

December 14, 1979

Honorable Don Young  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Young:

We are responding to your communication to the Department, dated November 13, 1979, concerning an inquiry by your constituent, Herbert Werre.

Mr. Werre asks whether it is permissible for a gas company to install a pipeline along the center of a road and, if so, to what depth the line must be buried.

The Federal safety standards governing the transportation of gas by pipeline are set forth in 49 CFR Part 192. These safety standards do not prohibit a gas company from installing a pipeline under a road, running along its center or elsewhere.

For buried onshore pipelines installed after March 12, 1971, or relocated or replaced after November 12, 1970, the required burial depth is set forth in Section 192.327 for transmission lines and mains, and in Section 192.361(a) for service lines. Earlier buried onshore pipelines are not subject to the burial standards of Part 192.

Since the pipeline Mr. Werre is concerned about is a distribution line, the appropriate burial depth (assuming the line is subject to the burial standards) would depend on whether the line is a "main" or "service line." Under the Federal standards a "main" is a line that serves as a source of gas supply for more than one service line, and a "service line" is a line between a main and the customer's piping or customer's meter, whichever is farther downstream. The required burial depth for buried mains as prescribed by Section 192.327(b), (c), and (d) is as follows:

- "(b) Except as provided in paragraph (c) and (d) of this section, each buried main must be installed with at least 24 inches of cover.
  
- "(c) Where an underground structure prevents the installation of a transmission line or main with the minimum cover, the transmission line or main may be installed with less cover if it is provided with additional protection to withstand anticipated external loads.

- "(d) A main may be installed with less than 24 inches of cover if the law of the State or municipality--
- (1) Establishes a minimum cover of less than 24 inches;
  - (2) Requires that mains be installed in a common trench with other utility lines; and
  - (3) Provides adequately for prevention of damage to the pipe by external forces.

The required depth for buried service lines as prescribed by Section 192.361(a) is as follows:

- "(a) Depth. Each buried service line must be installed with at least 12 inches of cover in private property and at least 18 inches of cover in streets and roads. However, where an underground structure prevents installation at those depths, the service line must be able to withstand any anticipated external load.

We trust this adequately responds to your inquiry.

Sincerely,

\signed\

Howard Dugoff  
Administrator