

NPMS and PIMMA: Essential preparedness tools for first responders



More than 300,000 miles of underground natural gas transmission pipelines transport large volumes of natural gas at high pressures, over long distances delivering gas to towns and cities. Damage to these pipelines can cause dangerous leaks that have the potential to ignite or explode. As a first responder, it is vital that you know the location, size and contents of the large pipelines that may cross your jurisdiction. How do you learn about the pipelines in your area and what they contain?

The National Pipeline Mapping System provides general locations.

You can learn the general location of natural gas and hazardous liquid transmission pipelines that cross your jurisdiction from the **National Pipeline Mapping System (NPMS)** at <https://www.npms.phmsa.dot.gov>, which is administered by the National Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA).



NPMS is a web-based mapping application, featuring data related to hazardous liquid and natural gas transmission pipelines, liquefied natural gas plants, and break-out tanks (a type of storage tank). NPMS does not include distribution lines or gathering pipelines that transport gas from wells to processing plants.

Even a quick glance at the Public Map Viewer portion of the NPMS website (open to anyone) reveals that natural gas transmission pipelines traverse nearly every county in the country. The scale at which pipelines are visible on the public maps is restricted. Pipelines shown on the public maps disappear as you zoom in past a certain point as a security precaution.

For specific pipeline locations, first responders can register with the Pipeline Information Management Mapping Application (PIMMA) at <https://www.npms.phmsa.dot.gov>. An iPhone app is also available.

Use the Pipeline Information Management Mapping Application for exact locations.

For more detailed maps or to request GIS data layers to use in your own mapping system, federal, tribal, state and local officials (including all first responders) can apply for access to the **Pipeline Information Management Mapping Application (PIMMA)**, also at <https://www.npms.phmsa.dot.gov>. PIMMA can serve as an essential tool in preparedness planning for catastrophic natural gas and hazardous liquids pipeline emergencies. It shows the same information that is available on the Public Map Viewer, but the scale is not restricted, so first responders can identify the exact location of pipelines in their communities.



Access to PIMMA is restricted, and the applicant's relationship to an authorized organization is investigated. For the sake of pipeline security, PHMSA requires applicants to agree not to share their account information or redistribute the information they derive from PIMMA maps. Multiple users from your department may apply for access.