

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

Pipeline Segment

API RECOMMENDED PRACTICE 1110
FIFTH EDITION, JUNE 2007



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1 Introduction

1.1 GENERAL

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. Where an alternative is offered, the RP may be used, provided any and all variations from the RP are identified and documented.

1.2 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following 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 Std 1160 and ASME B31.8S.

This RP is not technology specific. It accommodates present and future technologies used for pressure testing steel pipelines.

This RP is performance-based and provides guidelines for the qualification of the pressure testing processes. It does not, however, define how to meet those guidelines.

This RP provides guidelines for documenting important information during each phase of the pressure testing process.

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 4.

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).
- c. Confirming and verifying pressure test results.

2 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, control 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.

3 References

Unless otherwise specified, the most recent editions of the following standards, codes and specifications, in full, to the extent specified herein, form a part of this document.

API

Std 1160 *Managing System Integrity for Hazardous Liquid Pipelines*

ASME¹

B31.4 *Pipeline Transportation Systems for Liquid Hydrocarbons and Other Liquids*

B31.8 *Gas Transmission and Distribution Piping Systems*

B31.8S *Managing System Integrity of Gas Pipelines*

4 Terms and Definitions

- 4.1 anomaly:** A deviation from the norm in pipe material, coatings, or welds.
- 4.2 appurtenance:** A component that is attached to the pipeline; e.g., valve, tee, instrument connection, supports, anchors, etc.
- 4.3 ASME:** American Society of Mechanical Engineers, also known as ASME International.
- 4.4 bend:** A physical configuration that changes pipe direction.
- 4.5 carbon dioxide:** A fluid consisting of more than 90% carbon dioxide molecules compressed to a supercritical state.
- 4.6 certification:** A written testimony of qualification.
- 4.7 characteristic:** Any physical descriptor of a pipeline or an anomaly, such as length, depth, shape, severity, orientation, and location.
- 4.8 cold work:** A process that affects the mechanical properties of the metal, resulting in a hardened microstructure through the formation of martensite.
- 4.9 component:** Any physical part of the pipeline, other than line pipe, including but not limited to valves, welds, tees, flanges, fittings, tees, branch connections and outlets.
- 4.10 corrosion:** The deterioration of a material, usually a metal, that results from a reaction with its environment.
- 4.11 crack:** A very narrow elongated separation caused by mechanical splitting.
- 4.12 dead-weight tester:** An instrument consisting of a finely machined piston mounted vertically in a close-fitting cylinder and maintaining a calculable pressure; also known as a “**piston gauge**.” When fitted with a means of pressure control, additional pressure ports, masses etc., the complete system is commonly known as a “**dead-weight tester**.”
- 4.13 examination:** A direct physical inspection of an anomaly by a person, which may include the use of nondestructive examination techniques.

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