DECISION MEMORANDUM

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FROM:DON HOWELL

DATE:JUNE 6, 1997

RE:UPDATING THE COMMISSION’S SAFETY RULES AND REGULATIONS PERTAINING TO PUBLIC UTILITIES

The Commission’s existing Safety and Accident Reporting Rules were last updated in 1993.  Since that time, several national safety codes and the federal gas pipeline safety regulations have been amended and updated.  The Staff is recommending that the Commission adopt by reference the various updates to the national safety requirements by initiating a rulemaking docket.

1.  The National Electric Safety Code (NESC).  The Commission’s Safety Rule 101 adopts by reference the NESC based upon the 1993 edition of the code.  The Staff recommends that the Commission adopt the 1997 edition of the NESC.  In the 1997 edition, several changes were made.  The most significant are:

◆Numerical values found throughout the code were changed to show the metric (SI) system first, with the customary inch-foot-pound values (inside parenthesis) following.

◆Changes were made in rules affecting the grounding of fences clarifying the methods of grounding when such “grounding” is required by the code. See § 9

◆Safety clearance zones for fences relative to exposed “live” parts for electric supply stations were added.  A requirement for short-circuit protection for power transformers was added.  See § 9, Part 1.

◆Changes were made to the clearance rules applicable to emergency and temporary overhead lines.  Changes to clearance rules were also made for unguarded rigid “live” parts of overhead lines over or near swimming pools. See  § 9, Part 2.

◆A requirement for continuous metallic shield for some communication cables were added.  The requirements for random separation of direct-buried underground supply and communication cables were modified with respect to sequential marking of the identification symbol with other data on the cable.  See § 9, Part 3.

2.  Gas Pipeline Safety.  Rule 201 adopts various parts of Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations pertaining to gas and pipeline corporations.  The Staff proposes that the Commission adopt by reference various safety regulations promulgated by the U.S. Department of Transportation effective October 1, 1996.

3.  National Fuel Gas Code (NFGA).  Commission Rule 202 last adopted the NFGA’s 1992 edition.  The Staff proposes that the Commission adopt the 1996 edition including the following changes:

◆Changes regarding the relocation of the point of delivery for propane piping systems to be the discharge of the final stage pressure regulator, rather than the first stage pressure regulator.

◆Adding a new option for the opening for air for combustion and ventilation.

◆Adding sizing tables for polyethylene tubing and corrugated stainless steel tubing.

◆Adding tables for sizing of masonry chimneys exposed to the outdoors below the roof line.

4.  Uniform Mechanical Code (UMC).  Rule 203 adopts by reference portions of the UMC referring to gas or gas burning appliances published in the 1991 edition.  The Staff proposes that the Commission adopt the 1997 edition of the UMC.

In addition to the adoption of the updated versions of the various safety codes and regulations, the Staff has made several “housekeeping changes” to the rules updating for typos, stray words, our address, and other non-substantive changes.  The updated rules in legislative format are attached for your review.

Commission Decision

Does the Commission wish to adopt the updated National Safety Codes and Federal Regulations?

Don Howell

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