



FACT SHEET

The Role of Pipeline Age in Pipeline Safety

The age of a natural gas transmission pipeline, in and of itself, is not the most important factor affecting the safety of that pipeline, a November 2012 report by the INGAA Foundation found.

The report, *The Role of Pipeline Age in Pipeline Safety*, found that:

1. 85% of pipeline incidents reported to PHMSA from 2002-2009 occurred irrespective of the age of the pipeline, with just 15% related in some way to the age of the pipeline.
2. The properties of the steels which comprise natural gas pipelines do not change with time; that is, pipe does not “wear out.”
3. The fitness of a pipeline for service does not necessarily expire at some point in time.
4. The integrity of those pipelines for which the fitness for service may degrade with the passage of time can be assessed periodically. Timely repairs - and other mitigation efforts - based on those assessments will ensure the pipeline’s continued fitness for service.
5. A well-maintained and periodically assessed pipeline can safely transport natural gas indefinitely.

The report looked at the various phenomena that can threaten the integrity of a pipeline. It specifically reviewed pipeline incidents reported to Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration from 2002 to 2008 and characterized the incidents by the pipeline’s decade of construction. The data indicated that older pipelines may be more susceptible to failure if certain kinds of threats are not assessed and mitigated.

Factors that contribute to those threats include:

- External Corrosion
- Rains/ Floods
- Excavation Damage
- Manufacturing & Component Defects
- Girth & Seam Welds
- Stress Corrosion Cracking

The study is available at [http:// www.ingaa.org/ PipelineAge.aspx](http://www.ingaa.org/PipelineAge.aspx)

For more information, please contact Cathy Landry, clandry@ingaa.org or Rich Hoffmann, rhoffmann@ingaa.org.