

WHY: THE BENEFITS OF  
**PIPELINE PUBLIC  
ENGAGEMENT**

# FAQ

---

## **WHAT TYPES OF PIPELINES ARE COVERED UNDER RP 1185?**

This RP establishes an engagement framework for companies that operate interstate hazardous liquids, gas transmission as well as gathering pipelines which are regulated by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

## **WHY IS PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT NEEDED?**

Public engagement is crucial for pipeline operators as it promotes transparency, fosters trust and allows for the exchange of information between operators and the public. It enables operators to address concerns, gather local knowledge and incorporate community perspectives into decision-making, ultimately enhancing safety and minimizing risks.

## **HOW WAS THIS RECOMMENDED PRACTICE DEVELOPED AND BY WHOM?**

RP 1185 is the culmination of a multi-year effort by the pipeline industry, government representatives and public advocates to offer ways to improve pipeline public engagement. RP 1185 was developed under API's American National Standards Institute accredited process, ensuring that standards are recognized not only for their technical rigor but also their third-party accreditation which facilitates acceptance by state, federal and international regulators.

## **HOW OFTEN SHOULD PIPELINE OPERATORS ENGAGE WITH THE PUBLIC?**

Public engagement should be an ongoing process throughout the life cycle of

pipeline operations. Regular engagement activities such as information sharing, meetings and feedback collection should occur at key stages, including pipeline construction, maintenance and expansion projects. Continuous engagement helps maintain open lines of communication and strengthens relationships with the public.

## **HOW WILL ENGAGEMENT HELP IMPROVE PIPELINE SAFETY?**

Public engagement in pipeline safety improves awareness, education and collaboration among communities and stakeholders. It enables the identification and mitigation of risks, enhances emergency preparedness and fosters a culture of continuous improvement in safety practices. By involving the public, pipeline operators can work towards safer and more resilient pipeline infrastructure.

## **IS RP 1185 A REGULATORY REQUIREMENT OR A VOLUNTARY PRACTICE?**

RP 1185 is a voluntary practice, not a regulatory requirement. API has published more than 800 standards, recommended practices, and other documents for voluntary implementation across the oil and gas industry. The members of the RP 1185 Task Group developed this document as a voluntary practice rather than a regulatory requirement to avoid one-size-fits-all, prescriptive audits that could hinder additional benefits. Federal agencies would need to undergo the rulemaking process with public notice and input in order to make RP 1185 a regulatory requirement.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

Introduction .....	5
Pipeline Public Engagement Will Help Improve Pipeline Safety .....	7
Benefits to New Pipeline Projects .....	9
Benefits to Existing Pipelines .....	11
An Inclusive Engagement Process .....	13
Enhanced Safety Culture .....	15
Going Beyond Traditional Public Awareness .....	17
Case Study: Public Engagement in the Oil and Gas Industry.....	19
FAQ .....	20





## INTRODUCTION

---

**Pipelines are a vital part of modern life and will continue to play a role in our energy future. Running through communities across America, pipelines have a direct impact on the public. Recommended Practice (RP) 1185 for *Pipeline Public Engagement* will help facilitate communication between pipeline operators and members of the public on proposed and existing pipeline systems. RP 1185 provides a scalable and flexible framework with implementation specifics dependent on the type, size and location of a pipeline. RP 1185 is a tool intended to be used in conjunction with existing programs.**

RP 1185 is the culmination of a multi-year effort by the pipeline industry, government representatives and public advocates to offer ways to improve pipeline public engagement. RP 1185 was developed under American Petroleum Institute's (API) American National Standards Institute (ANSI) accredited process, ensuring that standards are recognized not only for their technical rigour but also their third-party accreditation which facilitates acceptance by state, federal and international regulators.

RP 1185 builds upon the one-way communication of RP 1162, *Public Awareness Programs for Pipeline Operators* by encouraging proactive two-way communication with a broader range of stakeholders.

RP 1185 may also contribute to the stakeholder engagement element of a Pipeline Safety Management System as found in RP 1173.



“[Public participation] promotes sustainable decisions by providing participants with the information they need to be involved in a meaningful way, and it communicates to participants how their input affects the decision.”

**International Association of Public Participation**

# PIPELINE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT WILL HELP IMPROVE PIPELINE SAFETY

# 02

Pipeline operators' highest priority is the safety of people and the environment in the pursuit of continuous improvement and zero-incident operations. RP 1185 aims to enhance public safety by promoting effective public engagement. Effective engagement will allow operators to establish open lines of communication with stakeholders to gather input and hear different perspectives. This can reduce mistrust and help mitigate the misunderstanding about the likelihood and consequences of an unintended release or abnormal operations.

## I GOAL

By applying this RP, pipeline operators will develop relationships, build trust and achieve meaningful involvement in the engagement process, with the ultimate goal of improving pipeline safety and environmental stewardship.

## I BENEFITS



**Pipeline Operators** - gain perspectives and information needed to consider, develop and operate pipelines within their community.



**Public Participants** - learn about, better understand and share their perspectives on pipelines in or proposed for their community.



**Everyone** - can develop relationships, build trust and achieve meaningful involvement in the engagement process.





# BENEFITS TO NEW PIPELINE PROJECTS

03



**Enhanced Understanding:** Proactive engagement during new pipeline projects gets more information about the project to impacted stakeholders, helping them understand the project's purpose, scope, potential impacts and benefits. Questions can be asked and answered before uncertainty or misinformation becomes a problem.



**Addressing Concerns and Mitigating Impacts:** Engagement provides a forum for stakeholders to provide feedback on a project and raise any concerns. By actively listening and responding to these concerns, pipeline operators can identify and address potential issues early on, potentially reducing project delays.



**Earning Trust:** Effective engagement builds trust between the pipeline operator and the community. By actively involving stakeholders, pipeline operators demonstrate their commitment to open communication, responsiveness and accountability. This trust and positive relationship can lead to better cooperation and more efficient project implementation.



**Improved Project Outcomes:** Engagement during new pipeline projects can lead to improved project outcomes. By integrating stakeholder perspectives, addressing concerns and incorporating local knowledge, pipeline operators can make more informed decisions, implement effective risk mitigation measures and optimize project designs. This, in turn, can contribute to enhanced pipeline safety, environmental stewardship and community acceptance.



**Long-term Stakeholder Support:** Engaging with the public and stakeholders fosters ongoing relationships beyond the pipeline project. By maintaining open lines of communication, and providing timely and accurate information, pipeline operators can build long-term stakeholder support. This support can be crucial during project maintenance activities and future projects.



# BENEFITS TO EXISTING PIPELINES

# 04



**Enhanced Safety and Risk Management:** Continued engagement with stakeholders throughout the life cycle of a pipeline helps raise awareness about safety measures, emergency response procedures and risk mitigation strategies. Engaged stakeholders are more likely to remain vigilant, promptly report issues and actively participate in maintaining the safety of the pipeline.



**Changing Communities:** Engagement provides a platform for addressing community concerns, particularly as the challenges faced by communities evolve over the lifespan of a pipeline. The footprint of the community residing near a pipeline and attitudes towards infrastructure all have the potential to change. Continued relationships fostered through public engagement assist in navigating these changes effectively.



**Timely Communication:** Engaging with stakeholders ensures that they are informed in advance about any changes, maintenance activities or potential disruptions associated with existing pipelines. Regular communication helps manage expectations, reduces surprises and promotes transparency. Timely updates and clear communication channels build trust and minimize misunderstandings.



**Collaboration in Maintenance:** Engagement during maintenance activities helps manage what may be disruptive to a surrounding community. Turnover in a community may mean current residents or leaders were not present during original construction. Involving stakeholders in the planning and execution of maintenance activities ensures that community needs and concerns are considered. Collaboration helps minimize disruptions, promotes efficient planning and enhances overall project outcomes.



“Public participation is an integral part of the transportation process which helps to ensure that decisions are made in consideration of and to benefit public needs and preferences. Early and continuous public involvement brings diverse viewpoints and values into the decision-making process.”

**U.S. Department of Transportation/Federal Highway Administration**

## AN INCLUSIVE ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

Stakeholders can come from diverse backgrounds, including communities historically underrepresented due to economic, cultural, racial, health-related and other disparities. It is important that operators recognize these differences to help understand the specific challenges, priorities and values of different stakeholder groups. An inclusive engagement process benefits pipeline operators and the surrounding community. Specifically, effective engagement:



Allows for **more voices to be heard**, including those historically underrepresented.



Ensures **information is accessible**, relevant and effectively communicated.



Leads to a **more meaningful and fair involvement** in pipeline projects.



Allows for **tailored engagement approaches** that resonate with the specific circumstances and concerns of each stakeholder group.



Contributes to **building and maintaining a social license to operate**, as stakeholders are more likely to support pipeline projects and operations when they feel their unique needs have been voiced, understood and considered.

Essential Question:  
Design and build a model of a space suit that accommodates life activities on the moon.

Product:  
Design a space suit to the Artemis mission.

Transferable skills  
would be most beneficial  
to secure preferred employment  
on the Artemis mission?

Artemis Career  
(student produced)



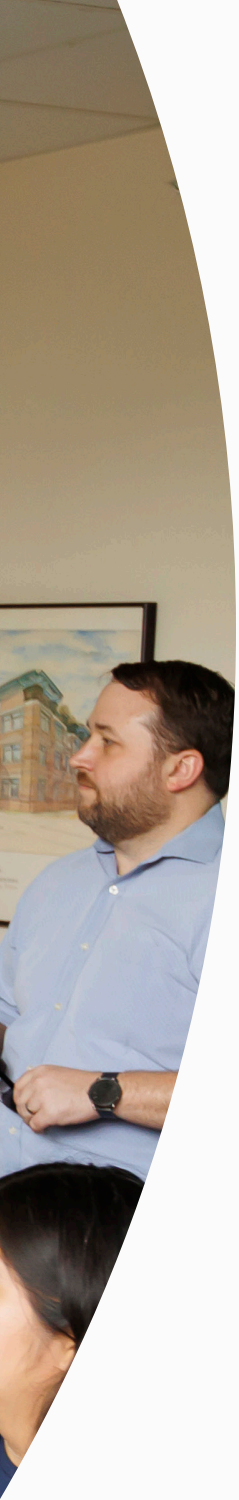
## ENHANCED SAFETY CULTURE

06

**Pipeline operators with a robust public engagement program demonstrate their culture by seeking input, listening and acting upon input – all essential components of a strong safety culture.**

A pipeline organization's leadership commitment, as outlined in the RP, is essential to an improved safety culture. Employees will understand safety is valued if they see management tangibly demonstrating its commitment and allocating necessary resources to facilitate improvements in engagement.

Likewise, public engagement reflects and builds on the actions and values of a strong culture. By engaging with stakeholders, addressing concerns and providing accurate information, the organization builds trust and credibility not only with the public but also with its own employees. This trust is vital to establish a strong safety culture, as it encourages open communication, reporting of potential safety issues and active participation in safety initiatives.



DESTRUCTION OF THIS SIGN VIOLATES FEDERAL LAW

**PIPELINE WARNING**



IN AN EMERGENCY  
CALL 911 AND  
MARATHON PIPE LINE LLC  
AT  
1-800-537-6644

SCAN WITH YOUR SMARTPHONE  
TO CONNECT TO

**NOTICE:  
DAMAGE OR  
REMOVAL  
OF THIS SIGN  
IS A  
FEDERAL  
OFFENSE  
SUBJECT TO A  
\$5000 FINE  
AND/OR  
1 YEAR  
IMPRISONMENT**

BEFORE EXCAVATING CALL



Know what's below.  
Call 811 before you dig.

**MUST BE NOTIFIED  
WHEN ANYONE IS  
WORKING WITHIN  
50 FEET OF THE  
PIPELINE**





# GOING BEYOND TRADITIONAL PUBLIC AWARENESS

07

**Expanding beyond traditional public awareness programs brings significant advantages to pipeline operators. Public awareness activities described by RP 1162 are required for compliance with federal regulation and play an important role in informing the surrounding public about a pipeline in their community. However, public awareness is limited to mostly one-way communication activities from the operator to the public.**

While informing the public is important, an operator can gain even more from listening. Two-way communication embodied by public engagement benefits both new project development and ongoing pipeline operations. It allows operators to gain perspectives and information they need to consider, while allowing public participants the opportunity to learn and share their perspectives on pipelines in or proposed for their community.

By combining the strengths of both standards, pipeline operators can enhance their overall approach to public engagement, ensuring effective communication, education and meaningful participation throughout the pipeline life cycle.



- P PLAN**  
Strategic planning activity
- D DO**  
Implementation activity
- C CHECK**  
Evaluation and QAQC activity
- A ADJUST**  
Program updates and adjustment activity



## CASE STUDY:

# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT IN THE OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY

08

The oil and gas industry has long utilized public engagement and community partnership programs in areas of operations. These efforts serve to establish and maintain strong relationships with stakeholders at the local, state, and federal level, as well as with tribal representatives, around the core principles of transparency, respect, reciprocity, inclusiveness, accessibility, and equity. Organizations including Ipieca and the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) coordinate with the industry to disseminate leading practices and mitigate challenges to strong and sustainable relationships throughout the lifecycle of energy infrastructure.

### **Ipieca lists the immense benefits of public engagement, including the use of Community Development Agreements, for oil and gas operators:**

- 1 “gaining community support over the project lifecycle;
- 2 increasing confidence in the community over local benefits from the project;
- 3 allowing the project to proceed without community disruption or cost of disputation;
- 4 increasing certainty over investment by the company;
- 5 increasing ability to secure access to further resources; and
- 6 achieving reputational advantage as a responsible operator.”

([Ipieca](#), Community development agreements, 2019)



**RP 1185 Disclaimer:** This booklet provides a basic overview of pipeline public engagement. API is not affiliated with or endorsed by the organizations (AHA, TechCrunch, APA) identified in this booklet and information from these organizations are used only as examples of public engagement. This booklet is intended as a reference for developing a public engagement program and should not replace regulatory requirements, engineering principles, or company policies.