

Checking and Corrective Action

The organization must:

- Establish documented procedures to monitor and measure characteristics of its facilities that can have an impact on its operations and compliance;
- Prepare a procedure to periodically evaluate compliance with the regulations;
- Establish procedures for defining responsibility and authority for handling, investigating and taking actions on nonconformance which must be reported to the SII Team as agreed upon;
- Record and implement changes resulting from corrective and preventive actions; and
- Schedule audits based on the importance of the activity and the result of previous audits.

Management Review

Management must:

- Periodically review the self-audit procedures and documentation to ensure continuing suitability, adequacy and effectiveness;
- Evaluate the need for changes to policy, objectives and other elements as it relates to continuing progress to the plan; and
- Appraise the need for additional training and communications to remain in conformance and plan for personnel changes.

Documentation

The Self-Audit Plan must be conducted by implementing a structured process for documentation. The organization must establish and maintain information, in paper or electronic form, the description of core elements of the Self-Audit Plan.

Audit Cycle

In summary, the SII Pilot Program self-audit process is expected to proceed as follows:

1. Operator conducts the self-audit, collecting evidence and reporting findings;
2. Operator prepares the self-audit report;
3. Operator and SII Team discuss self-audit results during annual site information exchange;
4. SII Team conducts spot-inspection to validate the report;
5. SII Team evaluates self-audit, discusses findings with operator and makes recommendations for improvements. Operator fine tunes Self-Audit Plan as necessary;
6. Operator addresses recommendations and corrects mutually agreed on deficiencies; and
7. Operator begins next cycle.

Exhibit B—Operator's System Integrity Plan

The System Integrity Plan shall address key elements of pipeline system integrity issues that are not explicitly or completely addressed in the current pipeline safety regulations. This plan will enable both the operator and SII Team to cooperate and share information on strengths and weaknesses of the operator's pipeline system in a partnering, problem-solving, and consultative environment. Input to the System Integrity Plan typically includes data and information about the design and age of the pipe, external factors, operational and maintenance

practices, operating history, test history, inspection findings, and the proximity and distribution of population, third party construction activities, environmentally sensitive areas, and unusually sensitive areas. The operator's System Integrity Plan should include the following:

- An ongoing system-wide engineering analysis,
 - Feedback to management,
 - Implementation of activities to address the most significant threats to integrity, and
 - Continuous improvement.
- Diligently applied, this plan should result in:
- A benchmark for evaluating the SII Program effectiveness,
 - Evidence of a documented system integrity system,
 - Documented and implemented integrity improvement ideas,
 - Enhanced employee involvement, and
 - Targeted training resulting in a better informed workforce.

Some examples of an operator's system integrity program key elements that may be included in the Plan are listed below:

A. SCADA

- Design parameters and limitations.
- Operational logistics.

B. Corrosion Control

- External.
- Internal.
- Atmospheric.

C. Operational Integrity

- Hydrostatic testing, close interval surveys, internal inspection, or other integrity assessments:

—How does the Operator determine where and when to apply these tools which are above the minimum Federal regulations?
 —What determines the choice of a method?
 —What determines the interval or frequency?
 —Who reviews the summary?
 —Are the reports used for long-term planning? How?

D. Pipeline Incidents and Accidents

- All leak/spill history (Reportable and Non-reportable).
- Repair reports.
- Operator errors.
- Equipment failure/malfunction.
- Natural causes (landslide, earthquake, flood, etc.).
- Third party damage.
- Near miss reporting.
- Abnormal operations.

Exhibit C—Spot Checks for Validation of Operator Self-Audit Plans

Some key areas will be randomly selected for field inspection by the SII Team at various points along the system considering operator self-audit exception data, system performance data, and accident/incident information. Other portions in the system that are crucial for public and environmental safety and operational reliability may also be reviewed. Some of the areas that could be covered in the validation check include the following:

- Pipe in, across, or over bridges, streams, national parks, wild and scenic rivers,

cultural areas, populated areas, unusually sensitive areas (proposed USA's), large reservoirs and aquifers with water for human consumption, high hazard and high consequence areas (as identified in FEMA reports);

- Pipe at supports;
- Marginal cathodic potential readings;
- Patrolling records/ROW issues;
- SCADA system;
- Ongoing operation/maintenance activities;
- Pressure settings on regulator or relief valves;
- Internal inspection device operations and results;
- Close interval surveys;
- Rehabilitation projects, condition of rehabilitated pipe and coatings;
- Class location changes;
- Overpressure device settings;
- Maintenance Repair practices (lowering in-service lines, reduction in MAOP or MOP due to anomalies); and
- Pipe replacement practices.

Issued in Washington, DC, on December 8, 1998.

Richard B. Felder,

Associate Administrator, Office of Pipeline Safety.

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DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans, Notice of Meeting

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), in accordance with Public Law 103-446, gives notice that a meeting of the Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans will be held from Monday, January 25 through Wednesday, January 27, 1999, in Washington, DC. The purpose of the Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans is to advise the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on the administration of VA benefits and services for minority veterans, to assess the needs of minority veterans and to evaluate whether VA compensation, medical and rehabilitation services, outreach, and other programs are meeting those needs. The Committee will make recommendations to the Secretary regarding such activities.

The meeting will convene in room 230, VA Central Office (VACO) Building, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC, from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. On Monday, January 25, the Committee will focus on implementation of the recommendations contained in its two previous annual reports. The Committee will also review reports of the four subcommittees. On Tuesday, January 26, the Committee will review the status

of the Roadmap to Excellence strategy of the Under Secretary for Benefits. The Committee will also finalize budgets for each subcommittee and schedule field visits for the coming year. On Wednesday, January 27, the Committee will focus on VA's Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) to assess effectiveness of VA's contracting initiatives to increase the number of contracts to minority and other disadvantaged veterans. These sessions will be open to the public. Those who wish to attend should contact Mr. Anthony T. Hawkins, Department of Veterans Affairs, at (202) 273-6708, prior to January 20, 1999. The Committee will accept written comments from interested parties on issues affecting minority veterans. Such comments should be referred to the Committee at the following address: Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans, Center for Minority Veterans (OOM), U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420.

Dated: December 4, 1998.

By Direction of the Secretary.

Heyward Bannister,

Committee Management Officer.

[FR Doc. 98-33083 Filed 12-11-98; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Rehabilitation Research and Development Service Scientific Merit Review Board, Notice of Meeting

The Department of Veterans Affairs gives notice under Public Law 92-463 (Federal Advisory Committee Act) as amended, by section 5(c) of Public Law 94-409 that a meeting of the Rehabilitation Research and Development Service Scientific Merit Review Board will be held at the Wyndham Hotel, 1400 "M" Street NW, Washington, DC on January 12 through January 14, 1999. The session on January 12, 1999, is scheduled to begin at 6:30 p.m. and end at 9:30 p.m. The sessions on January 13 and January 14, 1999, are scheduled to begin at 8 a.m. and end at 5 p.m.

The purpose of the meeting is to review rehabilitation research and development applications for scientific and technical merit and to make recommendations to the Director, Rehabilitation Research and Development Service, regarding their funding.

The meeting will be open to the public for the January 12 session for the discussion of administrative matters, the

general status of the program, and the administrative details of the review process. On January 13-14, 1999, the meeting is closed during which the Board will be reviewing research and development applications.

This review involves oral comments, discussion of site visits, staff and consultant critiques of proposed research protocols, and similar analytical documents that necessitate the consideration of the personal qualifications, performance and competence of individual research investigators. Disclosure of such information would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy. Disclosure would also reveal research proposals and research underway which could lead to the loss of these projects to third parties and thereby frustrate future agency research efforts.

Thus, the closing is in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552b(c)(6), and (c)(9)(B) and the determination of the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs under Sections 10(d) of Pub. L. 92-463 as amended by Section 5(c) of Pub. L. 94-409. Those who plan to attend the open session should contact Ms. Victoria Mongiardo, Program Analyst, Rehabilitation Research and Development Service (122P), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20420, at least five days before the meeting. For further information, call (202) 275-0023.

Dated: December 4, 1998.

By Direction of the Secretary.

Heyward Bannister,

Committee Management Officer.

[FR Doc. 98-33082 Filed 12-11-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8320-01-M

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Scientific Review and Evaluation Board for Health Services Research and Development Service; Notice of Meeting

The Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Health Administration, gives notice under Pub. L. 92-463, that a meeting of the Scientific Review and Evaluation Board for Health Services Research and Development Service will be held at the Embassy Suites, 9090 Southwest Freeway, Houston, TX, January 18 through January 20, 1999, from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. each day. The purpose of the meeting is to review research and development applications concerned with the measurement and evaluation of health care systems and

with testing new methods of health care delivery and management. Applications are reviewed for scientific and technical merit. Recommendations regarding funding are prepared for the Chief Research and Development Officer.

This meeting will be open to the public at the start of the January 18 session for approximately one-half hour to cover administrative matters and to discuss the general status of the program. The closed portion of the meeting involves discussion, examination, reference to, and oral review of staff and consultant critiques of research protocols and similar documents. During this portion of the meeting, discussion and recommendations will include qualifications of the personnel conducting the studies (the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy), as well as research information (the premature disclosure of which would be likely to frustrate significantly implementation of proposed agency action regarding such research projects). As provided by the subsection 10(d) of Pub. L. 92-463, as amended by Pub. L. 94-409, closing portions of these meetings is in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552b(c)(6) and (9)(B).

Those who plan to attend the open session should contact the Review Program Manager (124F), Health Services Research and Development Service, Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C., at least five days before the meeting. For further information, call (202) 273-8287.

Dated: December 4, 1998.

By Direction of the Secretary.

Heyward Bannister,

Committee Management Officer.

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DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Poverty Threshold

AGENCY: Department of Veterans Affairs.
ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) hereby gives notice of the weighted average poverty threshold established for 1997 for one person (unrelated individual) as established by the Bureau of the Census. The amount is \$8,183.

DATES: For VA determinations, the 1997 poverty threshold is effective September 9, 1998, the date on which it was established by the Bureau of the Census.