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NFPA®59A

Standard for the

Production, Storage, and Handling of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG)

2016 Edition

This edition of NFPA 59A, Standard for the Production, Storage, and Handling of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG), was prepared by the Technical Committee on Liquefied Natural Gas. It was issued by the Standards Council on November 14, 2015, with an effective date of December 4, 2015, and supersedes all previous editions.

This edition of NFPA 59A was approved as an American National Standard on December 4, 2015.

Origin and Development of NFPA 59A

A committee of the American Gas Association began work on a standard for liquefied natural gas circa 1960. In the autumn of 1964, a draft was submitted to NFPA with the request that it be considered as the basis for an NFPA standard. The Sectional Committee on Utility Gas prepared a standard that was adopted tentatively at the 1966 NFPA Annual Meeting at the recommendation of the Committee on Gases.

With the formation of the Committee on Fuel Gases in the summer of 1966, the standard was assigned to that committee and its subcommittee on Utility Gas Plants. The first official edition was adopted at the 1967 NFPA Annual Meeting under the sponsorship of the Committee on Fuel Gases.

By early 1969, it was apparent that the use of LNG was expanding considerably beyond the utility gas plant applications covered by the 1967 edition. The American Petroleum Institute suggested that one of its standards, PUBL 2510A, Design and Construction of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) Installations, be used to help develop a standard having a broader scope. The Committee on Liquefied Natural Gas was established for that purpose. The 1971 edition was the first edition of NFPA 59A developed under the broadened scope. Subsequent editions were adopted in 1972, 1975, 1979, 1985, 1990, 1994, 1996, and 2001.

The 2006 edition included revisions in compliance with the Manual of Style for NFPA Technical Committee Documents. Chapter 5 was revised to cover double and full containment LNG storage containers. Definitions of these types of containers were also added to the standard. Seismic design criteria for LNG containers were revised to correlate with the requirements of ASCE 7, Minimum Design Loads for Buildings and Other Structures. Chapter 11 was revised to add requirements for a contingency plan for potential LNG marine transfer incidents.

In the 2009 edition, additional vapor dispersion models were allowed where they are evaluated and approved by an independent body using the new Model Evaluation Protocol developed by the NFPA Research Foundation. The Design Spill table was revised to separate the design spill requirements for over-the-top fill/withdrawal containers, other containers, and process areas. Scope statements were added to each chapter, and the term radiant heat flux replaced thermal radiation throughout the document.

In the 2013 edition, Annex E, Performance-Based Alternative Standard for Plant Siting, was revised and relocated to the mandatory text as new Chapter 15, Performance (Risk Assessment) Based LNG Plant Siting. Use of the performance-based option required approval of the authority having jurisdiction. The performance-based option required analyzing the risks to persons and property in the area surrounding the proposed LNG plant based on risk mitigation techniques incorporated into the facility design. All of the minimum requirements of earlier chapters of NFPA 59A also had to be met. Chapter 15 provided several tables and figures to assist a facility designer in identifying those risks and determining if the risks are tolerable, as defined in Chapter 15.
The 2013 edition also incorporated several revisions to promote consistency between NFPA 59A and the Code of Federal Regulations, as well as some new terminology for tank systems. In addition, Chapters 7 and 14 were reorganized for easier use.

In the 2016 edition, several definitions have been revised to establish a hierarchy of components, facilities, and plants. A new definition for LNG facility has been added, and the definitions for LNG plant and component have been revised to maintain consistency. Subsequent chapters have been revised to correspond to the new definitions.

Additional changes have been made to improve the fire safe design of outer concrete containers to avoid explosive spalling during a fire event. Revisions have been made to requirements for inspections after repairs, detection of leaks, and post seismic events to provide greater confidence in the system’s continued safety and integrity.

The 2016 edition also incorporates several revisions to enhance the use of Annex A. NFPA documents that were listed in Annex A as informational references in prior editions have been moved into Chapter 12 as enforceable code in order to address the design and installation requirements for fire protection systems. New and revised annex material has been added for numerous sections to provide additional information, guidance, and clarification, as well as to point users to reference materials for further guidance.
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Committee Scope: This Committee shall have primary responsibility for documents on safety and related aspects in the liquefaction of natural gas and the transport, storage, vaporization, transfer, and use of liquefied natural gas.

2016 Edition
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NFPA 59A

Standard for the
Production, Storage, and Handling of
Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG)

2016 Edition

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Information on referenced publications can be found in Chapter 2 and Annex E.

Chapter 1 Administration

1.1* Scope.

1.1.1 This standard shall apply to the following:
(1) Facilities that liquefy natural gas
(2) Facilities that store, vaporize, transfer, and handle liquefied natural gas (LNG)
(3) The training of all personnel involved with LNG
(4) The design, location, construction, maintenance, and operation of all LNG facilities

1.1.2 This standard shall not apply to the following:
(1) Frozen ground containers
(2) Portable storage containers stored or used in buildings

(3) All LNG vehicular applications, including fueling of LNG vehicles

1.2 Purpose. The purpose of this standard is to provide minimum fire protection, safety, and related requirements for the location, design, construction, security, operation, and maintenance of LNG plants.

1.3* Equivalency. Nothing in this standard is intended to prevent the use of systems, methods, or devices of equivalent or superior quality, strength, fire resistance, effectiveness, durability, and safety over those prescribed by this standard.

1.3.1 Technical documentation shall be submitted to the authority having jurisdiction to demonstrate equivalency.

1.3.2 The system, method, or device shall be approved for the intended purpose by the authority having jurisdiction.

1.4 Retroactivity. The provisions of this standard reflect a consensus of what is necessary to provide an acceptable degree of protection from the hazards addressed in this standard at the time the standard was issued.

1.4.1 Unless otherwise specified, the provisions of this standard shall not apply to facilities, equipment, structures, or installations that existed or were approved for construction or installation prior to the effective date of the standard. Where specified, the provisions of this standard shall be retroactive.

1.4.2 In those cases where the authority having jurisdiction determines that the existing situation presents an unacceptable degree of risk, the authority having jurisdiction shall be permitted to apply retroactively any portions of this standard deemed appropriate.

1.4.3 The retroactive requirements of this standard shall be permitted to be modified if their application clearly would be impractical in the judgment of the authority having jurisdiction, and only where it is clearly evident that a reasonable degree of safety is provided.

1.5* SI Units. SI units in this standard shall be based on IEEE/ASTM SI 10, American National Standard for Use of the International System of Units (SI): The Modern Metric System.

1.5.1 Alternate usage of U.S. customary units and SI units on a single project shall not be used to lessen clearance distances.

1.6 Pressure Measurement. All pressures expressed in this document are gauge pressures unless specifically noted otherwise.

1.7 Referenced Standards. Reference is made to both U.S. and Canadian standards, because this standard is prepared for use in both the United States and Canada, as well as in other countries.

1.7.1 Where this standard is adopted, the adoption shall include a statement of which U.S. or Canadian reference standards shall be used.

1.7.2 If no such statement is made, the user shall use either all available U.S. or all available Canadian reference standards.

1.7.3 If other reference standards are to be used, it shall be so stated.