

Environment & Energy

DOT Announces Pipeline Rules to Lower Emissions, Boost Safety

By Zach Bright

March 31, 2022, 6:09 PM

Pipelines will be required to install automatic or remote-controlled shut-off valves to increase safety and reduce methane emissions, the Transportation Department's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration announced Thursday.

The new rule, effective 180 days from March 31, applies to all new or replaced onshore pipelines six or more inches in diameter. Pipeline operators will also have to comply with performance standards that require their closure no more than 30 minutes after a rupture or emergency event. The standards will reduce environmental threats like methane emissions and promote environmental justice for minority and low-income populations, the pipeline agency said in its statement.

1. The rule addresses congressional mandates in the 2011 Pipeline Safety Act, National Transportation Safety Board recommendations, and a Government Accountability Office study.
2. "Far too many Americans have experienced the consequences of pipeline failures," Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg said in a statement. "Today we are taking an important step to protect communities against hazardous pipeline leaks—helping to save the lives, property, and jobs of people in every part of the country while preventing super-polluting methane leaks."
3. In 2010, a Michigan pipeline leaked 843,444 gallons of crude oil into the Kalamazoo River before the pipeline was shut off. The same year, a natural gas pipeline in California leaked and caused an explosion that killed eight and injured 51 people.
4. Operators will also have to include written procedures to identify and mitigate system ruptures and how to contact public safety in their emergency response plans.

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Topics

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