

**APGA SOAR Survey
Topic: Employee Safety**

The Employee Safety topic reviews a system's dedication to ensuring the safety of your employees. This includes training, procedures and policies, programs, tools and equipment.

	Question	Answer Choices	Maximum Points
1	System & Contact Information	-	-
2	Does your system include a statement from management in your Safety Manual that expresses a commitment to safety that will be followed for all work practices?	Yes/ No	2
3	Does your system have a formal training program addressing employee safety? <i>Note: This training program should go beyond training for Operator Qualifications to include on-boarding and refresher trainings.</i>	Yes / No	2
4	Which of the topics listed below are included in your system's safety manual or are included in your safety training? (Check all that apply)	1. Properties and hazards of Natural Gas 2. Odorant Safety <i>(Also click if utility personnel do not handle odorant because the utility receives odorized gas and doesn't operate its own odorizers)</i> 3. Fire safety / Use of fire extinguishers 4. Personal Protective Equipment and Clothing 5. Respiratory Protection / Use of Respirators 6. Ladder & Tool Safety 7. Excavation, Trenching & Shoring 8. Work Area Safety (Barricades & Traffic Control) 9. Pipe Purging	All 9 Topics = 5 Points [Subtract 1 Point for: Properties and hazards of Natural Gas & 0.5 Points for remainder]
5	Does your system conduct periodic, large scale (e.g. 30 minutes or longer) safety meetings for all field employees?	Yes, quarterly or more often = 2 Points Less than quarterly = 1 Point No = 0 Points	2
6	Does gas system leadership attend large scale safety meetings at least once per quarter?	Yes / No	2
7	Does your utility conduct periodic short format (e.g. 10-15 minute "Tailgate" sessions) for all field employees?	Yes, at least monthly = 2 Points Yes, at least quarterly = 1 Point No = 0 Points	2
8	Does your system require pre-job safety briefings at all job sites?	Yes, even on routine jobs = 2 Points Sometimes, Only on "high risk" or non-routine jobs = 1 Point No = 0 Points	2
9	Does your system have a mechanism for employees to submit safety suggestions or "near miss" information?	Yes / No	1
10	Please describe how your system encourage employees to "stop the job" when they observe an unsafe practice or work environment.	Open Ended Response [SOAR Task Group may grant 1 Point]	1
11	Do 1st line supervisors attend at least 90% of all safety meetings with their crews?	Yes / No	1
12	Does your system conduct safety meetings for administrative and office staff?	Yes / No	1
13	Is your system's safety program managed by or periodically evaluated by a trainer or manager/evaluator that is an employee safety SME? That individual may be a Certified Safety Professional or participated in training programs specific to employee safety.	Yes/ No	1
14	Does your system have a formal or informal safety recognition program for your employees? <i>For example: A formal program may reward your field employees with a steak lunch if they go a specified number of days without a safety incident. An informal program may simply recognize individuals for addressing a safety issue during a staff meeting.</i>	Yes, we have a safety recognition program with stated goals = 2 Points Non-stated goals = 1 Point No = 0 Points	2
15	Does your system provide fire-resistant clothing to field workers that may work in flammable gas atmospheres?	Yes / Our procedures do not allow workers to enter flammable gas atmospheres = 2 Points No = 0 Points	2

16	Does your safety program specify working conditions under which workers must wear fire- resistant clothing?	Yes or N/A = 1 Point No = 0 Points	1
17	Does your system have a policy requiring contractors to have a suitable worker safety program?	Yes or N/A = 2 Points No = 0 Points	2
18	Does your system have a formal written policy for vehicle safety?	Yes / No	1
19	Does the policy address (Check all that apply)? Seat belt use Cell phone use	Yes/No Yes/No	1 1
20	Does your system offer safe driver training?	Yes/ No	2
21	Does your system submit an OSHA form 300 or use another evaluation and tracking method that includes comparable incident rate and documentation?	Yes, we use OSHA Form 300 = 1 Point Yes, we have a procedure similar to OSHA Form 300 = 1 Point No = 0 Points	1
22	Does gas system leadership review employee safety incident rate data at least annually?	Yes / No	1
23	Does your system have formal procedure for investigating injuries that meet the OSHA recordable definition? <i>Note: An OSHA recordable injury is any injury where the employee received medical treatment beyond first aid, lost consciousness, or resulted in an employee being placed on restricted work activity or transferred to another job.</i>	Yes / No	1
24	Do employee injury investigations result in written reports identifying causes and corrective actions?	Yes / No	1
25	Are employees provided with the findings of employee injury investigations, either or both in writing or verbally at safety meetings?	Yes / No	1
26	Does your system consider ergonomics for your workforce? <i>Note: This could include sit/stand desks for office personnel or steps for trucks for your field personnel, etc.</i>	Yes/ No	1
		Total Points Available	40

**APGA SOAR Survey
Topic: System Improvement**

The System Improvement topic reviews a system's dedication to continuous improvement. This is evaluated through the system's use of innovative tools and technologies, participation in industry voluntary initiatives, and implementation of industry best practices.

Question		Answer Choices	Maximum Points
1	System & Contact Information	-	-
	Does your utility currently use, used in the past, or evaluated the use of any of the following technologies? (check all that apply)	SCADA and/or telemetry (monitoring or control) Geographic Information system (GIS)/Digital mapping Automatic Meter Reading (AMR) or /Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI)	Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No
2	<i>Note: You are only required to have evaluated the potential costs and benefits of the technology. Your system need not have implemented these technologies to respond "Yes".</i>	Mobile workforce technology Mobile leak detection Corrosion Control Remote Monitoring Laser Methane Leak Detection	Yes / No Yes / No Yes/No Yes/No
3	Please describe one other technology not listed in the previous question that your system uses, has used in the past, or has evaluated. Your description must include how this technology is new or innovative for your system.	Open Ended Response [SOAR Task Group may grant 1 Point]	1
4	Has your system implemented a meter change out program for ensuring meter accuracy?	Yes/No	1
5	Does your system utilize the actions identified in your Distribution Integrity Management Plan to drive your budget and/or manpower considerations?	Yes/No	3
6	Does your utility have a written process for reviewing inspection and maintenance records to determine the need to replace, repair, or monitor any portion of your distribution system? (i.e. implementation of actions identified in DIMP)	Yes/No	3
7	Do you (or a consultant on your behalf) utilize a network modeling software to perform capacity calculations for system planning? <i>Note: The utilization of the software should go beyond calculating pipe sizing.</i>	Yes/No	3
8	Do you know your operational cost of service for each customer group (residential, commercial, industrial) to ensure your rates are appropriately set? <i>Note: This question is asking systems whether they understand how much it costs them to serve each of their customer groups (costs associated with the operations, maintenance, overhead, etc.) so as to ensure they are appropriately setting rates for each customer group. This exercise can help systems understand if their rates (i.e. funding) can accommodate the costs to perform compliance activities and enable them constantly improve.</i>	Yes/ No	3
9	Does your system contribute to gas industry research and development or participate in a technology pilot program? (Such as membership in the APGA Research Foundation)	Yes / No	1
10	Which of the following resources does your system utilize to stay abreast of current tools technology for gas distribution operations?	1. Membership in industry associations (national, regional, state). 2. Attendance at industry conferences or trade shows 3. Industry trade publications and magazines 4. Vendor Trainings or Seminars 5. Industry compliance tools (Windot)	More than 3 Tools = 2 Points 1-2 Tools = 1 Point No Tools = 0 Points
11	Has your system demonstrated its commitment to pipeline safety continuous improvement by using the framework provided in API RP 1173: <i>Pipeline Safety Management Systems</i> ? (Note: This could be through an internal 'Commitment Statement' or the approval of resources, such as a job assignment or funding.)	Yes/No	1
12	Has your system compared your existing practices against those recommended in API RP 1173 <i>Pipeline Safety Management Systems</i> ? <i>Note: This could be performed through using APGA Gap Analysis Tool or through your own process. In the Plan-Do-Check-Adjust cycle, this is the "Plan" phase.</i>	Yes/No	2
13	Has your system developed an action plan to address some (or all) of the gaps identified through your PSMS gap analysis? <i>Note: In the Plan-Do-Check-Adjust cycle, this is the "Do" phase.</i>	Yes/No	4

14	Has your system identified Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for your PSMS implementation? <i>For example: Leaks / Mile of Main or # of Open Leaks</i>	Yes/ No	1
15	Did your system complete the Industry PSMS Annual Survey distributed by APGA and the other trade associations each Fall? Note: This is the 21-question survey that is utilized for developing industry metrics on voluntary adoption and for advocacy messaging.	Yes/No	1
16	Describe two ways your system is reducing methane emissions? <i>See APGA's Commitment to Environmental Stewardship</i>	Open Ended Response [SOAR Task Group may grant 1 Point]	2
17	Awareness Question (Does not impact SOAR score in 2022): Does your system participate in the EPA Methane Challenge or ONE Future?	Yes/ No	0
		Total Points Available	35

**APGA SOAR Survey
Topic: System Integrity**

The System Integrity topic reviews a system's dedication to operating a safe system through their capital improvement projects, the integrity management of their assets, and their operations & maintenance activities.

	Question	Answer Choices	Maximum Points
1	System & Contact Information	-	-
2	Do your procedures address what system pipe and facility asset records are retained? <i>Note: This includes construction, inspection, maintenance records.</i>	Yes/ No	1
3	Do you have a procedure that defines how long records are to be retained (life of pipe, 5 years, etc.)?	Yes/ No	2
4	Do you have a system of record for your pipeline assets (GIS, organized paper copies)?	Yes/ No	1
5	If you answered "No" to any of Questions 1-3, please explain how your system ensures asset records are maintained and available?	Open-Ended Response [SOAR Task Group may grant up to 2 points back]	
6	Does your utility have standard forms/formats for documenting inspections, repairs, 3rd party damages and other activities related to operations, maintenance and regulatory compliance?	Yes = 2 Points No = 0 Points	2
7	Does your utility have a program in place for backing up critical hard copy and/or electronic records?	Yes = 1 Point No = 0 Points	1
8	If not, please explain how your gas utility ensures that these records will be protected in the event of flood, fire or other disaster that destroys the primary records storage facility.	Open-Ended Response [SOAR Task Group may grant up to 1 point back]	
9	Does your system track emergency response time and have an internal goal?	Yes/ No	2
10	Does your utility utilize the Incident Command System framework, and if so, are employees trained on ICS?	Yes / No	1
11	Have all levels of personnel taken the free online NIMS ICS training courses?	All Applicable Employees = 1 Point Emergency Responders Only = 0.5 Point No = 0 Points	1
12	Does your utility have a written checklist/script to be followed by utility personnel who receive odor complaints and other potential emergencies from customers and the general public?	Yes = 3 Points No = 0 Points	3
13	If there is not a written checklist please describe how your gas utility ensures that personnel who receive notice of odors or potential emergencies ask for and record the proper information from the caller.	Open-Ended Response [SOAR Task Group may grant up to 2 points back]	
14	How often does your system participate in table top exercises or mock emergency drills?	At least once per year = 2 Points At least once every 2 years = 1.5 Points At least once every 3 years = 1 Point Less frequently than every 3 years = 0.5 Point We have no fixed schedule = 0.5 Point Never = 0 Points	2
15	Does your system include emergency responders in your table top exercises or mock drills?	Annually = 2 Points Occasionally = 1 Point Never = 0 Points	2
16	If not, please explain how your gas utility ensures that it is prepared to implement its emergency procedures:	Open-Ended Response [SOAR Task Group may grant up to 2 points back]	
17	Does your system have mutual aid agreements in place with other utilities and/or trade associations for gas related or general business continuation agreements?	Yes / No	1
18	<i>Note: Not just electric mutual aid for combination joint utilities.</i> If not, describe how your gas utility would arrange for outside support in the event of a catastrophic event.	Open-Ended Response [SOAR Task Group may grant up to 1 point back]	
19	In the past 3 years, has your state regulator identified a violation (or NOPV) that has not been resolved?	No = 2 Points Yes = 0 Points	2
20	Does your utility conduct internal audits to identify potential violations of pipeline safety regulations and utility procedures?	Yes = 2 Points No = 0 Points	2

21	If you do not conduct formal compliance audits please describe how you ensure that all pipeline safety regulations and utility procedures are followed.	Open-Ended Response [SOAR Task Group may grant up to 2 points back]	
22	If your system does conduct internal audits, how often are they conducted?	At least once per year = 3 Points At least once every 2 years = 2 Points Less frequently than once every 2 years = 1 Point No Fixed Schedule = 0.5 Point We don't conduct audits = 0 Points	3
23	How often do you review your DIMP plan?	Annually = 3 Points Every 3 Years = 1 Point Every 5 Years or Longer = 0 Points	3
24	Please provide two examples of Accelerated Actions identified in your DIMP program that your system performs and the corresponding Performance Measures.	Open-Ended Response [SOAR Task Group may grant up to 4 points]	4
25	Does your utility participate in a utility coordination council or similar regional or local damage prevention group?	Yes = 2 Points There are no such groups in our area = 2 Points No = 0 Points	2
26	Is your utility current on all required surveys, monitoring and inspections required by your operations and maintenance manual and procedures?	All surveys, monitoring and inspections are current = 2 Points One survey, monitoring or inspection is overdue = 1 point Two or more surveys, monitoring or inspections are overdue = 0 points	2
27	Does your utility have a clear, understandable and well-communicated chain of command? It does not have to be in writing as long as all employees understand who they report to, who reports to them and their level of authority.	Yes / No	1
28	Does the chain of command include provisions for addressing communications and management when one or more members are absent?	Yes / No	1
29	Is your utility's upper management involved in decisions concerning system safety and integrity?	Upper management is fully involved and committed = 4 Points Upper management is marginally involved = 2 Points Upper management is not involved = 0 Points	4
30	Does your system investigate the cause of an unexpected change in percent of LUAF?	Yes = 1 Point No = 0 Points	1
31	What was the LUAF percent for your system 3-year weighted average based upon sales volume?	Less than 1 percent = 3 points 1-2 percent = 2 points 2-3 percent = 1.5 points 3-4 percent = 1 point 4-5 percent = 0.5 points >5% = 0 points	3
32	Does your system have process for accurately accounting for gas used in utility operations (e.g. line heaters and other system use)? This can include actually measuring gas used in utility operations or estimating unmeasured system use.)	Yes = 1 Point N/A - We don't use any natural gas in our operations = 1 Point No = 0 Points	1
33	Does your system investigate the causes of 3rd party damages?	Yes = 2 Points No = 0 Points	2
34	Does your system submit information on excavation damages to the Common Ground Alliance DIRT (Damage Information Reporting Tool) Program?	Yes / No	1
35	Has your system reviewed the Common Ground Alliance Best Practices and implemented those that are applicable?	Yes / No	1
36	Does your system submit plastic pipe and material failure information to the Plastic Pipe Database Collection Initiative (https://www.aga.org/safety/promoting-safety/plastic-pipe-database-collection-initiative/)?	Yes / No	1
37	Does your system have the ability to access an enterprise fund should you need to perform emergency O&M or integrity management activities?	Yes/ No	1
38	How does your system ensure that technology, procedural, equipment, and organizational changes have been reviewed and approved by the appropriate individual(s) at your system to maintain system integrity?	Open Ended Response [SOAR Task Group may grant up to 2 Points]	2
39	Does your document the approval process for these changes? <i>See Question #38</i>	Yes/No	1
40	Does your system have a process in place to ensure changes that impact the safe operations of your system have been <u>communicated to necessary employees</u> ?	Yes/No	1
Total Points Available			58

**APGA SOAR Survey
Topic: Workforce Development**

The Workforce Development topic reviews a system's efforts related to the recruitment, retention, growth, and satisfaction of their employees.

	Question	Question Type	Maximum Points
1	System & Contact Information	-	-
2	Does your system have a policy concerning diversity in hiring practices?	Yes/No	1
3	Has your system reviewed its policies to ensure inclusivity of all employees? <i>Note: This could include a statement explicitly affirming your position on inclusivity or a reframing of existing policies, for example: family leave instead of maternity leave.</i>	Yes/No	1
4	Do employees from your system attend industry trade association <u>meetings or events</u> (remotely or in-person)? <i>Note: Industry trade associations can be national, regional or state associations.</i>	Yes / No	1
5	Are there employees from your system that participate (remotely or in-person) in an industry trade association <u>committee</u> ?	Yes/ No	2
6	Does the system provide opportunities (for employees at all levels) to seek certifications, training, or other education that can advance them within their career path or outside their career path? In the employee's career path only Both inside and outside the employee's career path No opportunities are provided	Career Only = 1 Point Both Inside & Outside = 2 Points No opportunities are provided = 0 Points	2
7	Do you encourage your employees to be active within your community? <i>Note: This could include providing paid time off to participate in 501(c)(3) programs or employee payroll deductions for these organizations.</i>	Yes/No	1
8	Have written job descriptions been developed for all positions, describing the duties, responsibilities, required skills, training, knowledge and abilities of each position?	Yes/No	1
9	Please describe your system's approach to knowledge transfer for your workforce. <i>For example, how does your system ensure that a vacancy in a key position does not leave your system without the expertise to maintain excellent operations?</i>	Open Ended Response [SOAR Task Group may grant up to 2 Points]	2
10	Does your system provide employees with guidance on how to progress within their current position through experience and training? <i>Note: These are sometimes called "Level Guides" or apprenticeship programs.</i>	Yes/No	2
11	Does the utility have a written plan that covers: Retention Recruitment	Yes/ No Yes/ No	1 1
12	Does the utility have a written succession plan? <i>Note: Succession planning is a process for identifying and developing new employees who can replace existing key personnel when they leave their positions. Succession planning increases the availability of experienced and capable employees that are prepared to assume these roles as they become available.</i>	Yes, covering all positions = 2 Points Yes, covering some positions = 1 Point No written succession plan = 0 Points	2

13	How often do you review – and revise, if necessary – your system’s workforce program documents, such as: business continuity plan, succession plan, apprenticeship programs, etc?	Annually = 2 Points At least once every 3 years = 1 Point Greater than every 3 years = 0 Points N/A – We do not have any of these documents = 0 Points	2
14	Does the utility have a formal written process to evaluate and advise employees of their performance at least annually?	Formal Written Performance Appraisals are Proved to the Employee on at least an Annual Basis = 2 Points Less Than an Annual Basis = 1 Point Formal Written Performance Appraisals are Not Performed = 0 Points	2
15	Does your system provide tools, resources, or programs to assist your employees’ health and wellness outside of the workplace? For example: Substance abuse programs, Wellness Programs, Employee Assistance Programs (EAP)	Yes/ No	1
16	Did your system participate in the 2022 APGA Salary Survey?	Yes/ No	1
Total Points Available			23