

# Pipeline Safety

## **How safe are the pipelines?**

According to the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, pipelines are the safest and most cost-effective means to transport the extraordinary volumes of natural gas and hazardous liquid products that fuel our economy. To move the volume of even a modest pipeline, it would take a constant line of tanker trucks (about 750 per day) loading up and moving out every two minutes, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

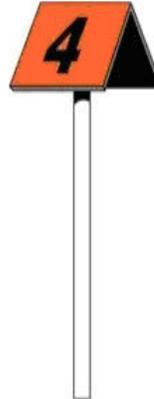
## **Call Before You Dig!**



The number one cause of pipeline ruptures is careless backhoe operation. Since 2007, a “one-call” system has been in place. Now, by calling **8-1-1**, a centralized center will give construction and utility crews one place to call before they dig, to coordinate and ensure that they will not damage the various underground utilities. You can read more about it at [www.call811.com](http://www.call811.com).

Every digging job requires a call—even seemingly small projects like planning a tree. If you hit an underground utility line or pipeline while digging, you can harm yourself or those around you, disrupt service to an entire neighborhood and potentially be responsible for fines and repair costs. **Smart digging means calling 8-1-1 before each job. Whether you are a homeowner or a professional excavator, one call to 8-1-1 gets your underground lines marked for FREE.**

**Pipelines, carrying a variety of fuels, run North to South through Cowlitz County near Interstate 5.**



## **How Do I Locate a Pipeline Area?**

Since pipelines are usually buried underground, line markers and warning signs like the ones above are used to indicate their *approximate* location along the pipeline route. Pipeline right-of-ways are well marked to help prevent damage from digging. Anyone planning to dig, especially in an area that appears to be a pipeline right-of-way, should contact the 8-1-1 call center at least 72 hours in advance of digging.

## **What is a Pipeline Right-of-Way?**

A right-of-way is a strip of land over and around pipelines where some of the property owner's legal rights have been granted to a pipeline company. The agreement may vary the rights and widths of the right-of-way, but generally, the pipeline company's right-of-way extends 25 feet from each side of the pipeline unless special conditions exist.

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## **How to Recognize a Pipeline Leak:**

If you suspect a leak has occurred, the American Petroleum Institute suggests that you look for the following warning signs:

- **Sight**—Look around the pipeline area. Visually, a leak could appear as an accumulation of liquid on the ground near the pipeline, or a dense white cloud of fog over the leak location. Spots of discoloration among otherwise green vegetation surrounding the pipeline may also indicate a leak.
- **Sound**—Listen for an unusual noise coming from the pipeline. A leak can make a hissing or a roaring sound, depending on the magnitude of the leak.
- **Smell**—Detecting an unusual odor could be an indication of a pipeline leak. A liquid petroleum leak will be accompanied by a strong scent. Each liquid petroleum product has its own characteristic odor.

## **If a Leak Occurs:**

If you know or suspect that a pipeline is leaking or damaged, your personal safety and the safety of those around you should be your first concern. You should follow these steps:

- Leave the area immediately.
- Avoid direct contact with the escaping liquids.
- Avoid creating sparks or sources of heat that could cause liquids or vapors rising from them, to ignite and burn. For example, do not light a match, start an engine, use a telephone or even switch on/off an electric light.
- Turn off any running machinery (engines).
- Call 9-1-1 after you have left the area.

## **Websites:**

[www.call811.com](http://www.call811.com)

[www.phmsa.dot.gov](http://www.phmsa.dot.gov)

[www.pipeline101.com](http://www.pipeline101.com)

