



Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association

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# Gas Circuit Rider Newsletter

January 2020

## Annual Reviews/Reports

Just a reminder that as we finish one year and start another, it's a good time to review all the plans that require it (i.e. O&M, Public Awareness, OQ). Documentation of these annual reviews has been found lacking in many instances over the last year. If these plans are maintained separately from the O&M, they must be documented separately (log sheet, etc.). If they are all part of the O&M then one log sheet will be sufficient. Also, DIMP plans should be updated with your annual report info. They do not have to be revised every year but should be updated. (Let me know if you need help.)

## 2020 Inspection Plans/Changes

I will be meeting with MNOPS Inspectors to schedule 2020 Inspections next week, Friday, 1/10/20, at the MNOPS Office in St. Paul.

All municipals will have an annual Field & Records Inspection. Additional inspections, once identified, will be communicated to you as soon as possible, as well as your tentative scheduled dates.

You may have a new MNOPS Inspector for 2020. Please see the following page for Inspector Assignments.

## Annual Fusion/Mechanical Coupling Qualification

If you have dates in mind for your annual re-qualifications let me know ASAP so we can get them in my schedule before it starts filling up with inspection dates.

## MEA EnergyU LMS Next Generation Portal Change

Will take place Sunday night, January 26 through Monday night, January 27. MEA asks that in anticipation of this downtime you do not plan any training on EnergyU on these days. More details of the system update and downtime should be available by January 8, 2020. Stay tuned.

## Operator Qualification

Please review your Operator Qualifications (OQ). Use eConfirm or EnergyU to check for expiring qualifications.

## MNOPS Newsletter is attached:

Please review for MNOPS Spring Conference Dates. Spring Conference is an excellent opportunity to meet with other municipal gas utilities, vendors, and Inspectors. Several Training Tracks will be available as well.

**Have a great "2020"**

**Work Safe!**

Robin Klug  
Natural Gas Circuit Rider  
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Row Labels	Count of Company
<b>Adam Ratzlaff</b>	<b>3</b>
Perham Municipal Gas System	1
Sheehan Gas Co Inc	1
Two Harbors City Municipal Gas Dept	1
<b>Ed Boyd</b>	<b>6</b>
BAGLEY NATURAL GAS, CITY OF	1
CITY OF FOSSTON MUNICIPAL GAS	1
Clearbrook Municipal Gas, City of	1
DOOLEY'S NATURAL GAS II LLC	1
DOOLEY'S NATURAL GAS LLC	1
Randall, City of	1
<b>Joe Hauger</b>	<b>2</b>
CITIES OF CLARISSA AND EAGLE BEND	1
Cohasset, City of	1
<b>Pat Donovan</b>	<b>2</b>
CITY OF HENNING	1
New Ulm Public Utilities Commission	1
<b>Tom Chrisfield</b>	<b>8</b>
ARGYLE MUNICIPAL GAS SYSTEM	1
Chandler Co-op	1
Community Utility Co.	1
HALLOCK GAS DEPT, VILLAGE OF	1
Stephen, City of	1
Tyler, City of	1
Warren Gas Dept, City of	1
Westbrook Public Utilities	1
<b>Vica Livshutz</b>	<b>7</b>
Battle Lake	1
GOODHUE MUNICIPAL GAS, CITY OF	1
HAWLEY UTILITIES COMM	1
Hibbing Public Utilities COMM	1
Lake Park Public Utilities	1
Owatonna Public Utilities	1
Virginia Dept of Public Utility, City of	1
<b>Estelle Hickman</b>	<b>6</b>
Circle Pines Utility	1
City of Fairfax Municipal Utilities	1
Hutchinson Utilities Commission	1
Morgan, City of	1
New York Mills Municipal Gas System	1
Round Lake, City of	1



**Seasons Greetings** from the Minnesota Office of Pipeline Safety (MNOPS) staff! We've got some exciting news and accomplishments to share with you!

**Federal Program Evaluation:**

- MNOPS received 100 percent scores on the annual federal Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration's (PHMSA) evaluation of its Natural Gas and Hazardous Liquid programs.

**MNOPS Database Upgrades**

- MNOPS rolled out a new Pipeline Safety Database on Jan. 1, 2019. The rollout has been positive and brought some welcomed improvements over the old system.

**MNOPS Babies!**

- This year brought many new faces to the MNOPS family. Five babies were born throughout 2019 among various MNOPS staff. Moms, dads and kiddos are all doing well!

The MNOPS staff — including our Large Operator Inspection Team, Small Operator/Interstate Inspection Team and the Damage Prevention Team — have been working closely with pipeline operators on inspections and accident investigations. With continued emphasis on pipeline safety, I anticipate 2020 to be another busy year for the MNOPS staff.

This will be my last holiday newsletter update as MNOPS director. I am very excited and humbled to announce Department of Public Safety Commissioner John Harrington has appointed me assistant commissioner for the Department of Public Safety effective Dec. 11. I will oversee MNOPS as well as the State Fire Marshal Division, Homeland Security and Emergency Management, and DPS' Emergency Communications Network.



Thank you all for your dedication to pipeline safety and underground utility damage prevention in Minnesota. This year has been a full year of carrying out routine inspections, education as well as many discussions regarding proposed statute changes.

This year's newsletter contains many important dates, reporting information and detail regarding proposed statute changes. The work you do every day is extremely important to keep Minnesota safe!

I look forward to working with you all again in 2020 as we continue keeping pipelines and underground utilities safe in Minnesota!

*Best wishes for the new year!  
~ Jon Wolfgram, Chief Engineer*

Thank you for your hard work. On behalf of the MNOPS staff, I wish all of you happy holidays and a safe, happy and healthy 2020!

## **Proposed Changes to Pipeline Civil Penalty Amounts:**

MNOPS submits federally required progress reports each year and participates in a two-week audit of MNOPS procedures, documentation and field inspections. During the 2019 Underground Natural Gas Storage progress report review, PHMSA identified that current Minnesota statutes for civil penalties (*\$100,000 per violation with a \$1,000,000 cap*) are not commensurate with the PHMSA penalty structure (*\$218,000 for each violation with a \$2,186,464 cap*). PHMSA deducted a point from our overall program score based on this finding. MNOPS is required to take action to address the noted issue to avoid losing future program funding. MNOPS receives funding up to 80 percent of program costs. MNOPS aims to achieve the maximum amount of funding possible in order to minimize pipeline quarterly invoice costs.

Upon receipt of this letter, MNOPS brought a statute change request forward to align state statute with the PHMSA penalty structure. A proposed change to Minnesota Statute 299F.60 Subdivision 1 is under review as a part of the supplemental budget process. This proposed change would allow MNOPS to align the state statute with the federal penalty provisions of Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations Part 190 and apply natural gas and hazardous liquid pipelines as well as underground natural gas storage.

MNOPS plans to meet with stakeholders during the week of Jan. 13, 2020. There will be additional details regarding these meetings in the upcoming weeks.

## **Proposed One-Call Statute Changes:**

MNOPS continues to review proposed changes to Minnesota's One-Call Law (Minnesota Statute 216D). Based on stakeholder feedback, revisions have been made to the Sept. 6, 2019, proposal.

MNOPS recently completed a week-long series of meetings Nov. 18-22 with many stakeholders. These meetings generated very good discussion regarding the proposed changes and prompted an additional utility operator survey to gain more information.

MNOPS plans to hold the next stakeholder meetings during the week of Jan. 13, 2020, at our St. Paul office. There will be additional details regarding these meetings in the upcoming weeks. We will continue working with Gopher State One Call to develop a summary of tentative costs associated with the proposed One-Call Law (MS216D) revisions.

Please click below for the revised language and if you would like to provide comments:

[MNOPS Proposed One-Call Law Revisions 10/10/2019](#)

[MNOPS One-Call Law \(MS216D\) Comments and Suggestions](#)

## **Important Information & Reporting**

We have revised the various forms that you have come to expect this time of year. The [MNOPS website](#) will host the forms and important information for the upcoming year. We ask that **all forms be submitted electronically** in the provided format as we go into 2020. Please reach out to your assigned inspector for help filling out these items electronically. **The Emergency Response Reporting Form** is for intrastate operators only and is now due annually by March 15. You can [fill it out here](#).



## Save The Date!

MNOPS will be hosting next year's Annual Pipeline Safety Educational Conference on **[April 14-16](#)**.

Watch our website for updated information, venue location and registration in January.

We hope to see you all there!

The required intrastate reporting deadlines are as follows:

Report Type	Due Date
Annual Pipeline Operator Billing Information	February 14, 2020
Annual Emergency Response Reporting Form	March 15, 2020
Utility Damage Reporting Survey	Quarterly
Intrastate Annual Report Form Copies	Following PHMSA Submittal

To sign up for email updates or access your subscriber preferences please go to [Email Updates](#).

## 2020 Inspections

MNOPS inspectors are beginning to prepare for 2020 inspections. The 2020 inspection plan will focus on review of records, procedures and visits to your facilities. MNOPS will be placing a greater emphasis on construction inspection in the upcoming year as a part of a recent PHMSA State Program Guideline Requirement. Construction inspection will focus on review of field processes as well as review of design and construction related documentation. The format and inspection questions for 2020 will transition to use PHMSA's Inspection Assistant (IA) software.

## Alert Notices and Advisory Bulletins

Important Alert Notice and Advisory Bulletins are on both the MNOPS and PHMSA websites. This information contains valuable "lessons learned" applicable to all pipeline operators.

[MNOPS Alert Notices](#)

[PHMSA Notices and Advisory Bulletins](#)



*Bruce West*

*Jon Wolfgram*

*Jeff Cremin*

*Thomas Coffman*

*Todd Stansbury*

*Adam Ratzlaff*

*Sean Mangan*

*Mike Mendiola*

*Claude Anderson*

*Elizabeth Skalne*

*Jeff Blackwell*

*Kyle Christy*

*Jon Sogard*

*Andrew Voyer*

*Vica Livshutz*

*Pat Donovan*

*Ed Boyd*

*Ole Engebretson*

*Joe Hauger*

*Kita Nelson*

*Estelle Hickman*

*Tom*

*Chrisfield*



## **Contact Us**

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