



National Energy
Board

Office national
de l'énergie

Emergency Notifications

How are potentially affected communities and people notified in the event of an emergency involving a NEB-regulated company's operations or facilities?



What is an emergency notification?

Emergency notification is one of the first steps in communicating that an emergency has occurred. This is information and instructions that must be provided to affected communities and people in an immediate manner because it has potential health and safety consequences for those that could be affected by the emergency. People need to know what has happened and what they need to do in order to be safe. Emergency notifications can happen in many different ways, such as phone calls, public service alerts, social media postings and door knocking. The purpose of an emergency notification is to alert as many people as possible, as quickly as possible, that an emergency has occurred.

How do emergency notifications relate to the operation of NEB-regulated pipelines and facilities?

The National Energy Board Onshore Pipeline Regulations (OPR), require NEB-regulated companies to develop, implement and maintain an emergency management program that anticipates, prevents, manages and mitigates conditions during an emergency that could adversely affect property, the environment, or the safety of workers or the public.

Companies must have emergency plans that consider which communities and individuals could be affected by an emergency situation and how the company will notify them during the emergency response. The NEB expects that companies liaise with these communities and individuals on a regular basis in order to ensure that the company's plans for emergency notifications are current, and that their communication methods and contact information is up to date, accurate and meets the needs of those to be contacted.

Quick Facts

- The purpose of an emergency notification is to alert as many people as possible, as quickly as possible, that an emergency has occurred.
- In the event of an emergency at NEB-regulated facilities or operations, the regulated company is responsible for emergency notification of all potentially affected communities and individuals, such as Indigenous communities, landowners, businesses and rural residents.
- The NEB ensures that the regulated company carries out emergency notifications to affected communities and individuals. The NEB can also direct the company to make additional notifications, if the NEB assesses that this is required for health and safety reasons.

Who is responsible for notifying communities in the event of an emergency?

In the event of an emergency at NEB-regulated facilities or operations, the regulated company is responsible for emergency notification of all potentially affected communities and individuals such as, Indigenous communities, landowners, businesses and rural residents.

Emergency responses can include different levels of government, and a variety of response agencies and first responders working together. Emergency plans, including those of NEB-regulated companies, often pre-plan for different agencies to manage and coordinate certain emergency notifications. For example, a NEB-regulated company may notify first responders of an emergency at a company facility and first responders may then notify the affected community members. Regardless of the plan and means by which emergency notifications are conducted, the NEB holds its regulated companies accountable for ensuring that emergency notifications are completed.

What is the NEB's role regarding notifications?

The NEB ensures that the regulated company carries out emergency notifications to affected communities and individuals. During an emergency, one of the first steps that the NEB takes is to ask the regulated company who they have notified. The NEB can also direct the company to make additional notifications, if the NEB assesses that this is required for health and safety reasons.

As part of its oversight role, the NEB may follow up with affected communities and individuals to check that the company did in fact notify them and to check if it met the needs of those affected, including: was it timely, was accurate information provided, were updates given and was a point of contact available for questions and further information. If concerns are raised, the NEB can require the company to take corrective actions during the response, or to make improvements to its emergency management program following the response.

How can a community be prepared in advance of receiving an emergency notification?

Different communities have different needs and information requirements when it comes to emergency notifications. It is important that communities along the route of NEB-regulated pipelines discuss their notification needs and expectations with companies so this information can be incorporated into the company's emergency management plans. This allows companies to plan for effective emergency notifications to all communities and individuals who could be affected by an emergency, or potential emergency, related to their pipelines or facilities.

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