

**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.

**Pipeline Safety**

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 risk-based field inspections of pipeline activities including construction and repairs. The Division also responds to and investigates reported pipeline Incidents<sup>1</sup> and Accidents<sup>2</sup> 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 2022, 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 22,303.6 miles of main piping and 19,831 miles of service pipeline. These 42,134.6 miles of natural gas distribution pipeline provide service to 1,329,576 Virginia customers based on 2021 federal reporting data (at the time of this report 2022 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 517 miles of intrastate transmission pipelines in the Commonwealth. Additionally, there are four gathering line operators who operate 40.47 miles of gathering line piping, one liquefied natural gas plant, 36 master-metered distribution systems, and 12 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 four interstate hazardous liquid pipeline companies along with the inspection of Virginia's sole intrastate hazardous liquid company. These five hazardous liquid pipeline companies operate 1,143 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. No inspection activity occurred for the Mountain Valley Pipeline in 2022 due to legal challenges brought against permits for the pipeline. The Division's temporary interstate agreement was renewed through 2023 for this project in anticipation of construction restarting. The project is approximately 95% complete.

**Summary of Calendar Year 2022 Activities**

Gas safety inspection days conducted	809.09
Interstate gas safety inspection days conducted	0
Hazardous liquid safety inspection days conducted	225
Number of probable violations found during 2022	581
Number of probable violations submitted to PHMSA	28
Number of compliance actions taken	60
Pipeline Incidents <sup>3</sup> or Accidents <sup>4</sup> investigated	1
Number of citizen complaints investigated	17

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<sup>1</sup> Incident as defined by §191.3.

<sup>2</sup> Accident as defined by §195.50.

<sup>3</sup> Incident as defined by §191.3.

<sup>4</sup> Accident as defined by §195.50.

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**Railroad Safety**

The Rail Safety Section of the Division in coordination with the Federal Railroad Administration (49 CFR Part 212 – Safe Safety Participation Regulations), helps ensure the safe operation of jurisdictional railroads and contractors by conducting inspections of tracks, signal systems (wayside and onboard locomotive), highway rail grade crossings, railroad operations, shipment of hazardous materials by rail, motive power and equipment and investigations of critical accidents and citizen complaints. The Division's inspections involve more than 4,100 miles of track, over 4,200 public and private highway rail-grade crossings, thousands of rolling stock, which also include tank cars, and intermodal containers and 69-yard facilities.

During the year of 2022, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) had multiple vacancies which were not filled. The SCC rail safety team played an integral part in the success of carrying out the FRA's mission. Inspectors assisted in multiple audits across all disciplines in and out of the state.

**Summary of 2022 Inspection Activities**

	<b>Own<sup>6</sup></b>	<b>Accompanied<sup>7</sup></b>
Number of Hazmat Units <sup>1</sup> Inspected	8,133	2,128
Number of Track Units <sup>2</sup> Inspected	9,915	953
Number of Locomotive and Car Units <sup>3</sup> Inspected	42,687	859
Number of Operating Practice Units <sup>4</sup> Inspected	817	251
Number of Signal/Grade Crossing <sup>5</sup> Units Inspected	454	954
Number of Defects Noted	6,802	774
Number of Violations Cited	57	17
Number of Accidents Investigated	9	
NRC Incidents Investigated	40	
Number of Complaints Investigated	35	

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> Each mile of track, record, crossing at grade, among other things, is considered a track unit.

<sup>3</sup> Each locomotive, car, motive power equipment record, among other things, is considered a unit.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> Each signal/switch/grade crossing/PTC/ wayside and onboard locomotive signal system and record review along with each visual inspection of a signal/grade crossing component is considered a signal/grade crossing unit.

<sup>6</sup> Own means the primary inspector wrote the report themselves.

<sup>7</sup> Accompanying means the inspector worked alongside (accompanying inspector) another inspector during their duties and was shown on the primary inspector's report.

**Damage Prevention**

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 2022 Activities**

Underground Utility Damage Reports Investigated	1,054
Number of Individuals Having Received Damage Prevention Training	363
Number of Damage Prevention Educational Material Disseminated	78,797
Number of Damage Prevention Field Audits Conducted	667