

Recommended Practice for the Pressure Testing of Steel Pipelines for the Transportation of Gas, Petroleum Gas, Hazardous Liquids, Highly Volatile Liquids, or Carbon Dioxide

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Contents

	Page
1 Scope	1
2 Normative References.....	1
3 Terms, Definitions, and Abbreviations	1
3.1 Terms and Definitions.....	1
3.2 Abbreviations.....	5
4 Pressure Test Planning Process	5
4.1 Guidelines for Planning a Pressure Test	5
4.2 Pressure Test Medium	11
4.3 Pressure Test Equipment and Materials.....	12
4.4 Location and Use of Test Measuring Equipment.....	14
5 Pressure Test Implementation	15
5.1 General	15
5.2 Qualification of Contractor and Operator Personnel	15
5.3 Line Fill and Cleaning	15
5.4 Initial Pressurization	17
5.5 The Test Period	18
5.6 Pressure Test Failures	19
5.7 Searching for Leaks	19
5.8 Pressure Test Acceptance Criteria	20
5.9 Depressurization, Displacement, and Disposal of the Test Medium.....	21
5.10 Drying Operations	22
6 Pressure Test Records and Drawings.....	22
6.1 General	22
6.2 Pressure Test Records	22
6.3 Pressure Test Drawings	24
Bibliography	25
Figures	
1 Impact of Test Pressure on Margin of Safety.....	10
2 Pressure–Volume Plot with Residual Air	17

Introduction

This recommended practice (RP) provides guidelines for pressure testing steel pipelines for the transportation of gas, petroleum gas, hazardous liquids, highly volatile liquids, or carbon dioxide. The RP provides guidance so that:

- a) pipeline operators can select a pressure test suitable for the conditions under which the test will be conducted—this includes, but is not limited to, pipeline material characteristics, pipeline operating conditions, and various types of anomalies or other risk factors that may be present;
- b) pressure tests are planned in order to meet the overall objectives of the pressure test;
- c) site-specific procedures are developed and followed during all phases of the pressure testing process;
- d) pressure tests consider both personnel safety and environmental impacts;
- e) pressure tests are implemented by qualified personnel;
- f) pressure tests are conducted in order to meet stated acceptance criteria and pressure test objectives;
- g) pressure test records are developed, completed, and retained for the useful life of the facility.

Users of this RP should be aware that further or differing requirements may be necessary for some applications. Nothing in this RP is intended to inhibit the use of engineering solutions that are not covered by the RP. This may be particularly applicable where there is innovative developing technology. When an alternative is offered, the RP may be used, provided any and all variations from the RP are identified and documented.

The guiding principles of this RP are as follows.

- a) This RP provides a consistent means of preparing, assessing, using, and verifying pressure test results in order to help insure that the objectives of the pressure test are met. It also provides guidance for meeting the requirements of Integrity Management as stated in API 1160 and ASME B31.8S.
- b) This RP is not technology specific. It accommodates present and future technologies used for pressure testing steel pipelines.
- c) This RP is performance-based and provides guidelines for the qualification of the pressure testing processes. It does not, however, define how to meet these guidelines.
- d) This RP provides guidelines for documenting important information during each phase of the pressure testing process.
- e) Wherever possible, this RP utilizes existing terms and definitions from other applicable industry documents. Definitions of terms used in this RP are listed in Section 3.
- f) The use of a pressure testing process to manage the integrity of pipelines requires an appropriate amount of interaction between the provider of the inspection service (service provider), if one is used, and the beneficiary of the service (operator). This RP provides guidelines that will enable service providers and operators to clearly define the areas of cooperation required and thus facilitate the satisfactory outcome of the pressure testing process.

Although many operators use service providers during various phases of the pressure testing process, it is important to note that the operator is ultimately responsible for:

- a) identifying specific risks (threats) to be assessed as part of the pressure testing process,
- b) choosing the proper pressure test in order to assess identified risks (threats), and
- c) confirming and verifying pressure test results.

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1 Scope

This RP applies to all parts of a pipeline or pipeline facility including line pipe, pump station piping, terminal piping, compressor station piping, metering station piping, delivery station piping, regulator station piping, appurtenances connected to line pipe, appurtenances connected to facility piping, fabricated assemblies, valves, tees, elbows, reducers, flanges, and any other pipeline equipment or appurtenances.

This RP does not apply to pumping units, compressor units, breakout tanks, pressure vessels, vent piping, sample piping, instrument piping/tubing, or any component or piping system for which other codes specify pressure testing requirements (i.e. ASME *Boiler and Pressure Vessel Code*, piping systems covered by building codes, etc.).

Although this RP contains guidelines that are based on sound engineering judgment, it is important to note that certain governmental requirements may differ from the guidelines presented in this document.

This RP does not address piping systems that are pressure tested with natural gas, nitrogen, or air.

2 Normative References

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

API Standard 1160, *Managing System Integrity for Hazardous Liquid Pipelines*

ASME B31.4¹, *Pipeline Transportation Systems for Liquid Hydrocarbons and Other Liquids*

ASME B31.8:2007, *Gas Transmission and Distribution Piping Systems*

ASME B31.8S, *Managing System Integrity for Gas Pipelines*

3 Terms, Definitions, and Abbreviations

3.1 Terms and Definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following definitions apply.

3.1.1

anomaly

A deviation from the norm in pipe material, coatings, or welds.

3.1.2

appurtenance

A component attached to the pipeline (e.g. valve, tee, instrument connection, supports, anchors, etc.).

3.1.3

bend

A physical configuration that changes pipeline direction.

¹ ASME International, 3 Park Avenue, New York, New York 10016-5990, www.asme.org.