



WHAT IS  
**PIPELINE PUBLIC  
ENGAGEMENT?**

# FAQ

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## **WHAT IF A STAKEHOLDER ASKS FOR INFORMATION THAT AN OPERATOR CANNOT SHARE FOR LEGAL, REGULATORY OR BUSINESS PROPRIETARY REASONS?**

When asked about a specific type of information that can be subject to one of these restrictions, the operator should strive to share a summary of the information that meets the stakeholder's needs. If the information cannot be shared, the operator shall explain why it cannot be shared, and seek to learn if there is alternative information that can be shared that will meet the needs of the stakeholder. The operator should focus on what can be shared with stakeholders.

## **WHAT WILL THE OPERATOR AND STAKEHOLDER INTERACTIONS LOOK LIKE?**

The interactions between a pipeline operator and stakeholders should be characterized by transparency, inclusivity, and a collaborative approach. The goal is to foster meaningful and constructive engagement to address concerns, share information, and make informed decisions

## **DOES AN OPERATOR NEED TO ENGAGE WITH STAKEHOLDERS WHO HAVE NO INTEREST IN ENGAGEMENT?**

No, an operator is not expected to engage with stakeholders who have stated they are not interested in engagement. However, an operator should maintain a process for stakeholders to express their interest in engagement throughout a pipeline's life cycle, even if they were not initially interested.

## **WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT BY PIPELINE OPERATORS?**

The benefits of improved public engagement include enhanced understanding by stakeholders as well as addressing community concerns and minimizing impacts. Public engagement also benefits communities that will likely change over the course of a pipeline's life cycle. Establishing a relationship built of trust and transparency also provides safety benefits for an informed community and proactive operator.

## **ARE OPERATORS EXPECTED TO BE FULLY CONFORMANT WITH THIS RP ON THE DATE OF PUBLICATION?**

No, similar to RP 1173 Pipeline Safety Management Systems, timeframes are measured in years to reach significant and widespread maturity across all program elements. Regardless of an operator's starting point, the iterative nature of the approach described in RP 1185 provides the opportunity for continuous improvement over a journey of increasing conformance and effectiveness.

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## INTRODUCTION

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**Our nationwide pipeline network delivers the fuels and raw materials we need to power our vehicles, heat our homes and make the products of modern life. This pipeline network from production areas, to processing locations to local delivery means every community across the country is near or crossed by pipelines.**

API Recommended Practice (RP) 1185, *Pipeline Public Engagement* will help transmission and DOT-regulated gathering line operators engage communities and facilitate needed conversations. RP 1185 builds upon the one-way communication of API RP 1162, *Public Awareness Programs for Pipeline Operators* by encouraging proactive two-way communication and with a broad range of stakeholders. RP 1185 may also contribute to the stakeholder engagement element of a Pipeline Safety Management System program as found in RP 1173.

RP 1185 provides a scalable and flexible framework with implementation specifics dependent on the type, size and location of a pipeline, alongside existing programs. RP 1185 and this guidebook provide operators with recommendations on effective public engagement as well as its importance and benefits. The broad themes and specific elements of RP 1185 are highlighted in this guidebook with operators encouraged to consult industry-wide resources at [pipelinepublicengagement.org](https://pipelinepublicengagement.org) for more implementation materials.





# BENEFITS OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

# 02



**Enhanced Understanding:** Proactive engagement during new pipeline projects sends more information about the project to impacted stakeholders, helping them understand the project's purpose, scope, potential impacts and benefits. Questions can be asked and answered before uncertainty or misinformation becomes a problem.



**Addressing Concerns and Mitigating Impacts:** Engagement provides a forum for stakeholders to provide feedback on a project and raise concerns. By actively listening and responding to these concerns, pipeline operators can identify and address potential issues early on, potentially reducing project delays.



**Changing Communities:** Engagement provides a platform for addressing community concerns about existing pipelines, particularly as the challenges faced by communities evolve over the lifespan of a pipeline. The footprint of the community near a pipeline and its members' attitudes towards infrastructure have the potential to change. Continued relationships fostered through public engagement assist in navigating these changes effectively.



**Collaboration in Maintenance:** Engagement before and during maintenance activities helps manage potential disruptions to a surrounding community. Turnover in a community may mean current residents or leaders were not engaged during original construction. Involving stakeholders in the planning and execution of maintenance activities fosters shared responsibility and ensures that community needs and concerns are considered. Collaboration helps minimize disruptions, promotes efficient planning and enhances project outcomes.



**Enhanced Safety and Risk Management:** Continued engagement with stakeholders throughout the life cycle of a pipeline helps raise awareness about safety measures, emergency response procedures and risk mitigation strategies. Engaged stakeholders are more likely to be vigilant, report issues promptly and actively participate in maintaining the safety of the pipeline.







## CORE PRINCIPLES

RP 1185 contains Core Principles for effectively engaging with stakeholders. These Core Principles provide pipeline operators with a set of fundamental values and objectives to guide their public engagement efforts. By aligning their practices with these principles, pipeline operators can ensure that their engagement initiatives are effective, transparent, inclusive and responsive to the needs and expectations of the public and stakeholders.



**Openness and Transparency:** Frank discussion, sharing of truthful, timely and relevant information, coupled with the willingness to listen and learn, all nurture an environment of transparency.



**Respect:** Considering and respecting others' points of view by listening to questions, understanding concerns and allowing each other to share perspectives.



**Reciprocity:** Communication and action for mutual benefit, listening as well as speaking, being responsive to inquiries and interests and sharing responsibility for interactions and relationships.



**Inclusiveness:** Deliberate efforts to involve stakeholders interested in the subject or action.



**Accessibility:** Commitment to provide a variety of methods and opportunities for all interested stakeholders to participate.



**Equity:** Recognition that stakeholders live under different circumstances and are afforded an opportunity for meaningful engagement to inform decision making.









## FLEXIBILITY AND SCALABILITY

# 04

**Flexibility and scalability are fundamental features of RP 1185. The developers of RP 1185 recognize pipeline operators and their pipeline networks come in all shapes and sizes, from interstate to regional to local. Pipelines operate in vastly different types of locations, from rural to suburban to urban. Pipeline projects vary greatly from local maintenance on existing pipelines to projects proposed to cross an entire region of the country.**

**RP 1185 reflects and embraces the differences in operators, engagement programs and engagement needs** by providing a flexible and scalable framework. Pipeline operators cannot and should not employ a one-size-fits all approach to their engagement programs. Similarly, operators should be allowed to scale their engagement efforts to reflect the type and needs of their specific engagement circumstances.

**RP 1185's framework gives operators the flexibility to tailor their public engagement program in a way that reflects their organization, current programs and future needs.**

Where an operator already has an established engagement program, RP 1185 provides a baseline to compare, evaluate and improve their program. For operators with some engagement practices but no comprehensive engagement program, RP 1185 provides a means to establish a comprehensive public engagement program.

**RP 1185 also intends for operators to scale their specific engagement efforts to reflect the number and variety of stakeholders and scope of a particular community.** The local communities, their history with prior industrial activity in their area and the engagement challenges operators may face all call for different levels of engagement. Operators have the flexibility and scalability to apply this RP as appropriate to their specific circumstances with the goal of having a comprehensive and effective program.









# 05 ELEMENTS OF STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

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The following elements are intended to apply to any engagement process and form the main program elements of RP 1185:

- 1 Commit and Align** – Describes how operators, beginning with their management, demonstrate the organization's commitment to stakeholder engagement
- 2 Identify, Understand and Confirm** – Describes stakeholders who may need engagement
- 3 Plan and Prepare** – Describes how operators prepare for stakeholder engagement activities
- 4 Share Information** – Describes what operators should share as part of baseline information
- 5 Ask, Listen and Respond** – Describes how operators should engage with stakeholders
- 6 Monitor, Evaluate and Adjust** – Describes how operators should assess, document, verify and improve stakeholder engagement performance

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## PLAN, DO, CHECK AND ACT

The six elements of RP 1185 form an engagement cycle similar to the Plan, Do, Check and Act cycle of RP 1173, *Pipeline Safety Management Systems*.









## ELEMENTS OF STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

# COMMIT AND ALIGN

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**Under RP 1185, operators commit and align their organizations to effective public engagement. High-level management support is crucial to promoting a culture of transparency, inclusivity and responsiveness necessary to build mutual trust and conduct effective public engagement. Without this tangible leadership commitment, developing an effective public engagement program may be challenging. In some smaller organizations, Top Management and Management may be the same set of personnel.**

## TOP MANAGEMENT

- Sets the vision and direction for public engagement efforts
- Makes clear to employees and stakeholders the organization's commitment to public engagement
- Establishes high-level performance measures for transparency and engagement
- Identifies the executives accountable for implementation and continuous improvement
- Ensures engagement programs are adequately budgeted and resourced

## MANAGEMENT

- Translates the vision set by Top Management into actionable plans and procedures to implement, evaluate and improve engagement programs
- Assigns personnel accountable for engagement programs and activities
- Provides resources, training and integration of engagement practices into daily operations
- Aligns programs and actions involving public engagement, such as safety management systems, public awareness, damage prevention, integrity management and emergency response
- Encourages sharing, monitoring and evaluation of engagement efforts to promote continuous improvement









## ELEMENTS OF STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

# IDENTIFY, UNDERSTAND AND CONFIRM

**Establish which persons or groups have an interest in a planned or existing pipeline and gain a deeper understanding of the basis for their outlook.**



IDENTIFY



UNDERSTAND



CONFIRM



**Identify:** Consider the range of potential stakeholders based on their proximity, interests, concerns and potential impacts throughout the life cycle of a pipeline. Proactive efforts can find subpopulations potentially more vulnerable to impacts or facing barriers to participation. Cultural differences may affect how a population relates to a project in their community. Government identification tools and guidance may supplement an operator's approach.



**Understand:** Geographic and contact information about a stakeholder are only starting points. Understanding stakeholders means recognizing and appreciating their interests, needs, affiliations, rights and expectations. Having an in-depth understanding of stakeholders' perspectives helps pipeline operators adequately plan and prepare for engaging with them.



**Confirm:** Confirming contact information includes knowing an effective means to engage a stakeholder. Knowing the preferred connection approach or the presence of a barrier to participation improves the effectiveness and efficiency of engagement.





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## ELEMENTS OF STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

# PLAN AND PREPARE

**Planning and preparing for stakeholder engagement allows the operator to ensure its engagement program reflects the needs of identified stakeholders and is fit for the purpose of the engagement.**



**Plan:** Planning for an upcoming engagement builds on the information gathered during Identify, Understand and Confirm activities. A plan reflecting the needs and expectations of stakeholders includes the tools and methods most effective for reaching those stakeholders. The plan may include strategies for overcoming barriers to participation to ensure fair representation, inclusion and equitable involvement of needed stakeholders. The plan will reflect the scope of the project or pipeline and the purpose of the engagement.



**Prepare:** Preparing for engagement involves establishing the necessary procedures, allocating resources and identifying the personnel responsible for implementing the engagement plan. Preparation can include training to ensure that personnel have the skills and knowledge required for effective engagement. RP 1185 provides suggestions for methods of engagement, communications tools and key process steps. RP 1185 also expands on engagement considerations over the pipeline life cycle.









## ELEMENTS OF STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

# SHARE INFORMATION

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**Sharing baseline information about a project or pipeline encourages initial engagement and begins the interactive part of the process. Providing sufficient information enables recipients to knowledgeably participate in engagement efforts. Baseline information can include facts about the proposed project or system, anticipated timeline or schedule description of work to be undertaken, short and long-term impacts and how they will be mitigated.**

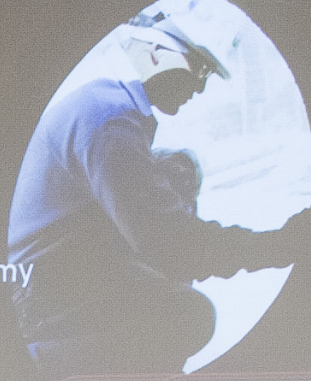
Providing clear and transparent communication about the pipeline project or operation fills information voids, helps prevent the spread of misinformation and builds trust between stakeholder and operator. Relationships are started during the initial sharing information phase and provide the basis for information flowing through the Ask, Listen and Respond phase.



# CO<sub>2</sub> Pipelines

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ExxonMobil Pipeline Company



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AskRail  
Cameo  
T&E H.S  
300ppm

FAIR  
RE

COVE  
FIRE



## ELEMENTS OF STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

# ASK, LISTEN AND RESPOND

The heart of an engagement process is asking stakeholders what they want to know about a pipeline or project, listening to their concerns and observations and responding to their requests.



ASK



LISTEN



RESPOND



**Ask:** Pipeline operators are encouraged to ask stakeholders for their opinions, concerns and suggestions regarding a pipeline project or operation. This involves creating opportunities for stakeholders to provide their input through various channels such as public meetings, surveys, focus groups or individual consultations. Meaningful involvement means stakeholder groups are sought out, there is two-way dialogue and their involvement facilitated.



**Listen:** Listening involves attentively considering and acknowledging the input provided by stakeholders. It requires creating a safe and respectful environment where stakeholders feel comfortable expressing their views and where their input is genuinely considered. Active listening allows pipeline operators to demonstrate empathy, build trust and establish a constructive dialogue with stakeholders.



**Respond:** Pipeline operators are encouraged to respond to stakeholders' concerns, questions and suggestions in a comprehensive and meaningful manner. This involves providing clear and accurate information, addressing stakeholder concerns and explaining the rationale behind decisions. By responding effectively, pipeline operators can demonstrate their commitment to acknowledging stakeholder input, fostering trust and maintaining engagement with the public.





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## ELEMENTS OF STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

# INFORMATION REQUESTS

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**Sharing information in response to a stakeholder request is foundational to effective engagement. Sharing information promotes transparency and helps build trust. Information requests may come to an operator through an engagement process or unsolicited during normal operations. An operator should respond clearly, timely, with the necessary context and matching the stakeholder's understanding level.**

There are types of information that an operator cannot share for legal, regulatory or business proprietary reasons. RP 1185 provides a process for operators to consider information requests, determine the nature of the request, identify what information is shareable, including in redacted or summarized form and respond to the stakeholder. A successful sharing process under RP 1185 reflects an operator considering the request in good faith and sharing what information they can.







## ELEMENTS OF STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

# MONITOR, EVALUATE AND ADJUST

**Monitor:** Collecting and tracking key performance indicators, such as operator activities, stakeholder participation rates, the quality of interactions and the impact of engagement activities, is important for measuring individual engagement efforts and overall program performance. Minimum program documents of RP 1185 may form the basis for a monitoring program. In addition to quantifiable activity metrics, operators can also use qualitative surveys, interviews or advisory group feedback to gauge stakeholder satisfaction.

**Evaluate:** An evaluation of an engagement program should reflect a combination of quantitative and qualitative measures of activities and outcomes. Quantitative metrics around documents, interactions and responses are important. Effective engagement is also about the stakeholder experience and whether participants felt respected, listened to and influential. Ultimately an engagement or program with an unsatisfied stakeholder can be effective if based on reasonable compliance with RP 1185.

**Adjust:** Operators can improve engagement performance over time through adjustments based on findings from program monitoring and evaluation. Management plays a crucial role in fostering a culture of sharing and learning, as well as supporting necessary program or resource changes to enhance effectiveness.



### **P PLAN**

Strategic planning activity

### **D DO**

Implementation activity


### **C CHECK**

Evaluation and QAQC activity

### **A ADJUST**

Program updates and adjustment activity



A photograph of three firefighters standing in front of a fire truck inside a fire station. The firefighter on the left is wearing a dark uniform and has his arms crossed. The firefighter in the center is wearing a dark t-shirt and has his arms crossed. The firefighter on the right is wearing a dark uniform and has his arms crossed. The fire truck is a large vehicle with a chrome grille and emergency lights on top. The text "CEDAR COUNTRY FIRE RESCUE" is visible on the side of the truck. The background shows the interior of a fire station with various equipment and a large open bay door.

**RP 1185 Disclaimer:** This booklet provides a basic overview of pipeline public engagement. API is not affiliated with or endorsed by the organizations (AHA, TechCrunch, APA) identified in this booklet and information from these organizations are used only as examples of public engagement. This booklet is intended as a reference for developing a public engagement program and should not replace regulatory requirements, engineering principles, or company policies.