



National Energy
Board

Office national
de l'énergie

Pipeline Decommissioning



Quick Facts

When decommissioning a pipeline, a company must:

1. Remove product from the pipeline
2. Clean the inside of the pipeline
3. Disconnect the pipeline from existing facilities such as pump stations and other active pipelines
4. Create barriers within the pipeline that stop anything from entering or exiting the pipeline
5. Restore the land to a comparable state with the surrounding environment

A decommissioned pipeline may be removed or remain in place.

What is decommissioning?

Decommissioning is when a company shuts down the operation of a pipeline, but service is still provided through other pipelines owned by the operator.

Decommissioning is an optional stage in a pipeline lifecycle that can happen prior to a pipeline abandonment. A company must apply to the NEB to decommission a pipeline and the NEB will either approve or deny the application.

When do companies decommission pipelines?

- When a section of the pipeline is no longer needed.
- When a new pipeline is required to replace another pipeline and will provide the same service.

How are applications to decommission pipelines assessed?

The NEB looks at a number of considerations including socio-economic, environmental, safety and financial effects of the proposed decommissioning when deciding whether to approve or deny an application. Public hearings for decommissioning a pipeline are not mandatory; however, the NEB can hold a hearing if it deems it to be in the public interest.

How are decommissioned pipelines regulated?

As the NEB is a lifecycle regulator, pipeline regulations apply to decommissioned pipelines just like they do with operating pipelines. The NEB ensures pipeline companies follow their responsibility to Indigenous communities, landowners and the public to uphold safety within the pipeline right-of-way and associated facilities.

What is the difference between decommissioning and abandonment?

When a pipeline is decommissioned, the same service (ie. product transportation) still continues through other methods, such as newly built pipelines through the same or a similar route or different pipelines within the same system.

When a pipeline is abandoned, all service ceases. There are no new pipelines built to provide the same service and service does not continue through other pipelines within a system.

These examples do not apply to all decommissioned pipelines. If you would like more information on decommissioning, please view Guidance Notes for the Decommissioning Provisions under the Onshore Pipeline Regulations (OPR) <http://www.neb-one.gc.ca/bts/ctrg/gnnb/nshrpln/2014nshrplngn-eng.html>.

Full Life Cycle Pipeline Oversight



Need Help or More Information?

For more details visit the NEB website or contact the NEB with your questions at:

NEB Website:

<https://www.neb-one.gc.ca/cntcts/index-eng.html>

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