

National Pipeline Mapping System (NPMS) FAQs

1. How do I get access to NPMS data if I am not a government official or pipeline operator?

The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration can only release NPMS data to government officials and pipeline operators. There are several private vendors who can provide you pipeline GIS data at a cost. The NPMS Public Map Viewer is open to all users and displays NPMS data for a single county at a time. Additionally, the Find Who's Operating in Your Area tool provides the general public with pipeline operator contact information within a specific state, county, or ZIP code.

2. Where do I start if I've never made an NPMS submission before?

A complete submission to the NPMS consists of five components. Your first step should be to consult the Summary of Required Components page. Next, download the latest version of the NPMS Operator Standards and the Operator Submissions Guide. Everything you need to know about making a submission is contained in these documents. The five components that are required are as follows:

- Public Contact Information
- Geospatial Pipeline Data
- Attribute Data
- Metadata
- Transmittal Letter

3. Where can I find the status of my submission?

Contact NPMS staff at npms@dot.gov for an update on your submission status.

4. How often should I update my submission?

Operators are required to submit their data to the NPMS every 12 months, or to notify the NPMS National Repository if there have been no changes from the previous submission. In order to align NPMS submissions with Annual Reports, operators are required to use the same OPID to report assets to the NPMS as they use in their Annual Report. Operators are also requested to submit their gas pipelines to the NPMS between 1/1 and 3/15 of each year reflecting assets as of 12/31 the previous year and to submit liquid pipelines between 1/1 and 6/15 of each year, reflecting assets as of 12/31 the previous year.

5. What do I do if the FTP tool is not working?

If you find that the FTP tool is not working, please alert NPMS staff by emailing npms@dot.gov or calling 703-317-6294.

6. Is the NPMS collecting gathering and distribution line data?

Section 2 of the NPMS Operator Standards defines the pipeline data that is collected for the NPMS.

7. Operators were required to provide NPMS information on the confidence/accuracy of their pipeline location information. Is accuracy available for the other data layers?

Yes. Metadata is associated with the Commercially Navigable Waterways, High Population Areas and Other Populated Areas data layers in NPMS. The metadata describes the sources and accuracies of the data layers.

8. Should operators inform PHMSA Pipeline Safety of changes they determine are needed to HCAs as defined in the NPMS?

Operators should evaluate the information they obtain from the NPMS to determine if it is accurate. If operators conclude that changes to HCA boundaries are needed (e.g., populated areas have expanded), then operators should make those changes to the HCAs as they are used in the operators' integrity management programs. Operators should document the reasons for such changes and be prepared to discuss them during PHMSA Pipeline Safety inspections. Operators should not generally inform PHMSA Pipeline Safety of such changes. PHMSA Pipeline Safety relies upon other agencies (e.g., Census Bureau, Corps of Engineers) for the data used in the NPMS and does not have the resources to engage those agencies to make minor changes. An exception in which operators should notify PHMSA Pipeline Safety would be if significant positional or labeling errors are found. As an example, rivers in Alaska were found to be mis-located in early versions of the NPMS due to digitizing errors in the original Commercially Navigable Waterways data set. PHMSA Pipeline Safety will work with other agencies as appropriate to try to correct any major deficiencies in the NPMS. Operators should contact their PHMSA Pipeline Safety Region representatives if they identify errors of this nature.