



# National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, DC 20594

## Safety Recommendation

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**Date:** March 10, 2014

**In reply refer to:** P-14-2 through -4

Mr. Glen L. Kettering  
Interim Chief Executive Officer  
Columbia Pipeline Group  
Columbia Gas Transmission Corporation  
801 E. 86th Ave.  
Merrillville, IN 46410

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The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant accidents in other modes of transportation—railroad, highway, marine, and pipeline. The NTSB determines the probable cause of the accidents and issues safety recommendations aimed at preventing future accidents. In addition, the NTSB carries out special studies concerning transportation safety and coordinates the resources of the federal government and other organizations to provide assistance to victims and their family members affected by major transportation disasters. We are providing the following information to urge Columbia Gas Transmission Corporation to take action on the safety recommendations being issued in this letter.

On February 19, 2014, the NTSB adopted its report concerning the December 11, 2012, accident, in which a buried 20-inch-diameter interstate natural gas transmission pipeline owned and operated by Columbia Gas Transmission Corporation ruptured in a sparsely populated area in Sissonville, West Virginia.<sup>1</sup> Additional information about this accident and the resulting recommendations may be found in the report of the investigation, which can be accessed at our website, <http://www.nts.gov>, under report number PAR-14/01.

As a result of this investigation, the NTSB issued four new safety recommendations, including one to the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration and the following three recommendations to Columbia Gas Transmission Corporation:

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<sup>1</sup> *Columbia Gas Transmission Corporation Pipeline Rupture, Sissonville, West Virginia, December 11, 2012, Pipeline Accident Report NTSB/PAR 14/01* (Washington, DC: NTSB, 2014).

P-14-2

Implement a process for selecting alert setpoints, and provide guidance to pipeline controllers on the expected alert response time, ways to evaluate the significance of alerts, and actions the controller must take in response to those alerts.

P-14-3

Modify your supervisory control and data acquisition system to (1) provide the controller with operating parameter trend data that can be used to evaluate the significance of a system change and (2) assign an alarm function to trends that are likely significant system malfunctions and therefore require immediate action by the controller.

P-14-4

Establish a procedure to ensure that all integrity-related information gathered for pipelines located in high consequence areas is considered in the risk assessments and integrity management of other pipelines not located in high consequence areas.

These safety recommendations are derived from the NTSB's investigation and are consistent with the evidence we found and the analysis we performed. Chairman HERSMAN, Vice Chairman HART, and Members SUMWALT, ROSEKIND, and WEENER concurred in these recommendations.

The NTSB is vitally interested in these recommendations because they are designed to prevent accidents and save lives. We would appreciate receiving a response from you within 90 days detailing the actions you have taken or intend to take to implement them. When replying, please refer to the safety recommendations by number. We encourage you to submit your response electronically to [correspondence@ntsb.gov](mailto:correspondence@ntsb.gov). If it exceeds 10 megabytes, including attachments, please e-mail us at the same address for instructions. Please do not submit both an electronic copy and a hard copy of the same response.

[Original Signed]

By: Deborah A.P. Hersman,  
Chairman