

EXCESS FLOW VALVES

At the present time, the basis for mandatory installation of excess flow valves is set forth in the “Pipeline Inspection, Protection, Enforcement and Safety Act of 2006” (PIPES Act of 2006). According to the Act, the Secretary of the Department of Transportation (DOT) is required to develop minimum standards for integrity management programs for distribution pipelines. The minimum standards shall include a requirement for an operator of a natural gas distribution system to install an excess flow valve on each single family residence service line connected to such system if —

- “(i) the service line is installed or entirely replaced after June 1, 2008;
- “(ii) the service line operates continuously throughout the year at a pressure not less than 10 pounds per square inch gauge;
- “(iii) the service line is not connected to a gas stream with respect to which the operator has had prior experience with contaminants the presence of which could interfere with the operation of an excess flow valve;
- “(iv) the installation of an excess flow valve on the service line is not likely to cause loss of service to the residence or interfere with necessary operation or maintenance activities, such as purging liquids from the service line; and
- “(v) an excess flow valve meeting performance standards developed under section 60110(e) of title 49, United States Code, is commercially available to the operator, as determined by the Secretary.

No rule has been finalized with respect to mandatory installation, so there is no code section in the CFR Title 49, Part 192 relating to a final rule. However, Section **192.381**, effective July 22, 1996, includes performance standards and installation and marking requirements for excess flow valves. In addition, Section **192.383**, February 3, 1998 includes definitions relative to excess flow valves. In summary, Section **192.381** contains requirements/guidance as follows:

- Operator must mark or otherwise identify the presence of an excess flow valve in a service line. Marking must be field recognizable or visible so that operator personnel are aware of the presence of the excess flow valve and unique operating characteristics associated with the excess flow valve. Marking and identifying that an EFV has been installed may be accomplished by affixing a durable identifying tag to the meter set(s), appropriately indicating the presence of an EFV on maps or records, or other acceptable methods. Combinations of the above may also be considered.
- The operator should install the excess flow valve as near as practical to the fitting connecting the service line to the main providing the source of natural gas. Such a practice places as much service line length under the influence of the excess flow valve as possible.

Point of interest in Section **192.383** is as follows:

- Definition of a replaced service line – a natural gas service line where the fitting that connects the service line to the main is replaced or the piping connected to this fitting is replaced.