

Pipeline Safety Group

In order to protect the public and property, the State of Utah has adopted Federal Pipeline Safety Regulations. These Regulations prescribe the minimum safety requirements that need to be adhered to by anyone involved in transportation of gas via pipelines within the State of Utah. For details refer to Title 54 Chapter 13 of the Utah State Code, Public Utilities Statutes and Public Service Commission Rules, R746-409.

These regulations cover the operation of Questar Gas Company (QGC), Municipalities of Mona, Nephi, Levan, Eagle Mountain, Blanding, several small intrastate transmission companies and several hundred Master Meters. Master Meters are small gas system operators that purchase gas from a distribution company and further distribute it within their facilities.

The Pipeline Safety Section within the Division of Public Utilities has been authorized by the Commission to carry out the enforcement of the adopted Pipeline Safety Regulations. The employees of the Pipeline Safety Section are authorized to inspect and examine the records and properties of any person engaged in intrastate pipeline transportation of natural gas and other flammable gases.

Questar Gas is the major distribution company along the Wasatch Front. In one year Questar Gas Company experienced 1416 dig-ins known as third party damage. Forty-four percent of excavators who damaged Questar's pipeline did not call Blue Stakes, which is a utility notification center. Thirty-four percent of damage to pipelines was due to excavator negligence in spite of the pipelines location being marked.

It is estimated that 40% of damages to underground facilities is the direct result of excavator activities. Chapter 8a of Utah Code Title 54 requires that before excavation, an excavator shall notify each operator with underground facilities in the area of the proposed excavation. This requirement intends to give the operators an opportunity to mark their facilities before an excavation. In order to facilitate this notification process for the excavators the Blue Stakes of Utah, Utility Notification Center, Inc. was established.

Now excavators have to place only one call to Blue Stakes of Utah at 1.800.662.4111 or (208-2100 SLC Metro) with their dig information and Blue Stakes of Utah will notify all the operators with underground facilities within the excavation area. Blue Stakes (www.bluestakes.org) will locate and mark underground utilities at no cost to you. You can prevent leaks to natural gas pipelines by calling Blue Stakes to locate buried pipelines before you dig.



photo courtesy of Colorado Springs Utilities