



Backgrounder: What is a Class Location?

Every section of a pipeline is associated with what's called a "Class Location". A class location refers to an area on either side of a NEB-regulated pipeline that is classified according to population density and factors such as environmental sensitivity. The number and type of buildings near the pipeline are often used to estimate the number of people in the area. There are four different class location categories:

- Class 1: 10 or less residences
- Class 2: 11-45 residences, a building or outside area with 20 or more people during normal use (i.e. playground or recreation area), and/or an industry such as a chemical plant.
- Class 3: 46 or more residences
- Class 4: mostly apartments and condominiums with four or more stories.

NEB-regulated companies are expected to have a clear understanding of the current class location of each section of their pipelines. They are also expected to have the ability to monitor for population, development and/or environmental changes. If the class location around the pipeline changes, a company must report how it plans to deal with the change to keep operating the pipeline safely. *Guide E* of the NEB's [Filing Manual](#) tells the company what information is needed, so that the NEB can evaluate the company's plan.

Proposed Changes to Guide E of the NEB's Filing Manual – Change of Class Location

The NEB is updating *Guide E* of the [Filing Manual](#) to make it clearer for companies what information is required by the NEB when a change in class location is required. Timely filing of information and timely implementation of safety measures to improve public safety and environmental protection is critical. The changes to Guide E reflect this.

Class Location Changes

An increase in population is often the reason for a change to a higher class location. A higher population means more activities in the area which may increase the potential for damage to the pipeline if nearby residents are not aware of the pipeline location (e.g. hitting the pipeline when digging). As a result, appropriate safety measures need to be in place to protect the public and the environment.

NEB-regulated companies are required to file a comprehensive class location plan within six months after the change that needs to include, for example:

- A summary of the population and/or development changes that have occurred;
- A summary of the pipeline content (natural gas, oil) and its operating pressure;
- Pipeline depth;
- History of pipeline incidents; and
- A detailed overview of nearby developments (schools, hospitals, daycare, etc.).

Potential safety measures may include:

- Lowering the operating pressure;
- Replacing with a thicker wall pipeline;
- Installation of barriers;
- Increased communications with the public including additional signage, direct outreach; and contact information.

Pipeline companies are required to prove to the NEB that the pipeline is safe to operate at the new class location with the proposed safety measures.