DIVISION OF UTILITY AND RAILROAD SAFETY

The Division of Utility and Railroad Safety ("Division") assists the Commission in administering three safety programs: Gas and Hazardous Liquid Pipeline Safety, Railroad Safety and Underground Utility Damage Prevention.

The Pipeline Safety Section of the Division helps ensure the safe operation of gas and hazardous liquid pipeline facilities, through various types of inspections. These inspections include; comprehensive reviews of required programs, procedures, and plans, the inspection of pipeline facilities, review of operator records, and the performance of risked-based field inspections of pipeline activities including construction and repairs. The Division also responds to and investigates reported pipeline Incidents[1] and Accidents[2] as reported to the Division's 24-hour, 365 day staffed on-call emergency number. The Division also investigates certain other pipeline emergencies that may be of significant impact to the Commonwealth but have not yet risen to reporting criteria at the time of discovery.

In 2020, the Division's pipeline safety activities encompassed the inspection of intrastate gas distribution and transmission pipelines, intrastate hazardous liquid pipelines, and certain interstate gas and liquid pipelines.

The Virginia natural gas distribution systems are comprised of seven private natural distributions gas companies and three municipal owned distributions systems who collectively operate a total of 21,972 miles of main piping and 19,526 miles of service pipeline. These 41,498 miles of natural gas distribution pipeline provide service to 1,307,894 Virginia customers based on 2019 federal reporting data (at the time of this report 2020 data is not yet submitted).

Pipeline safety activities also include inspections of intrastate transmission lines. These pipelines are operated by the seven private distribution companies, five intrastate gas transmission lines. These transmission pipeline companies operate over 500 miles of intrastate transmission pipelines in the Commonwealth. Additionally, there are five gathering line companies who operate 35 miles of gathering line piping, one liquefied natural gas plant, 40 master-metered distribution systems, and 10 propane companies who operate jurisdictional distribution systems (two of which also operate private natural gas distribution systems).

The Division acts as an interstate agent for the US Department of Transportation, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration ("PHMSA") and inspects three interstate hazardous liquid pipeline companies along with the inspection of Virginia's sole intrastate hazardous liquid company. These four hazardous liquid pipeline companies operate 1,145 miles of hazardous liquid pipelines in Virginia.

Since 2017, the Division has entered into a temporary agreement with PHMSA to inspect construction of the Mountain Valley Pipeline and Atlantic Coast Pipeline interstate gas transmission pipelines in response to §56-555.2 of the Code of Virginia. The Atlantic Coast Pipeline was canceled during 2020.

Summary of Calendar Year 2020 Activities

Gas safety inspection days conducted	1,273
Interstate gas safety inspection days conducted	12
Hazardous liquid safety inspection days conducted	94
Number of probable violations found during 2020	1
Number of probable violations submitted to PHMSA	23
Number of compliance actions taken	45
Pipeline Incidents[3] or Accidents[4] investigated	7
Number of citizen complaints investigated	14

The Rail Safety Section of the Division in coordination with the Federal Railroad Administration, helps ensure the safe operation of jurisdictional railroads by conducting inspections of tracks, signals, highway rail grade crossings, railroad operations, shipment of hazardous materials by rail, motive power and equipment and investigations of certain accidents and citizen complaints. The Division's inspections involve more than 3,800 miles of track, over 4,100 highway and private grade crossings, thousands of rolling stock, which also include tank cars, and intermodal containers and 69 yard facilities.

[1] Incident as defined by §191.3.
[2] Accident as defined by §195.50.
[3] Incident as defined by §191.3.
[4] Accident as defined by §195.50.

Summary of 2020 Activities

Number of Hazmat Units[5] Inspected	9,494
Number of Track Units[6] Inspected	10,581
Number of Locomotive and Car Units[7] Inspected	24,486
Number of Operating Practice Units[8] Inspected	941
Number of Signal/Grade Crossing[9] Units Inspected	1,143
Number of Defects Noted	5,356
Number of Violations Cited	43
Number of Accidents/NRC Incidents Investigated	39
Number of Complaints Investigated	23

The Damage Prevention Section of the Division investigates all reports of "probable violations" of the Underground Utility Damage Prevention Act ("Act") and on a monthly basis presents its findings and recommendations to an Advisory Committee appointed by the Commission in accordance with the Act. This Committee then makes enforcement recommendations to the Commission. The Division provides free training relative to the Act and safe digging practices to excavators, utilities and others, disseminates damage prevention educational material and promotes partnership among the stakeholders to further underground utility damage prevention in Virginia.

Summary of 2020 Activities

Underground Utility Damage Reports Investigated	1,137
Number of Individuals Having Received Damage Prevention Training	1,118
Number of Damage Prevention Educational Material Disseminated	151,676
Number of Damage Prevention Field Audits Conducted	1,180

[5] Each hazmat record review along with each visual inspection of a tank car, bulk/non-bulk package and/or freight container is considered a hazmat unit.
[6] Each mile of track, record, crossing at grade, among other things, is considered a track unit.
[7] Each locomotive, car, motive power equipment record, among other things, is considered a unit.
[8] Each location where operations are or may occur such as switchyards, field offices, yard offices, trains, yard crew locations and dispatching are considered an operating practice unit.
[9] Each signal/switch/grade crossing record review along with each visual inspection of a signal/grade crossing component is considered a signal/grade crossing unit.