cut from test manifold sites when confirming MAOP and the related testing requirement for pipe that fails a pressure test. This amendment acknowledges that § 192.624(c) already requires that an operator obtain necessary missing material records using the process described in existing § 192.607. In addition, because § 192.617 requires that an operator investigate and analyze any pipe failures to determine their cause and contributing factors, including this requirement in § 192.624(c)(1)(iii) is redundant.

Timeframe to Make RMVs Operational. PHMSA proposes to amend §§ 192.634(a) and 195.418(a) to allow operators of gas transmission pipelines and hazardous liquid pipelines 90 days, instead of 14 days, to make rupture-mitigation valves and alternative equivalent technologies operational after placing a new or replaced pipeline segment into service. The NPRM explains that the longer timeframe is appropriate to accommodate construction issues, the procurement and installation of telemetry equipment, adverse weather and other issues.

Direct Final Rules Affecting Hazardous Liquid Pipelines

Clarifying Hazardous Liquid Pipeline Integrity Management Guidance. PHMSA amends Appendix C to Part 195 which provides guidance on conditions an operator should consider when determining whether a hazardous liquid pipeline is located in or could affect a high consequence area and on identifying threats to pipeline integrity. The direct final rule adopts certain provisions originally proposed in an NPRM issued in 2020 that were never adopted in a final rule. In particular, the 2020 NPRM had proposed to clarify that an operator's consideration of agricultural drainage tiles is to be based on information and knowledge available to the operator. The 2020 NPRM also had proposed to remove from Section 1.b guidance provisions addressing considerations for identifying segments that could affect HCAs and relocating those provisions to section II.A addressing the identification of threats.

The direct final rule, however, does not adopt language from the 2020 NPRM that suggested that, if an operator incorporates Appendix C into its Integrity Management or O&M procedures, the guidance becomes mandatory. The direct final rule states that, while an operator must follow its written procedures, incorporating portions of Appendix C does not make those provision enforceable. In addition, an operator may modify elements of Appendix C to adapt them to the operator's facility, assuming that the procedure meets Part 195 requirements.

Electronic Retention of Part 194 Response Plans. This direct final rule amends § 194.111 to expressly allow operators of hazardous liquid pipelines to maintain electronic versions of onshore oil spill response plans.

Final Rules

PHMSA issued 13 final rules that make a number of editorial and technical revisions and corrections to Part 191, Part 192, and Part 195. Most of the final rules become effective on August 3, 2026. Final rules codifying PHMSA procedures already in place or mandated by statute became effective April 24, 2026.

Final Rule	Description
Clarification of Accident Reporting Requirements for Hazardous Liquid and Carbon Dioxide Pipeline Facilities Clarification of Incident Reporting Requirements for Gas Pipeline Facilities	Revises §§ 191.5(b) and 195.52(b) to provide that operators can provide immediate notices of certain incidents and accidents to the National Response Center (NRC) only by telephone. The revision removes the ability to provide electronic notification because the NRC has eliminated this option.
Consent Orders	Amends §§ 190.208 and 190.219 to clarify that consent agreements and orders may be used to resolve all enforcement proceedings brought under Part 190. This final rule became effective April 24, 2026.
Declaratory Order Procedures	Adopts new § 190.13 providing procedures for an operator to request a declaratory order to address an issue of controversy or uncertainty. PHMSA states that it is publishing this final rule in accordance with the 2020 PIPES Act. This final rule became effective April 24, 2026.
Editorial Corrections and Clarifications to Criteria for Conducting Integrity Assessments Using Guided Wave Ultrasonic Testing	Amends Appendix F of Part 192 to correct typographical errors. The final rule eliminates the second duplicate paragraph XIV and adds paragraph XIX.
Editorial Correction to Requirements for Low-Stress Hazardous Liquid Pipelines in Rural Areas	Revises § 195.12(e)(1)(ii), which addresses the requirements for assessing newly identified unusually sensitive areas for low-stress pipelines in rural areas to replace an erroneous citation to § 195.452(d)(3) (which does not exist) with the correct reference to § 195.452(d).
Editorial Corrections to Telephone and Facsimile Numbers	Amends numerous provisions in Part 190, Part 192, Part 193 and Part 195 to remove obsolete telephone and fax numbers. The final rule eliminates the option to submit requests for special permits by fax and instead requires that they be transmitted by email or overnight courier. Reports of abandoned or deactivated pipelines may be submitted by mail or email.
Electronic Submission of Requests for Written Interpretations and Special Permits	Revises §§ 190.11(b) and 190.341(b) to allow the electronic submission of requests for written interpretations and applications for special permits.
Interpretation Request Procedures	Amends § 190.11 to require that PHMSA post on its website requests for written regulatory interpretation and to provide an opportunity for public comment. This final rule codifies PHMSA's recently adopted practice and became effective April 24, 2026.
Outer Continental Shelf Pipelines	Revises § 195.9, which applies to pipelines on the Outer Continental Shelf, to reflect that the Minerals Management Service changed its name to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement.

Final Rule	Description
Removing Obsolete Provision in Safety-Related Condition Reporting Requirements Removing Obsolete Provision from Safety-Related Condition Reporting Requirements for Hazardous Liquid and Carbon Dioxide Pipeline Facilities	Amends §§ 191.25(c) and 195.56(a) to provide that operators may submit safety-related condition reports only by email because PHMSA no longer allows operators to submit reports by fax.
Safety of Gas Transmission Pipelines: MAOP Reconfirmation, Expansion of Assessment Requirements, and Other Related Amendments; Correction	Amends § 192.624(c)(6 to eliminate a duplicate provision.

Direct Final Rules Incorporating New Editions of Industry Standards into Part 192 and Part 195

PHMSA issued 15 direct final rules incorporating new editions of industry standards into Part 192 and Part 195. These direct final rules become effective January 1, 2027, unless PHMSA receives an adverse comment by June 23, 2026. PHMSA will withdraw any direct final rule that receives an adverse comment and publish an NPRM to provide additional opportunity for public comment.

Incorporated Standard	Affected Regulation	Description of Standard
ASME B31.4, Pipeline Transportation Systems for Liquids and Slurries: ASME Code for Pressure Piping, B31, December 8, 2022 edition	§§ 195.3, 195.110(a)	Governs the design, materials, construction, assembly, inspection, testing, operation, and maintenance of various types of liquid pipeline systems, as well as piping that transports aqueous slurries of nonhazardous materials such as coal, mineral ores, concentrates, and other solid materials.
ASTM A333/A333M, Standard Specification for Seamless and Welded Steel Pipe for Low-Temperature Service and Other Applications with Required Notch Toughness, April 1, 2024 edition	§§ 192.7, 192.113, Appendix B to Part 192, 195.3, 195.106(e)	Covers wall seamless and welding carbon and alloy steel pipe intended for use at low temperatures. Also specifies requirements for tensile tests, impact tests, hydrostatic tests, and nondestructive electric tests.
ASTM A372/A372M, Standard Specification for Carbon and Alloy Steel Forgings for Thin-Walled Pressure Vessels, reapproved 2025 edition	§§ 192.7, 192.177	Presents the current state of knowledge and technology regarding the manufacture of relatively thin-walled forgings, including gas bottles, for use in pressure vessels. Covers carbon and alloy steel forgings.

Incorporated Standard	Affected Regulation	Description of Standard
ASTM A53/A53M, Standard Specification for Pipe, Steel, Black and Hot-Dipped, Zinc-Coated, Welded and Seamless, March 1, 2024 edition	§§ 192.7, 192.113, Appendix B to Part 192, 195.3, 195.106(e)	Covers seamless and welded black and hot-dipped galvanized steel pipe in NPS 1/8 to NPS 26.
ASTM D2513, Standard Specification for Polyethylene (PE) Gas Pressure Pipe, Tubing, and Fittings, July 1, 2024 edition	§ 192.7, Appendix B to Part 192	Presents the current state of knowledge and technology applicable to PE pipe, tubing, and fittings used for fuel gas pipelines, including pipe used to distribute natural gas.
ASTM D2564, Standard Specification for Solvent Cements for Poly (Vinyl Chloride) (PVC) Plastic Piping Systems, September 1, 2024	§§ 192.7, 192.281	Presents current requirements for solvent cements used to join PVC piping systems. Addresses requirements in Specification D1784 regarding PVC pipe created from compounds and includes Practice D2855's procedure for joining PVC fittings and pipe.
ASTM F1055, Standard Specification for Electrofusion Type Polyethylene Fittings for Outside Diameter Controlled Polyethylene and Crosslinked Polyethylene (PEX) Pipe and Tubing, November 1, 2022 edition	§§ 192.7, 192.283(a) and Appendix B to Part 192	Covers electrofusion-type polyethylene fittings for outside diameter-controlled polyethylene pipe and tubing
ASTM F1973, Standard Specification for Factory Assembled Anodeless Risers and Transition Fittings in Polyethylene (PE) and Polyamide (PA11) and Polyamide 12 (PA12) Fuel Gas Distribution Systems, May 1, 2025 edition	§§ 192.7, 192.204(b) and Appendix B to Part 192	Covers requirements and test methods for the qualification of factory assembled anodeless risers and transition fittings for use in polyethylene (PE), in sizes through NPS 8, and Polyamide 11 (PA11), in sizes through NPS 6, gas distribution systems.
ASTM F2620, Standard Practice for Heat Fusion Joining of Polyethylene Pipe and Fittings, July 1, 2024 edition	§§ 192.7, 192.281(c), 192.285(b)	Describes procedures for making joints with polyethylene pipe and fittings by means of heat fusion joining in, but not limited to, a field environment
ASTM F2767, Standard Specification for Electrofusion Type Polyamide-12 Fittings for Outside Diameter Controlled Polyamide-12 Pipe and Tubing for Gas Distribution, July 1, 2024 edition	§§ 192.7, Appendix B to Part 192	Presents the current state of knowledge and technology applicable to PA12 electrofusion fittings for use with outside-diameter-controlled PA12 pipe, as covered by ASTM F2785. The standard also contains requirements for materials, workmanship, and testing performance.

Incorporated Standard	Affected Regulation	Description of Standard
MSS SP-75, High-Strength, Wrought, Butt-Welding Fittings, June 2025 edition	§§ 195.3, 195.118(a)	Covers factory-made, seamless, and electric welded carbon and low alloy steel, butt welding fittings for use in high pressure gas and oil transmission and distribution systems, including pipelines, compressor stations, metering and regulating stations, and mains
NACE SP0206, Internal Corrosion Direct Assessment Methodology for Pipelines Carrying Normally Dry Natural Gas (DG-ICDA), 2016 edition	§§ 192.7, 192.923(b), 192.927(b)	Presents the current state of knowledge and technology applicable to the NACE internal corrosion direct assessment process for normally dry natural gas pipeline systems. The standard formalizes the ICDA process and helps pipeline operators identify corrosion-related threats and mitigation measures in a consistent manner.
NACE SP0502, Pipeline External Corrosion Direct Assessment Methodology, April 28, 2025 edition	§§ 195.3, 195.588(b)	Covers the Association for Materials Protection and Performance (AMPP) external corrosion direct assessment (ECDA) process for buried onshore ferrous pipeline systems.
NFPA 58, Liquefied Petroleum Gas Code, 2024 edition	§§ 192.7, 192.11	Contains criteria for all aspects of the safe design, construction, installation, and operation of LP-Gas piping, equipment, and venting, along with highway transportation of liquefied petroleum gas.
NFPA 59, Utility LP-Gas Plant Code, 2024 edition	§§ 192.7, 192.11	Covers general requirements for the design, construction, location, installation, operation, and maintenance of refrigerated and non-refrigerated liquefied petroleum utility gas plants

For More Information

Van Ness Feldman counsels clients on pipeline safety compliance, enforcement, litigation under state and federal Pipeline Safety Laws and regulations, and with safety requirements applicable to the transportation of hazardous materials. If you would like additional information about PHMSA's final rules or would like to submit comments, please contact Joseph Hainline, Susan Olenchuk, or any member of the firm's Pipeline & LNG practice group.

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