



California State Fire Marshal Information Bulletin 14-001

Issued: February 27, 2014
(Updated)

Pipelines, Trains and Bakken Crude Oil

On January 2, 2014, The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) issued the attached Safety Alert to notify the general public, emergency responders, and shippers and carriers that recent derailments and resulting fires indicate that the type of crude oil being transported from the Bakken region of North Dakota and Canada may be more flammable than traditional heavy crude oil.

California refiners are a large consumer of this cheaper priced crude oil. With no existing pipelines to deliver the Bakken oil to the West Coast, oil companies are using a combination of rail cars, barges, and local pipelines to deliver this oil to California refineries. To accommodate additional volumes, new rail car unloading facilities are being proposed and constructed at key distribution sites in the state. Principally in Contra Costa and Kern Counties, these facilities will offload crude oil into tanks and transport using existing pipelines to the refineries throughout California.

We are advising the fire service to treat all crude oil spills, whether they are from rail car or pipeline, with the understanding that the flammability of the oil may be higher than they have traditionally encountered. Also, we encourage you during your annual meetings with the hazardous liquid pipeline operators to discuss if they are shipping Bakken Oil. Additional information can be obtained by clicking on the following links:

- 1) [PHMSA Safety Alert, \(January 2, 2014\)](#)
- 2) [DOT Issues Emergency Order \(February 25, 2014\)](#)
- 3) [DOT Emergency Restriction/Prohibition Order](#)
- 4) [Crude Oil Pipeline Map of California](#)

Should you have any questions regarding the pipeline systems or the commodities that run through your community, please contact the OSFM Pipeline Safety Division at (916) 445-8200.