

PI-73-0116

September 13, 1973

Mr. Philip Furgang  
Village Trustee  
Suffern, NY 10901

Dear Mr. Furgang

This is in response to your letter dated August 29, 1973, regarding service line valves.

You indicate that it is your understanding that each house constructed in Suffern has a gas cut-off valve, exterior to the house, but mounted thereon. You inquire whether a secondary valve, specifically a curb cut-off valve, is required according to the Federal gas pipelines safety regulations.

Section 192.363 of Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations requires that each service line must have a service line valve that meets the material requirements of Subpart B and the design requirements of Subpart D of the regulations. The Federal pipeline safety regulations, however, do not specify whether the valve shall be above or below ground. Section 192.365, 49 CFR, requires that each service-line valve must be installed upstream of the regulator or meter; must be installed in an accessible location outside the building, if feasible; and underground service-line valves be located in a covered durable curb box or standpipe.

There are no requirements for a secondary service-line valve in the Federal gas pipeline safety regulations. However a State regulatory agency which has assumed safety responsibility for intrastate facilities under Section 5 of the Natural Gas Pipeline Safety Act may have more stringent requirements regarding service-line valves.

I trust that this has answered your specific question. If we can be of further assistance to you, please let us know.

Sincerely,  
Joseph C. Caldwell  
Director  
Office of Pipeline Safety

September 14, 1973

Mr. Philip Furgang  
Village Trustee  
Village of Suffern  
44 Washington Avenue  
Suffern, New York 10901

Mr. Furgang:

This is in regard to your letter of August 29, 1973, concerning shutoff valves installed on gas service lines in the Village of Suffern, New York.

The National Transportation Safety Board is primarily concerned with investigating transportation accidents, (including pipelines) and conducting special accident prevention studies. The Board does not have any regulatory or enforcement authority. That responsibility rests at the Federal level, with the Office of Pipeline Safety (OPS). We are sending your letter to OPS and asking them to reply to your questions concerning the location of service line valves. You may also wish to review this matter with the New York State Public Service Commission.

As a practical matter, based on our many accident investigations throughout the country, we have never encountered a case where ignited gas flowed back through the gas lines to other houses. Since a gas air mixture is required for combustion, and gas lines contain only gas under pressure, it is extremely improbable, if not impossible, for such an action to occur.

Your concern for pipelines safety is gratifying.

Sincerely yours,  
John H. Reed  
Chairman

August 29, 1973

Chairman  
National Transportation Safety Board  
Dulles International Airport  
Virginia

Dear Sir:

Many of my constituents are concerned over a practice conducted by the Orange and Rockland Utilities. It is my understanding that each house constructed in Suffern has a gas cut-off, exterior to the house, but mounted thereon. In a great many cases, Orange and Rockland Utilities provide a cut-off at the curb as well. I have been advised by Orange and Rockland that the curb cut-off is provided solely for their convenience. However, I have been advised by members of our fire department that that second cut-off is a necessity, since hot fires very often prevent the turning off of the gas at the cut-offs located on the houses. In the instance of a hot fire, I am told, the ignited gas might flow back through the gas lines to any number of houses on the branches of a line, causing a chain reaction explosion.

There are a great many houses in the Village of Suffern which are without such curb cut-offs. Recently, I contacted Orange and Rockland Utilities and their representatives advised me that it was their belief that curb cut-offs were superfluous.

I would appreciate it if you would advise me whether or not you concur in that belief, or whether, indeed, they are a necessity. Your prompt response in this instance would be of great assistance to me and the Village of Suffern.

Very truly yours,  
Philip Furgang  
Village Trustee