

RULES AND REGULATIONS

Title 52—PUBLIC UTILITIES

PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION

[52 PA. CODE CH. 59]

[L-2009-2107155]

Meter Location; Advance Notice of Final Rulemaking

Public Meeting held
September 12, 2013

Commissioners Present: Robert F. Powelson, Chairperson; John F. Coleman, Jr., Vice Chairperson; Wayne E. Gardner; James H. Cawley; Pamela A. Witmer

*Amendment to 52 Pa. Code § 59.18 Meter Location;
Doc. No. L-2009-2107155*

Advance Notice of Final Rulemaking Order

By the Commission:

In accordance with Section 501 of the Public Utility Code, 66 Pa.C.S. § 501, the Commission formally commenced a rulemaking process to amend its existing regulations at 52 Pa. Code § 59.18 “Meter Location.” On July 28, 2011, the Commission entered a Proposed Rulemaking Order proposing new language for the regulation. Specifically, this review was to address meter placement and location and general requirements for new service lines. Comments were filed by various interested parties. The Commission has reviewed those comments in Attachment One and issues this Advanced Notice of Final Rulemaking including Annex A.

Background and Procedural History

On August 21, 2008, the Commission directed the Bureau of Transportation, Gas Safety Division, to institute an investigation into the issue of gas meter placement and relocation in the context of service disputes between gas distribution companies and their customers. Pursuant to the Commission’s directive, the Gas Safety Division reviewed existing regulations and tariff language on meter location. The Gas Safety Division concluded that the Commission’s existing regulation is vague, inadequate, and out-of-date with respect to the federal standards which the PUC has adopted.

The issue of gas meter placement and relocation in the context of service disputes between Natural Gas Distribution Companies (NGDCs) and their customers came before the Commission in two cases. *Mitchell v. Equitable Gas Company*, Docket No. C-20077457 (Opinion and Order entered January 22, 2009); *Lucas v. Columbia Gas Company of Pennsylvania, Inc.*, Docket No. C-20065830 (Order entered June 3, 2008). In both cases, the meter relocation occurred due to a discovery and repair of leaking service lines. Each case involved a customer complaint filed after the utility charged for relocating the meter.

Specifically, customers had objected to being charged for the relocation of meters from inside their residences to an exterior location, and sought reimbursement of associated costs. The gas line from the meter outlet valve is considered customer owned property. Therefore, when the meters were relocated outside, the customer line was lengthened. Normally, a homeowner would have to con-

tract with an Operator Qualified plumber to extend the house line outside to the meter. In the instances where the customers objected to the relocation of the meters, the NGDC required the meter to be relocated due to safety concerns.

After reviewing these and other cases, the Commission approved a motion offered by Commissioner Pizzingrilli finding that its regulations and the tariff provisions of gas utilities vary significantly:

[I]t is evident that there is ambiguity with respect to meter placement and relocation . . . [and] it is critically important that our regulations and company tariffs provide clear direction on meter location issues to ensure safe and reliable service.

As much of Pennsylvania’s natural gas infrastructure is aging and a number of gas utilities are in the process of embarking on significant infrastructure replacement initiatives, it is an opportune time to assess the meter relocation policy to enable gas utilities to more efficiently address this issue in the context of these programs and to ensure safe and reliable service.¹

The Commission then directed the Gas Safety Division to undertake a review of the regulations and to prepare a report with any recommendations.

Before discussing the Gas Safety Division’s report, it is noteworthy that the Commission’s only regulation governing gas meter location reads:

52 Pa. Code § 59.18 Location of meters.

Meters shall be installed in either of the following locations:

1. Inside the building, preferably in a dry, well-ventilated place not subject to excessive heat, and as near as possible to the point of entrance of the pipe supplying service to the building.
2. Outside the building at a location selected by the utility. A meter cover or housing is required if, in the judgment of the utility, conditions require the physical protection for the meter installation.

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) regulations, which the Commission has adopted² and has an agreement with the Pipeline and Hazardous Material Safety Administration (PHMSA) to enforce, include the following:

49 CFR § 192.353 Customer meters and regulators: Location.

- (a) Each meter and service regulator, whether inside or outside a building, must be installed in a readily accessible location and be protected from corrosion and other damage, including, if installed outside a building, vehicular damage that may be anticipated. However, the upstream regulator in a series may be buried.
- (b) Each service regulator installed within a building must be located as near as practical to the point of service line entrance.

¹ Gas Meter Location, Docket No. M-2008-2058386, Motion of Commissioner Kim Pizzingrilli (August 21, 2008).

² See Ratification and Adoption of Amendments to Part 192 of Title 49 of the *Code of Federal Regulations*, Docket No. M-00001347, Order entered March 16, 2000, 2000 Pa. PUC LEXIS 4; 52 Pa. Code § 59.33 Safety.

(c) Each meter installed within a building must be located in a ventilated place and not less than 3 feet (914 millimeters) from any source of ignition or any source of heat which might damage the meter.

(d) Where feasible, the upstream regulator in a series must be located outside the building, unless it is located in a separate metering or regulating building.

49 CFR § 192.357 Customer meters and regulators: Installation.

(a) Each meter and each regulator must be installed so as to minimize anticipated stresses upon the connecting piping and the meter.

(b) When close all-thread nipples are used, the wall thickness remaining after the threads are cut must meet the minimum wall thickness requirements of this part.

(c) Connections made of lead or other easily damaged material may not be used in the installation of meters or regulators.

(d) Each regulator that might release gas in its operation must be vented to the outside atmosphere.

The Commission's Gas Safety Division, in conjunction with the Law Bureau, implemented an investigation regarding meter set (meter and regulator) location. The Gas Safety Division issued ten data requests to the ten largest gas utilities under PUC jurisdiction. The data requests included questions related to the number of inside/outside meter sets, inside regulators, tariff language, inside meter set leak calls, reportable incidents associated with inside meter sets, meter relocation charges, inside leak surveys, and local ordinances requiring certain meter locations. All ten gas utilities responded. The data revealed that the Pennsylvania natural gas industry has approximately 27% of all meter sets located inside of residential dwellings. This average has been consistent over the last five years.

All the tariffs for the solicited utilities have tariff rules governing the location of meter sets. Each tariff states that the utility will make the ultimate siting determination. The basis for the utility decision for meter and regulator location is safety. The majority of the tariffs include language that allows for exceptions to outside siting. Allowance for inside meter and regulator sets are based upon historic area prohibitions and areas that have high amounts of vandalism.

The Commission is also concerned about the number of reportable incidents resulting, at least partially, from locating meters and regulators inside structures. The gas distribution utilities reported more than 4,000 leaks occurring on inside meter sets over a five year period. The number of reportable incidents³ (65) over the past forty years, however, is more alarming. While it appears from the data that the inside meter and regulators were not always the primary factor for accidents, locating meters and regulators inside certainly contributed to these incidents through a release of natural gas. State and federal gas safety regulations require gas utilities to perform leak surveys over service lines periodically; however, several of

the utilities reported that they could not comply with the leak survey requirements when the meter and regulator are inside a building, which prevents access. This is troubling because the state and federal regulations require leak surveys up to the meter. By not having access to the meter sets, the NGDCs cannot comply with the state and federal regulations and cannot detect inside leaks.

The state has experienced several gas explosions related to steel service lines being struck and pulled up from their stable position and subsequently pulling the service line from the inside meter set. Plastic service lines with inside meter sets do not pull away since the excavation equipment usually severs the line immediately after being struck. The combination of steel service line and inside meter set is a high risk factor for natural gas incidents.

The responding NGDCs also addressed the cost of moving meter sets from the inside to the outside. In most instances, if the customer requests a meter set relocation, the customer pays for the extension of the customer piping up to the outlet valve of the meter set. But the utilities have multiple exceptions as to who pays. Under federal regulations, Operator Qualified plumbers are the only plumbers who may perform work on service lines and meters. The Operator Qualified plumbers are certified and tested by the specific gas utility.

If a meter set is to be moved outside and the meter set was connected to a steel service line, the NGDC would replace the steel service line and move the meter set outside where practical. The cost of replacing the steel service line and moving the meter set outside is approximately \$4,000 per unit. The average cost of moving only a meter set from inside to outside is approximately \$500. UGI Utilities, Inc. (UGI) opined that most of the steel service lines with inside meter sets were connected to bare steel or unprotected steel mains which would also need to be replaced and would increase the cost.

Therefore, if an NGDC is replacing a natural gas main in accordance with its main replacement program, the NGDC should make all reasonable efforts to replace the bare or unprotected steel service lines in addition to relocating the meter set. In 2008, Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania, Inc. (Columbia) requested limited waivers of the tariff rules relating to customer service line replacement.⁴ According to Columbia's existing tariff, certain customers are responsible for the installation, maintenance and replacement of their service lines. We agreed it would be inequitable to require these customers to replace their service lines at the customers' expense when the replacement was required by Columbia's main replacement and upgrade project. Thus, it would be prudent and more cost effective for NGDCs to coordinate their meter set relocation program (including steel service line replacement when necessary) with their main replacement program.

There are several alternatives, however, to relocation and replacement of inside meter sets and steel service lines. One alternative is to retrofit existing service lines with Excess Flow Valves (EFV). An EFV is a device that reduces gas flow in the event that a pipe fails beyond the valve. EFVs are currently mandated for all new and

³ A reportable incident exists where there was a release of gas and (1) greater than \$50,000 in damages; (2) death or injury; or (3) a significant event in the determination of the distribution utility.

⁴ See Petition of Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania, Inc. for Limited Waivers of Certain Tariff Rules Related to Customer Service Line Replacement, Docket No. P-00072337 (May 19, 2008).

replaced service lines by federal law. See 49 U.S.C. § 60110, 49 CFR § 192.383. We have adopted the Federal regulation. The cost of retrofitting a steel service line with EFV is approximately \$1,500.

Another alternative to relocation and replacement is to relocate the inside regulator to the outside. The majority of NGDCs do not allow inside regulators; however, the companies that do allow them include UGI, PECO Energy Company (PECO), and Philadelphia Gas Works (PGW). The relocation of the inside regulator costs approximately \$450.

Finally, several utilities provide service in historic districts where municipal laws may require the meter set to be located inside structures. In some instances, the utilities may be able to locate the regulator outside; however, it was represented that there are instances when the utility must locate the entire meter set inside due to zoning ordinances. In addition, some utilities may locate meter sets inside due to vandalism concerns.

After review of the state and federal regulations pertaining to meter set location, gas distribution tariffs, and after meeting with the gas utilities and reviewing the data responses, Gas Safety concluded the following:

1. The Pennsylvania regulations at § 59.18 are silent as to reimbursement costs related to relocation of meters.
2. The Commission has adopted provisions of the *Code of Federal Regulations*, which address the safety issues related to meter set location and installation and thus are in conflict with the existing Pennsylvania regulations.
3. The collected data show that Pennsylvania has experienced 65 reportable incidents associated with inside meter sets and inside regulators over the last 40 years.
4. The gas distribution utilities have had more than 4,000 leaks related to inside meter sets over the last five years.
5. Several of the gas distribution utilities assert they cannot comply with the state and federal regulations pertaining to leakage surveys because they cannot get access to inside meter sets.
6. Inside meter sets with inside regulators are a major concern due to the possibility of high pressure gas flowing into a structure if the inside meter or inside regulator is detached from the service line. Three gas distribution utilities have high numbers of inside meter sets with inside regulators that are at higher risk for failure because the inside meter and regulator are connected to a steel service line. Steel service lines are susceptible to pulling from excavation equipment. Pennsylvania has experienced several catastrophic explosions due to steel service lines pulling away from inside meter sets and inside regulators.

Ultimately, Gas Safety concluded that the Commission's existing regulation is vague, inadequate, and out-of-date with respect to the federal standards which the Commission has adopted.

Therefore, on July 28, 2011, the Commission adopted and entered a Proposed Rulemaking Order titled "Rulemaking Re Amendment to 52 Pa. Code § 59.18 Meter Location." The Order was published in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin* on June 16, 2012. Comments were filed by approximately 44 interested parties and numerous letters

were filed by individual homeowners. The Commission's review and analysis of the comments is contained in Attachment One and incorporated by reference in this Order.

Summary of Issues

Essentially, the consensus of the utility industry's comments is that changes to existing regulations are unnecessary because the Commission's regulations are already consistent with Federal regulations and that the proposed rules are inconsistent with Federal regulations and impose new additional regulatory requirements. Furthermore, some of the utilities and the Energy Association of Pennsylvania (EAP) contend that the proposed regulation is based on the Gas Piping Technology Committee's (GPTC) Guide for Gas Transmission and Distribution Piping Systems (Guide or Guide Material), which is advisory in nature and not meant to be a regulation. Moreover, NGDCs are concerned about any removal of a utility's discretion in meter placement. It was suggested that relocation should be coordinated with the utility's established main replacement program and schedule, and that, specifically, utilities should not have to replace indoor regulators connected to steel service lines by 2020, as required in the proposed regulation. Utilities also seek clarification whether this regulation, if adopted, would apply to meter sets installed after the effective date of this proposed regulation since a number of new requirements are not requirements of meter sets today.

The general comments of historical commissions and boards, private citizens, preservation groups, civic associations, and government entities and officials is that meters and regulators should remain in the basements of properties within historic districts to preserve beauty and uniqueness of these areas. Also, moving meters outside will risk damage to the units caused by vehicles hitting meters and tampering, among other occurrences. Moreover, with the development of remote meter reading devices, some of these parties believe there is not a need to make meters visible in front of historic homes.

These parties also argue against limiting historic districts to those that are federally recognized. In other words, the definition of "Historic District" should specifically include local historic districts designated by municipalities, as well as others locally significant. These parties are also looking for a process for utilities to notify property owners about projects and allow the property owners to participate and make informed decisions about where the meter will be located. It was also recommended to the Commission to develop design guidelines for the appropriate location of meters and regulators. The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) also disagreed with a statement in the Order, asserting that it was unable to identify any locally adopted historic property regulations that stipulate the location of gas meters.

The Independent Regulatory Review Commission (IRRC) emphasized the point that the Commission established in Section 59.33 that the *Code of Federal Regulation* (CFR) and its subsequent amendments effectively supersede the Commission's regulations; and since the CFR addresses meter and regulator location, the proposed Section 59.18 raises the issue of "possible conflict with or duplication of Statutes or existing regulations." 71 P. S. § 745.5(b)(3)(i). IRRC continues its comments asking the Commission to explain how these mandates support the Commission's stated intent to make Pennsylvania's regulations consistent with federal regulations and reconcile with the Commission's statement that "the proposed

amended language imposes no additional regulatory requirements upon natural gas distribution companies (NGDCs) that these utilities are not already subject to under the federal regulations.”

IRRC further believes the proposed regulation includes only meter and regulator locations and does not address several of the other safety concerns identified by the Commission in its Order.

IRRC then notes that the Commission has not explained which state and federal provisions are inconsistent, or how the Commission’s regulations could conflict. In order to clearly establish and support this rule-making’s intent, IRRC recommends that the Commission review and revise its Preamble and responses in the Regulatory Assessment Form (RAF) prior to submitting a final regulation. IRRC questions the Commission’s support for the regulation based on safety concerns stating that the Commission has not addressed excess flow valves as alternatives to relocating inside meter sets outside, or established a direct link between reportable incidents and leaks at inside meters.

Discussion

Attachment One to this Order contains a summary of the comments from the utility industry, historical commissions and boards, private citizens, preservation groups, civic associations, and government entities and officials. In addition, the general comments of the Independent Regulatory Review Commission are summarized and then addressed in a response section. Finally, the specific issues raised by the comments to the specific subsections, paragraphs and subparagraphs of Annex A of the Proposed Rulemaking Order are addressed, discussed and resolved. In so doing, we have retained language, struck proposed language, and added new language.

Section 59.18 is currently limited with respect to providing regulatory requirements for locating meters. The regulation merely provides that meters can be installed inside or outside the building with a few location requirements. Our Proposed Rulemaking Order (page 1) acknowledged that the existing regulation is inadequate. IRRC notes that the Commission in Section 59.33 adopts the pipeline safety laws including 49 CFR Parts 191—193, 195 and 199 that address meter and regulator location. We do not believe that our adoption of these minimum safety standards in Section 59.33(b) conflicts or duplicates the proposed regulation. Section 59.33(b) is clear that the Federal regulations are the minimum safety standards that apply to natural gas public utilities.

While the CFR might address similar provisions in terms of subject matter to the proposed regulations, the specific requirements are not the same. In fact, we agree with the commentators that the proposed Section 59.18 is taken, largely, from the Guide Material and not the Federal regulations. The proposed regulation relies heavily on the Guide Material for structure and substance. That being said, we disagree that the language is inflexible and leaves no room for utility discretion. We believe that any limitation of an NGDC’s discretion through this regulation is in the public interest. We submit that specifying mandatory requirements for meter, regulator and service line locations is necessary to protect the safety of the public and, therefore, is in the public interest. However, the proposed regulation allows the utility in many instances to deviate from the general rule or requirement if it is not “feasible and practical to do so.” The utility will retain discretion in applying this regulation.

Our adoption of the CFR under Section 59.33(b) sets the minimum safety standards for all natural gas and hazardous liquid public utilities. Therefore, Section 59.33(b) does not prohibit the Commission from imposing additional regulatory safety requirements. Although there are additional requirements, we believe that the additional regulatory requirements are all in the public interest. In effect, the proposed regulation does impose additional regulatory requirements for utilities, whereas the Guide Material made them discretionary. Therefore, we agree that statements to the contrary in the RAF were incorrect and we will make the appropriate corrections.

We further note IRRC’s comment that the proposed regulation includes only meter and regulator location and does not address several other safety concerns identified in the Preamble (Order). The issue of access to inside meters to conduct leak surveys up to the meter is raised by IRRC. We believe, as explained in Attachment One, that reasonable access by the utility to its facilities should be addressed in the utility’s tariff. We also addressed the safety issue with respect to steel service lines pulled from a stable position with the regulations that provide for the placement of the regulator outside the building. Finally, the use of excess flow valves is a safety device used in the industry and, at this point, we are not concerned by any lack of use within the industry to warrant regulatory oversight. However, in addition to noting that federal law already requires EFV installation on all new and replaced service lines, we propose that excess flow valves must also be installed on all service lines when a meter is located inside.

The proposed regulations do amend existing regulations and we believe are consistent with the already adopted federal regulations. However, we did not intend to imply in response to RAF questions that we would not address other issues and safety concerns. Furthermore, it was not our intent to imply that the provisions of the CFR are in conflict with existing PUC regulations. Rather than be inconsistent, we believe the proposed regulations supplement our current regulations which adopt the federal regulations.

Moreover, we did not intend to imply that NGDCs do not have access to meter sets, and that NGDCs cannot comply with state and federal regulations. Gas utilities should always have the ability to gain access to their facilities by applying their tariff rules.

We also question whether homeowners will be adversely affected economically by the additional regulatory requirements. With respect to regulators being relocated outside buildings in historic districts, we believe that it is merely speculation to maintain that the relocated regulators would diminish the property value of the historic resource.

IRRC believes that the PUC should explain in its Final Rulemaking Order how the final regulation takes into consideration the impact of the location of meters and regulators on NGDCs, homeowners, communities, Pennsylvania’s historic resources, and local preservation programs. IRRC recommends that the PUC withdraw this regulation, and, if not, that the Commission conduct stakeholder meetings with gas utilities and commentators, including those with knowledge of ordinances regulating historic properties. If not, IRRC also recommends that the PUC publish an advance notice of final rule-making to allow the public and standing committees the opportunity to review any revisions that the PUC makes to the regulatory language before submittal of a final-form regulation. IRRC recommends that the PUC review

and revise its final rulemaking order and responses in the RAF prior to submitting a final regulation, in order to clearly establish and support the rulemaking's intent that it is in the public interest.

Conclusion

This order sets forth further proposed amendments to the Meter Location rules and general requirements for new service lines. IRRC strongly recommends that the Commission publish an advance notice of final rulemaking to allow the public the opportunity to review any revisions that the Commission makes to the regulatory language before submittal of a final-form regulation. We are mindful of IRRC's comments and, therefore, will issue this order as an Advance Notice of Final Rulemaking. Accordingly, this order also establishes an additional comment period that ends 30 days from the date of the publication of this order in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin*.

The Commission welcomes public comments on all revisions to the proposed regulations. We emphasize that parties should use this opportunity to focus on the revisions to the proposed rule, and not to revisit issues already raised in previously submitted comments. We are particularly interested in receiving comments on the costs that would be incurred, and any savings that might be realized by affected parties as the result of these proposed amendments. We look forward to preparing and delivering a final form regulation to the IRRC after we have reviewed these comments. *Therefore,*

It is Ordered That:

1. The Secretary shall serve a copy of this Advance Notice of Final Rulemaking Order and Annex A on all jurisdictional natural gas distribution companies, the Office of Consumer Advocate, the Office of Small Business Advocate, the Energy Association of Pennsylvania and all other parties that filed comments at Docket No. L-2009-2107155. The Order, Annex A, and Attachment One shall be posted and made available electronically on the Commission's web site.

2. The Secretary shall certify this Advance Notice of Final Rulemaking Order and Annex A and deposit them with the Legislative Reference Bureau to be published in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin*.

3. An original of any written comments referencing the docket number of the proposed regulations be submitted within 30 days of publication in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin* to the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, Attn: Secretary, P. O. Box 3265, Harrisburg, PA 17105-3265.

4. The contact person for this proposed rulemaking is Terrence J. Buda, Assistant Counsel, Law Bureau, (717) 787-5000. Alternate formats of this document are available to persons with disabilities and may be obtained by contacting Sherri DelBiondo, Regulatory Coordinator, Law Bureau, (717) 772-4579.

5. The parties serve a courtesy copy of their comments on the contact persons mentioned above.

ROSEMARY CHIAVETTA,
Secretary

(Editor's Note: See 42 Pa.B. 3454 (June 16, 2012) for the proposed rulemaking order.)

Annex A
TITLE 52. PUBLIC UTILITIES
PART I. PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION
Subpart C. FIXED SERVICE UTILITIES
CHAPTER 59. GAS SERVICE
SERVICE AND FACILITIES

§ 59.18. [Location of meters] Meter, regulator and service line location.

[Meters shall be installed in either of the following locations:

(1) **Inside the building, preferably in a dry, well-ventilated place not subject to excessive heat, and as near as possible to the point of entrance of the pipe supplying service to the building.**

(2) **Outside the building at a location selected by the utility. A meter cover or housing is required if, in the judgment of the utility, conditions require the physical protection for the meter installation.]**

(a) *General requirements for meter and regulator location.*

(1) **Unless otherwise specified in this section, meters and regulators shall be located outside and aboveground. A utility shall provide written notice to a utility customer by first class mail or by personal delivery 30 days prior to relocating and subsequently installing a meter or regulator outside the customer's property.**

(2) **When it is necessary to install meters at multiple locations on a premises, a utility shall provide a tag or other means to indicate there are multiple meter locations.**

(3) **When selecting a meter or service regulator location, a utility shall consider potential damage by outside forces.**

(4) **The meter location must accommodate access for meter reading, inspection, repairs, testing, changing, and operation of the gas shut-off valve.**

(5) **When feasible and practical to do so, the meter location must accommodate the installation of the service line in a straight line perpendicular to the main.**

(6) **Meters and service regulators may not be installed in the following locations:**

(i) **Beneath or in front of windows or other building openings that may directly obstruct emergency fire exits.**

(ii) **Under interior stairways.**

(iii) **Under exterior stairways, unless an alternate means of egress exists and the meter and service regulator are installed in a well-vented location under stairs constructed of non-combustible material.**

(iv) **A crawl space.**

(v) **Near building air intakes pursuant to local or State building codes.**

(vi) **In contact with soil or other potentially corrosive materials.**

(7) **Unless caused by a customer's violation of applicable gas safety or tariff rules, a utility shall pay the costs of relocating a meter or regulator**

when the relocation is performed to meet utility or Commission safety requirements.

(8) Unless caused by a customer's violation of applicable gas safety or tariff rules, a utility shall pay the cost of extending customer-owned facilities to the new meter or regulator location when the relocation is performed to meet utility or Commission safety requirements.

(9) A customer requesting that a meter or regulator be moved shall pay the costs associated with relocation when the meter and regulator are currently situated in a suitable location under State and Federal guidelines.

(10) Utilities shall address meter, regulator and service line location regulations in their tariffs.

(b) *Outside meter or service regulator locations.* Outside meters or service regulators shall be installed in one of the following locations:

(1) When feasible and practical to do so, aboveground in a protected location, adjacent to the building served or as close as possible to the point where a production or transmission line is tapped.

(2) In a buried vault or meter box.

(i) The vault or meter box must be located on a customer's property, either adjacent to the building served or near the gas main.

(ii) Vaults may be located in a public right-of-way, subject to the consent of local jurisdictions as may be required.

(c) *General requirements for vaults or meter boxes.*

(1) A utility shall consider proper design and location criteria for a meter box, including:

(i) Ventilation.

(ii) Vehicular traffic.

(iii) Soil accumulation.

(iv) Surface water runoff.

(v) High water table.

(vi) Proximity to building air intakes or openings.

(vii) Proximity to an excessive heat source as defined under 49 CFR 192.353(c).

(2) Piping installed through vault walls shall be properly coated to protect from corrosion.

(3) Vaults containing gas piping may not be connected by means of a drain connection to any other underground structure.

(4) When a meter box is located outside a paved surface, a utility shall consider fill, topsoil, or sod being placed over the vault and, when feasible and practical to do so, choose an alternate location.

(d) *Inside meter locations.*

(1) Inside meter locations shall be considered only when:

(i) An outside location is not available due to one of the following restrictions:

(A) A property is listed or is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

(B) A property is located within a historic district that is listed or is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

(C) A property has been designated as historic under the Pennsylvania Historic District Act, Municipalities Planning Code, or municipal home rule charter.

(ii) Protection from ambient temperatures is necessary to avoid meter freeze-ups.

(iii) A utility determines that a meter is subject to a high risk of vandalism based on the utility's prior experience.

(iv) A utility determines that an outside meter location is neither feasible nor practical.

(2) Installed inside meters must be attached to an operable outside shut off valve.

(3) Meters installed within a building must be located in a ventilated place not less than 3 feet (914 millimeters) from a source of ignition or source of heat which might damage the meter.

(4) Excess flow valves must be installed on all service lines when a meter is located inside a building.

(e) *Other meter or service regulator locations.* A utility may consider a specially constructed cabinet recessed in the building wall, sealed from inside the building and vented to and accessible from outside the building.

(f) *General requirements for new service lines.*

(1) When feasible and practical to do so, a building may not have more than one service line.

(2) When feasible and practical to do so, a service line must terminate at the inlet valve of the meter set in the building in which the service line enters.

(3) When feasible and practical to do so, the service line must be installed in a straight line perpendicular to the main.

(g) *Application of regulation.*

(1) Upon its effective date, utilities shall comply with this regulation for new meter, regulator, and service line installations in new locations.

(2) Upon its effective date, utilities shall comply with this regulation when replacing existing meters, regulators and service line facilities.

(3) Utilities shall have 10 years from the effective date of this regulation to complete replacement of existing facilities in compliance with the requirements of the regulation.

[Pa.B. Doc. No. 13-1799. Filed for public inspection September 27, 2013, 9:00 a.m.]