

Analysis of Current Field Data  
Technical Topical Report

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## ABSTRACT

This report provides a concise summary of the information collected and analyzed regarding the leak characteristics which define them as applicable candidates for pressure activated sealant technology. This information covers Office of Pipeline Safety reported incidents from 1985 to 1997 and was collected from existing data sources as well as operator and service company input.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this collection and analysis of existing data regarding the cause, type and severity of leaks most commonly experienced in natural gas transmission systems is twofold: first, to develop a database on information gathered and provide a summary of leak characteristics which define them as applicable candidates for pressure activated sealant technology; and secondly, utilize this database as a basis in constructing applicable sealant test modeling.

The period from 1985-1997 was chosen because this was the time frame with the most complete data. Starting with "Analysis of DOT Reportable Incidents for Gas Transmission and Gathering System Pipelines, 1985 through 1997" and adding additional data from Office of Pipeline Safety reports as well as operator and service company input, we were able to identify 205 incidents from a possible 1,084 that would have been candidates for pressure activated sealant technology.

## EXPERIMENTAL

This report contains no experimental methods.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Collection of Data

Our collection of existing data started with the “Analysis of DOT Reportable Incidents for Gas Transmission and Gathering System Pipelines, 1985 through 1997”<sup>1</sup>. This report covers 1,084 incidents on 523,000 kilometers (325,000 miles) of natural gas transmission and gathering pipelines that were reported to the DOT’s Office of Pipeline Safety. In this report the authors classified the incidents into 22 distinct causes (Table 1).

**Table 1. PRCI Report, All Reportable Incidents, 1985 - 1997**

		Number	%
Cold Weather	CW	9	0.8%
Defective Fabrication Weld	DFW	20	1.8%
Defective Girth Weld	DGW	23	2.1%
Defective Pipe	DP	15	1.4%
Defective Pipe Seam	DPS	24	2.2%
External Corrosion Related Failure	EC	109	10.1%
Earth Movement	EM	24	2.2%
Gasket or O-Ring Failure	GF	15	1.4%
Heavy Rains or Flood	HRF	58	5.4%
Internal Corrosion Related Failure	IC	130	12.0%
Incorrect Operation by Carrier Personnel	IO	79	7.3%
Lightning	LIGHT	14	1.3%
Malfunction of Control or Relief Equipment	MCRE	27	2.5%
Miscellaneous	MISC	73	6.7%
Previously Damaged Pipe	PDP	40	3.7%
Stress Corrosion Cracking	SCC	11	1.0%
Seal or Pump packing Failure	SPPF	4	0.4%
Third Party Inflicted Damage	TP	308	28.4%
Threads Stripped, Broken Pipe, or Coupling Failure	TSBPC	34	3.1%
Unknown	UNK	54	5.0%
Vandalism	V	6	0.6%
Wrinkle Bend or Buckle	WBB	7	0.6%
		1,084	100.0%

In focusing on leak characteristics that define incidents as applicable candidates for sealant technology we first chose to examine leak severity. Data for actual leak size and rate being unavailable we filtered the incidents based on the data in the Rupture/Leak column (R/L)<sup>2</sup>, as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2. Rupture/Leak**

Input	Number	Percentage
"Blank"	6	0.6%
Leaks	354	32.7%
None	10	0.9%
Other	206	19.0%
Puncture	160	14.8%
Rupture	293	27.0%
Tear	55	5.1%
	1,084	100.0%

For the purpose of this analysis we eliminated all incidents that were not classified as Leaks (...an unintentional escape of gas from the pipeline). The inputs of "Blank", None and Other were too vague to make a determination of their candidacy. The inputs of Rupture (...a complete failure of any portion of the pipeline), Puncture (...damage from an externally applied force) and Tear (...an extension of the original opening in the pipeline resulting from an externally applied force) indicated conditions that may be too severe for pressure activated sealant technology. This analysis resulted in 354 incidents remaining in our database.

At present, for pressure activated sealant technology to be successful, a working pressure of plus or minus 1.38 MPa (200 psi) or greater is required. After eliminating incidents that were in environments less than 1.38 MPa (200 psi) MAOP, 328 incidents remained. At this stage, without having leak rate or size data available, the assumption could be made that "a leak is a leak" and thus all 328 remaining incidents were applicable candidates for pressure activated sealant technology. That being said, we also looked at the data from the viewpoint where a pressure activated sealant repair would have an economic advantage over traditional repair methods.

To achieve this we took a broad view of the causes that were associated with the remaining incidents, and then eliminated causes that, as a group, did not appear to have a distinct economic advantage for utilizing sealant repair technology. These causes are listed below in Table 3<sup>3</sup>.

**Table 3. Causes Eliminated**

Cause Eliminated	Reason for Elimination
Cold Weather	All incidents occurred onshore, on surface components and facilities that could easily be accessed for repair.
Gasket or O-Ring Failure	These types of leaks have historically been successfully cured by utilizing pressure activated sealant technology. Often, there are alternate methods of repair that possess an economic advantage.
Incorrect Operation by Carrier Personnel	All but one occurred onshore, mainly above ground, and usually resulted in damages that were too severe for sealant technology.
Lightning	All onshore and easily accessible.
Malfunction of Control or Relief Equipment	Either easily accessible, sealant technology not suitable for system or damage too severe.

Miscellaneous	Assorted failures on tees, ball valves and flanges, mainly at surface.
Stress Corrosion Cracking	All incidents resulted in ruptures.
Seal or Pump Packing Failure	Both incidents were compressor related.
Third Party Inflicted Damage	Mostly onshore, on exposed pipelines and damage too severe for sealant technology.
Threads Stripped, Broken Pipe or Coupling Failure	Mostly onshore and easily accessible.
Vandalism	All incidents were classified as ruptures.

We then examined the “OPS Natural Gas Transmission Incident Data – mid 1984 to 2001”, eliminating data prior to 1985 and after 1997, and merged the two databases, matching incident per incident. A final filtering was done through closer examination of each individual incident, with a focus on damage severity, accessibility, incomplete and conflicting information.

The remaining base of 205 incidents and their causes are reflected in Table 4.

**Table 4. Incident Base - Sealant Candidates**

		Number of Leaks by Cause	% of Incident Base	% of all 354 Leaks	% of all 1,084 Incidents
Defective Fabrication Weld	DFW	9	4.4%	2.5%	0.8%
Defective Girth Weld	DGW	16	7.8%	4.5%	1.5%
Defective Pipe	DP	5	2.4%	1.4%	0.5%
Defective Pipe Seam	DPS	12	5.9%	3.4%	1.1%
External Corrosion	EC	41	20.0%	11.6%	3.8%
Earth Movement	EM	7	3.4%	2.0%	0.6%
Heavy Rains or Flood	HRF	13	6.3%	3.7%	1.2%
Internal Corrosion	IC	77	37.6%	21.8%	7.1%
Previously Damaged Pipe	PDP	6	2.9%	1.7%	0.6%
Unknown	UNK	17	8.3%	4.8%	1.6%
Wrinkle Bend or Buckle	WBB	2	1.0%	0.6%	0.2%
		205	100.0%	57.9%	18.9%

The remainder of this report will focus on our analysis of this remaining incident base and how these incidents will be represented in our test modeling.

## Analysis of Data

### Leak Cause Analysis

An analysis of the incident base by cause (Table 5) shows that weld and corrosion causes account for 75.6% of the 205 incidents.

**Table 5.**

	Number of Leaks by Cause	% of Incident Base
DFW	9	4.4%
DGW	16	7.8%
DPS	12	5.9%
EC	41	20.0%
IC	77	37.6%
	155	75.6%

We also looked at causes by “Operator Judgment” versus “Damage Greater Than \$50K”, since by definition, the incidents that were classified under “Operator Judgment” are considered more of a minor, or lesser leak.

Table 6 shows that weld and corrosion leaks account for 81.7% of the incidents classified as Operator Judgment and 70.5% of the incidents classified under Damage Greater Than \$50K.

**Table 6.**

Operator Judgment			Damage > \$50K		
	Number of Leaks by Cause	% of Op Judg		Number of Leaks by Cause	% of Dam > \$50K
DFW	5	5.4%	DFW	4	3.6%
DGW	10	10.8%	DGW	6	5.4%
DPS	3	3.2%	DPS	9	8.0%
EC	27	29.0%	EC	14	12.5%
IC	31	33.3%	IC	46	41.1%
	76	81.7%		79	70.5%

For our testing, we will focus on simulating and sealing leaks that are caused by Defective Fabrication Welds, Defective Girth Welds, Defective Pipe Seams, External Corrosion and Internal Corrosion.

## Area of Incident

Table 7 illustrates the breakdown of offshore and onshore incidents.

**Table 7. Area of Incidents**

	Onshore	Offshore	Total	%
Above Ground	1	0	1	0.5%
Under Ground	92	1	93	45.4%
Under Pavement	8	0	8	3.9%
Above Water	0	5	5	2.4%
Under Water	14	83	97	47.3%
Other	1	0	1	0.5%
	116	89	205	100%

For the onshore incidents the 1 “Above Ground” is actually in a marsh area; the 1 “Other” is along the edge of a creek; and the 14 “Under Water” were under rivers and streams; all together making accessibility challenging.

The offshore incidents were represented by 1 “Under Ground” which was under water and then under a 4’ burial layer. The 5 incidents classified “Above Water” were riser related. Obviously the vast majority were “Under Water”. What we can conclude from this data is that based on accessibility, for all 205 incidents, internal sealant repair could have an economic advantage over traditional methods of repair which average \$75,000 and \$150,000 respectively for onshore and shallow offshore external repairs, with the costs soaring as water depths are increased.

## Area of Failure

Referring to Table 8, 81.0% of the incidents occurred on transmission lines, 16.6% on gathering lines and 2.4% on transmission lines of distribution system.

Even though all of the 205 incidents were candidates for sealant technology, for testing purposes we will focus on simulating pipe body and weld leaks, which together account for 88.3%, of the total incidents.

**Table 8. Area of Failure**

	Branch	Fitting	Gasket	Mech Jt.	Pipe Body	Unk	Valve	Weld	WB	
Gathering Line		2			31			1		34
Transmission Line	1	6	1	3	103	8	1	42	1	166
Trans. Line of Distr.		1			2			2		5
	1	9	1	3	136	8	1	45	1	205

## Pipe Size

Table 9 shows that 168.28 mm (6-5/8"), 323.85 mm (12-3/4"), 406.40 mm (16") and 508.00 mm (20") pipe accounted for 56.1% of the incidents. Since pipe size has no relevance for the success or failure of a sealant repair we will utilize 168.28 mm (6-5/8") pipe for our test modeling in order to reduce cost and facilitate ease of handling.

**Table 9. Pipe Sizes - by System of Failure**

Pipe Size mm	Pipe Size inches	Gathering	Transmission	Trans. Line of Distribution	Totals	%
12.70	0.500		3		3	1.5%
60.33	2.375		2		2	1.0%
76.20	3.000	2	2		4	2.0%
101.60	4.000		1		1	0.5%
114.30	4.500	2	6		8	3.9%
128.02	5.040		1		1	0.5%
139.70	5.500		1		1	0.5%
<b>168.28</b>	<b>6.625</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>20</b>		<b>27</b>	<b>13.2%</b>
219.08	8.625	4	8		12	5.9%
273.05	10.750	1	12		13	6.3%
<b>323.85</b>	<b>12.750</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>19.0%</b>
355.60	14.000		3		3	1.5%
<b>406.40</b>	<b>16.000</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>13.2%</b>
450.85	17.750		1		1	0.5%
457.20	18.000		4		5	2.4%
<b>508.00</b>	<b>20.000</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>10.7%</b>
558.80	22.000	2	1		3	1.5%
609.60	24.000	2	11		13	6.3%
660.40	26.000		4		4	2.0%
762.00	30.000		10		10	4.9%
863.60	34.000		1		1	0.5%
914.40	36.000		4		4	2.0%
1066.80	42.000		1		1	0.5%
		34	166	5	205	100.0%

## Pipe Material

Since incidents that occurred on systems rated less than 200 psi MAOP were already removed from our study, it comes at no surprise that the vast majority (204) of the incidents occurred on steel material. The one other incident was classified as weld material. We will utilize schedule 80 steel material for our test modeling, with 0.432" wall thickness and 12.36 MPa (1,793 psi) MAOP.

## Pipe Pressures

Table 10 shows the number of incidents at reported pressure ranges for estimated incident pressure, maximum leak differential and maximum allowable operating pressure.

The leak differential pressure is calculated as MAOP less atmospheric (or hydrostatic) pressure. With pressure activated sealants there are two primary criteria: a minimum of around 1.38 MPa (200 psi) differential pressure and leak severity.

The one Leak Differential incident in the 0.69 – 1.37 MPa (100 – 199 psi) range is at 1.28 MPa (185 psi). The thirty-nine MAOP incidents in the 9.65 – 10.34 MPa (1400 – 1499 psi) range were all 9.93 MPa (1440 psi). In our testing we will achieve a low pressure seal at 1.28 MPa (185 psi) and increase pressure in various stages until obtaining a maximum pressure seal at 9.93 MPa (1440 psi).

**Table 10. Number of Incidents at Each Pressure Range**

Pressure, MPa	Pressure, psi	Est. Incident Pressure	Max. Leak Differential	MAOP
0 - 0.68	0 - 99	5	0	0
0.69 - 1.37	100 - 199	4	1	0
1.38 - 2.06	200 - 299	12	8	9
2.07 - 2.75	300 - 399	19	7	6
2.76 - 3.44	400 - 499	21	11	6
3.45 - 4.13	500 - 599	18	5	11
4.14 - 4.82	600 - 699	18	8	4
4.83 - 5.51	700 - 799	17	17	16
5.52 - 6.20	800 - 899	28	22	22
6.21 - 6.89	900 - 999	17	21	17
6.89 - 7.58	1000 - 1099	22	13	17
7.58 - 8.27	1100 - 1199	16	31	13
8.27 - 8.96	1200 - 1299	1	11	30
8.96 - 9.65	1300 - 1399	0	22	11
9.65 - 10.34	1400 - 1499	0	17	39
10.34 - 11.02	1500 - 1599	1	0	0
11.03 - 11.71	1600 - 1699	0	0	0
11.72 - 12.40	1700 - 1799	0	1	0
12.41 - 13.09	1800 - 1899	0	0	1
13.10 - 13.78	1900 - 1999	0	0	0
13.79 - +	2000 - +	0	3	3
		199	198	205

## Pipe Corrosion States

It can be seen by the data in Table 11 that 68.3% of the externally corroded pipe and 64.1% of the internally corroded pipe is described as either “localized pitting”, “pinhole” or “pinhole with localized pitting”. This number for internally corroded pipe may actually be closer to the 80% range if not for the lack of data for 19 incidents under “Corrosion Description”. We will simulate pinhole leaks with localized pitting in our test model when attempting to seal external and internal corrosion leaks.

**Table 11. Pipe Corrosion States**

Leak Cause	Corrosion Location	Corrosion Description	Corrosion Cause
1 – DP	1 – Internal	1 – Localized Pitting	1 – Bacteria
41 – EC	40 – External	8 – General Corrosion 26 – Localized Pitting 1 – Pinhole 1 – Pinhole, Localized Pitting 4 – “Blank”	1 – Coating Failure 4 – Galvanic 3 – “Blank”  1 – Atmosphere 1 – Coating Failure 18 – Galvanic 6 – “Blank”  1 – “Blank”  1 - Galvanic  4 – “Blank”
	1 – Internal*	1 – Localized Pitting	1 – Bacteria
77 – IC	76 – Internal	1 – ¼" Circular Hole 9 – General Corrosion 38 – Localized Pitting 7 – Pinhole 3 – Pinhole, Localized Pitting 18 – “Blank”	1 – “Blank”  2- Bacteria 1 – Chemical 1 – Galvanic 1 – Microbiological 4 – “Blank”  2 – Liquid Accumulation 2 – Bacteria 2 – Chemical 9 – Galvanic 1 – H2S 22 – “Blank”  7 – “Blank”  1 – Galvanic 2 - Blank  1 – Liquid Accumulation 1 – Galvanic

	1 – “Blank”	1 – “Blank”	16 – “Blank”
			1 – “Blank”
1 – PDP**	1 – External	1 – External Cracks	1 – Stray Current
*Leak was classified as External Corrosion, but leak location was designated as internal. May have been typographical error, but data remained unchanged to ensure accuracy of analysis.			
**Operator classified cause as Stress Corrosion Cracking and not Previously Damaged Pipe.			

### Pipeline Piggability

Two operators and a service provider were queried about the ability to pig their pipelines. The service provider, through customer surveys, proclaimed that 40% of the onshore pipelines and 70% of the offshore pipelines were piggable. One operator generalized that only 20% of their onshore pipelines were piggable. Operator B examined 32 incidents that were part of our incident database and the results are outlined in Table 12.

**Table 12.**

	Piggable		
	Yes	No	Unknown
Offshore	6	6	16
Onshore	2	0	2
	8	6	18

Since the data is limited, these numbers are rendered inconclusive, and testing procedures will be developed for both non-piggable and piggable applications.

### **Conclusion**

Candidates for pressure activated sealant technology were identified on the basis of several criteria: Accessibility/Economic Advantage, Leak Severity, Leak Geometry, Minimum Operating Pressure, and Leak Cause.

Starting with 354 leaks out of 1,084 incidents in a 13 year period we identified 205 leaks that were candidates for our sealant technology. This number affirms that pressure activated sealant technology is a viable option to traditional external leak repairs.

**Accessibility/Economic Advantage:** The more inaccessible the leak site, the greater the economic advantage. Our database focuses on leaks where accessibility is difficult, time-consuming and costly. 198 incidents (96.6% of our 205 incident base) were either underground, under pavement or underwater.

**Leak Severity and Geometry:** While no actual leak rates were collected, we know through previous field experience and testing that we can cure leaks in the range of 2.83 – 8.50 cubic meters per minute (100 – 300 scf per minute). Our incident base focused on cracks & pinholes, not ruptures, punctures or tears, which may be out of the range for sealant technology. Narrow leaks, which have more surface area to open area, are easier to seal and have longer seal longevity than circular leaks.

**Minimum Operating Pressure:** MAOP less hydrostatic (or atmosphere) needs to be near or greater than 200 psi for pressure activated sealant technology to be successful. Our testing will focus on curing leaks with differentials from 1.28 MPa (185 psi) to 9.93 MPa (1440 psi).

**Leak Cause:** Weld and corrosion leaks accounted for 75.6% of our incident base and 43.8% of all 384 leaks. By focusing our testing on weld and corrosion leaks we will be testing a representative sampling of the majority of leaks that are applicable candidates for pressure activated sealant technology.

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<sup>1 - 3</sup> Report No. PR-218-9801 Published 2001 by Kiefner and Associates, Inc., J. F. Kiefner, R. E. Mesloh, and B. A. Kiefner









## Pressure Activated Sealant Candidates, 1985-1997

2/25/2004

Leak No.	OPS Rpt ID	Op Judgement	Offshore Area of Incident	Water Depth (ft)	Estimated Incident Pressure, psi	Max. Leak Differential Pressure, psi	MAOP, psi	Leak Cause	Leak Cause Detail	Corrosion Cause	Corrosion Location	Corrosion Description	Coated	Incident Occurred on CP	Pipeline Pigitable Yes/No	Failure Occurred on	Material Involved	Diameter (inch)	Wall Thickness (inch)	SNYS
190	19960146	Dam>\$50K	Offshore Under Water	220	856	1,102	1,200	IC			Internal	1/4" Circular Hole at 6 o'clock	N	Y	Trans	Pipe Body	Steel	12.750	0.381	52,000
191	19960169	Op Judge	Offshore Under Water	130		3,622	3,680	HRF	Break-Away Joint		Gath	Pipeline			Fitting	Steel	4.500	0.438	35,000	
192	19960174	Op Judge	Offshore Under Water	200	890	1,351	1,440	UNK	Unknown Pipe Leak		Trans	Pipeline			Unknown	Steel	16.000	0.438	42,000	
193	19960185	Dam>\$50K	Offshore Under Water	35	1,082	1,424	1,440	UNK	Unknown		Trans	Pipeline			Unknown	Steel	6.625	0.375	35,000	
194	19970078	Dam>\$50K	Onshore Under Ground	765	835	850	DPS				Trans	Pipeline			Weld	Steel	22.000	0.250	52,000	
195	19970083	Op Judge	Offshore Under Water	64	1,100	1,199	1,228	IC			General Corrosion	N	Y	Gath	Pipeline					
196	19970094	Dam>\$50K	Onshore Other		720	985	1,000	EC			Localized Pitting	N	Y	Trans	Pipeline					
197	19970095	Dam>\$50K	Offshore Under Water		848	1,100	IC				External Galvanic	N	Y	Trans	Pipeline	No				
198	19970122	Op Judge	Offshore Under Water	48	1,000	1,279	1,300	IC			Internal	Internal	N	Y	Gath	Pipeline				
199	19970132	Op Judge	Offshore Under Water	48	960	1,279	1,300	IC			Internal	Internal	N	Y	Trans	Pipeline				
200	19970135	Op Judge	Onshore Under Ground	650	843	858	IC				Pinhole Leak	N	Y	Gath	Pipeline					
201	19970140	Dam>\$50K	Offshore Under Water	74	1,170	1,407	1,440	IC			Internal	Internal	N	Y	Trans	Pipeline				
202	19970170	Op Judge	Onshore Under Ground	450	830	845	EC				Localized Pitting	N	Y	Trans	Pipeline					
203	19970171	Dam>\$50K	Onshore Under Ground	850	959	974	DGV				External	External	N	Y	Trans	Pipeline				
204	19980022	Dam>\$50K	Offshore Under Water		1,050	1,250	IC				Localized Pitting	N	Y	Trans	Pipeline					
205	19980025	Dam>\$50K	Offshore Under Water	250	1,000	1,328	1,440	IC			Localized Pitting	N	Y	Trans	Pipeline	Unk				
<b>Blue Text Represents Additional Operator Input</b>																				
<b>Red Text Designates Possible Error in Input</b>																				