State Website transparency
Parameters and points
Instructions for scoring – Summer 2012

This year, we are altering the way we review and score state websites for transparency. After our initial score card last year, several states recognized the need for better public access to more pipeline safety information and significantly upgraded their websites.

We recognized that the methodology we used in our first effort was somewhat subjective in terms of maintaining consistency in deciding what was easy to find and what was not so easy. Our hope is that with this rubric, our own process will be more transparent, more objective, and more useful to those state agencies that continue to improve their websites to provide the public with important pipeline safety information. Where a score depends on a description of something as “easy to find”, that means it can be found within 4 mouse clicks of the general agency home page.

1. Finding the agency website: 3 possible points (additive):
   - 2 points: If you go to general state government web page and look for, or search for “pipeline safety” or “pipeline regulation” will you get taken to the right page from a menu or will a link to the page be in the top five hits? Since PHMSA sends people to general state government home page, it’s important to be able to find pipeline safety agencies once you’re there.
   - 1 point: If you Google (state name) “pipeline safety” or “pipeline regulation”, will you get the right page as a top 5 choice? (And yes, we realize there’s only so much you can do to influence the Google responses)

2. Description of what state regulates: 3 possible points (additive):
   - Does agency site clearly describe what types of pipelines the state does and does not regulate, enforce, and/or inspect under certifications or agreements with PHMSA? (2 points)
   - Does agency site refer reader to PHMSA by appropriate link for pipelines not regulated by state? (If interstate agents for both, no link necessary)(1 point)
   - 0 Points= no description of what is and is not regulated and/or inspected

3. Contact information for agency staff
   - 3 points: easy to find, includes individual name(s), titles, email addresses and phone numbers
• 2 points: easy to find, names, titles, email addresses or phone numbers
• 1 Point: any shortcoming from 2 points: either hard to find, or missing some aspect of contact info from 2 points
• 0 points: Anything less, including blind email box for information request

4. Transmission Pipeline Maps
• 3 points: easy to find; can be either link to interactive state mapping system, or link to NPMS public viewer
• 2 points: not immediately apparent – need to use search function or fish around (more than 4 clicks) to find maps, either state system or link to NPMS.
• 1 point: some maps: operator system maps, fixed state map of systems, etc.
• 0 points: It's not there.

5. Pipeline Company contact information
• 3 Points: list of operators, including operator company name, address, contact information, type(s) of pipelines operated and PHMSA operator ID number.
• 2 Points: Everything but PHMSA operator ID; or link to NPMS operator finder page.
• 1 Point: not an option
• 0 Points: Anything less than what's required for 2 points.

6. Access to state statutes, rules; federal statutes, rules (points additive)
• Easy to find (1 point) links to: state pipeline safety statutes/rules (1 point) and a link to PHMSA standards and rulemakings page for federal regs, or direct link to federal regs (1 point).

7. Inspection records:
• Shows what types (IM, drug and alcohol, public awareness, leak survey, etc) of state inspections have been done by company, by date, links to records related to inspection, any correspondence, notices of probable violation, etc. (3 points)
• List of inspections performed by date and company, but no access to documents (1 point)
• 0 points = anything less, including number of inspections or number of inspection days, if not accompanied by more information

8. Incident Data: 4 possible points
• 3 points: Link to PHMSA state incident page, or presence of equivalent state page identifying incidents by commodity, location, and identifying operator, nature and cause of incident
• 1 point: Some sort of information about incidents (map, list)
• 0 points = not there
• 1 Bonus Point (additive): links to incident investigation reports

9. Enforcement data:
   • enforcement information, with totals by year, and by company:
     notices of probable violations, fines proposed, fines collected, links to
     administrative orders, consent orders or settlements or other
     correspondence closing out enforcement (3 points)
   • totals by year, by company, but no links to underlying documents; or
     link to PHMSA state enforcement page (2 points)
   • 1 point – some information about enforcement: by operator, or annual
     totals.
   • 0 points = anything less.

10. Excavation Damage Data:
    • 3 points: Link to excavation damage data by year, operator, cause,
      whether a reportable incident occurred
    • 1 point: Some information about excavation damage events
    • 0 points = anything less