

# **OPERATOR QUALIFICATION PROGRAM FOR MASTER METER OPERATORS**

**NAME OF FACILITY** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS** \_\_\_\_\_

**CITY** \_\_\_\_\_

**STATE** \_\_\_\_\_

**ZIP CODE** \_\_\_\_\_

**TYPE OF FACILITY:**

**APARTMENT COMPLEX**

**CONDOS**

**MOTEL**

**HOUSING AUTHORITY**

**MOBILE HOME PARK**

\_\_\_\_\_

## A. SCOPE

On August 27, 1999, the Research and Special Programs Administration published a final rule in the Federal Register under the authority of the Department of Transportation. The rule requires pipeline operators to develop and maintain a written qualification program for individuals performing covered tasks on pipeline facilities. All employees, contractors, or sub-contractors, or any other entity performing certain operation or maintenance tasks on the operator's pipeline facility, that could affect pipeline operations or integrity, must either meet specific qualification requirements of this program or be under the direct supervision of an individual qualified to perform the covered task. The effective date of the rule was October 26, 1999. Operators must have a written qualification program by April 27, 2001, and must complete the qualifications of individuals performing covered tasks by October 28, 2002.

## B. PURPOSE

The objective of the program is to reduce the risk of accidents on pipeline facilities attributable to human error. Operators of pipeline facilities are required to evaluate an individual's ability to perform covered tasks, and to recognize and react to abnormal operating conditions while performing covered tasks. The rule also sets recordkeeping requirements that operators must follow in order to demonstrate compliance, and specific deadlines by which this program must be implemented.

## C. QUALIFICATION PROGRAM

The term **OPERATOR** is used to identify the property owner, property management, or other persons responsible for the daily operation and management of the property.

The term **PIPELINE FACILITY** is the gas piping down stream of the master meter that serves gas to residents of the property. The gas piping is owned and maintained by the operator and not by the local gas company.

- (a) **RULE:** *Operators are required to identify the covered tasks being performed on their property. The covered tasks for this property are identified in Exhibit A.*
- (b) **RULE:** *Operators are required to ensure through evaluation that individuals performing covered tasks are qualified. This is a process that documents an individual's knowledge, skill, and ability to perform covered tasks and to be able to recognize and react to abnormal operating conditions while performing that covered task.*
- (c) **RULE:** *The operator must make provisions to allow non-qualified individuals to perform a covered task if directed and observed by an individual that is qualified to perform that covered task. Non-qualified individuals can only perform a covered task(s) when they are under direct observation and supervision by an individual that is qualified to perform the covered task(s). The supervising individual must never lose direct contact with the individual while the covered task is being performed.*
- (d) **RULE:** *The operator must evaluate an individual if the operator has reason to believe that the individual's performance of a covered task contributed to an incident. An operator must review the circumstances that resulted in the incident and make a determination whether the individual was in the performance of a covered task that may have contributed to the incident. It may be necessary for the operator to review the individual's qualifications in order for the individual to continue performing that covered task. (See definition of an incident)*

- (e) **RULE:** *The operator must evaluate an individual if the operator has reason to believe that the individual is no longer qualified to perform a covered task.* If there is reason to believe that an employee or a contractor is no longer qualified to perform a covered task, the operator will prohibit that individual from continuing to perform covered tasks without being under direct supervision and observation by an individual qualified to perform the covered task. The operator will evaluate the individual's qualifications and ensure the individual is qualified to return to performing covered tasks.
- (f) **RULE:** *The operator must communicate changes that affect covered tasks to the individuals performing those covered tasks.* Any changes in our operations or maintenance procedures will be communicated to both the maintenance personnel and any contractor that is working in a covered task. These changes will be communicated by memo or through staff meetings. These procedural changes can be as a result of changes in federal or state regulations, alleged violations from regulatory audits, changes in operator policy, and/or new equipment or technology.
- (g) **RULE:** *The operator must identify those covered tasks and the intervals at which re-evaluation of the individual's qualifications are required.* All employees performing covered tasks will be re-evaluated on a 5 year basis. All contracted employees will be re-evaluated pursuant to their individual program or requirements of their consortium, but not longer than 5 years between qualification periods.

## D. RECORDS

The following records will be maintained:

- (1) *Identification of qualified individuals and the covered tasks they are qualified to perform.* The names of all employees, contractors, plumbers, and any other individual qualified to perform covered tasks on this property will be maintained and updated as needed.
- (2) *The dates of the current qualification and the method that was used to qualify that individual will be maintained.* (See Exhibit B that summarizes the qualified individuals working covered task on this property) NOTE: the operator will maintain documents verifying the qualifications of these individuals.
- (3) *Records of prior qualifications will be maintained for 5 years.* Records of all contractor personnel will also be maintained for 5 years. Records of individuals that no longer perform covered tasks on this property will be maintained for 5 years from the last date they worked.

## E. DEFINITIONS

**Abnormal Operating Condition** is identified as a malfunction of a component or deviation from normal operations that may:

- (1) Indicate a condition exceeding design limits of the gas piping, or
- (2) Result in a hazard(s) to persons, property, or the environment. An abnormal operating condition for our system would be a failure of a service regulator, venting of a relief device, a release of

gas from either a leak or a component failure, dead vegetation that might indicate a gas leak, the smell of gas while patrolling the property, or other indicators that might be indicative of a gas leak or a condition found of the piping that could result in a leak.

**Covered Task** is an activity that must meet all of the following:

- (1) Is performed on a pipeline facility;
- (2) Is an operations or maintenance task;
- (3) Is performed as a requirement of law; and
- (4) Affects the operation or integrity of the pipeline,

The maintenance work that is performed on our gas piping system is a maintenance task as described in our operations and maintenance manual which consist of repairs and maintenance of the gas piping system by either our maintenance personnel or outside contractors. The inspection of the system is an operations function required by federal and state law that ensures the gas piping facilities are operated and maintained in a safe manner. The tasks described in Exhibit A are the operations and maintenance tasks ensuring the integrity of the gas system.

**Evaluation** is a process by which the operator uses to determine whether an individual is qualified to perform a covered task. The process must demonstrate that the individual has the knowledge, skills, and necessary abilities to be qualified. The operator can employ any of the following methods to make this determination:

- (a) Written examination;
- (b) Oral examination;
- (c) Work performance history review(WPHR);
- (d) Observation during:
  - (1) Performance on the job.
  - (2) On the job training.
- (e) Simulations; or
- (f) Other forms of assessment.

The qualifications of both operator and contractor personnel must be addressed in the operator's program. If the operator relies on a contractor's program, or a consortium, all programs must be specifically referenced in the operator's program. (See Exhibit B.)

Master meter operators can qualify their employees that have been working in maintenance prior to October 26, 1999, by WORK PERFORMANCE HISTORY REVIEW (WPHR). However, the operator must be able to produce documents verifying that the individual was adequately performing the covered task on a routine bases prior to October 26, 1999, without having caused an incident/accident on a pipeline while performing the covered task. The operator can use as verification: good performance reviews that describe the job the individual was performing during this time, documents with the individuals signature (i.e., odor testing records with the individuals signature, any compliance records that may have his/her signature, etc.) **But statements alone, written or otherwise, by previous employers, supervisors, or other individuals will not be acceptable.**

New employees that cannot document having performed covered tasks prior to October 26, 1999, on a gas system, must be qualified by other methods noted under "evaluation." After October 28, 2002, individuals cannot use work experience as the sole means of qualification.

Contract individuals that are not with a consortium must supply a work history resume showing when they began performing covered tasks and how they acquired the necessary skills to perform covered tasks. Contract individuals with a consortium must provide documentation from that consortium verifying their qualification. **All individuals performing covered tasks on this property must be qualified by October 28, 2002.**

### **Local Gas Distribution Company**

The gas distribution supplier's (LDC) will maintain the master meter, and may or may not service and test the pressure limiting devices. It will be required of the master meter operator to verify that LDC employees are qualified to perform maintenance tasks and inspections on the master meter. The operator must make contact with the LDC and obtain documents that verify the qualifications of the LDC's employees performing the covered tasks on the master meter.

### **Plumbers**

Plumbers licensed with the state will be considered qualified. The plumber should provide a copy of his license to the operator.

**EXHIBIT A**

**Place an “X” under the column indicating the covered tasks the operator or individuals performed.**

<b>COVERED TASK NUMBER</b>	<b>COVERED TASK</b>	<b>OPERATOR</b>	<b>GAS SUPPLIER</b>	<b>CONTRACTOR</b>	<b>PLUMBER</b>
1	Conducting pipeline patrols (every 3 months)				
2	Conducting odorization sniff test (every 3 months)				
3	Tenant gas leak complaint.				
4	Tenant gas leak repair records.				
5	Emergency valve inspection (yearly)				
6	Over-pressure protection device inspection (yearly)				
7	Regulator inspection on the master meter (yearly)				
8	Cathodic protection pipe-to-soil readings (yearly)				
9	Taking action to correct cathodic potential deficiencies.				
10	Installing cathodic protection anodes.				
11	Rectifier inspection (every 2 ½ months)				
12	Leakage survey (every 2 years)				
13	Leak repairs				
14	Welding on gas pipelines.				
15	Joining of plastic pipelines.				
16	Visual inspection of pipe or pipe components for damage prior to installation.				
17	Visual inspection of pipe components for correct pressure rating and correct application prior to installation on gas pipeline facilities.				
18	Locating of belowground pipeline facilities and marking the location of the facilities.				
19	Installing and burying gas pipelines in a ditch.				
20	Tapping gas mains on the master meter’s property.				
21	Responding to gas emergencies after business hours.				
22	Abandoning gas pipeline facilities.				

**EXHIBIT B**

**OPERATOR SHOULD IDENTIFY THE INDIVIDUAL WITH THE COVERED TASK IN EXHIBIT A  
DATES OF THE QUALIFICATION, METHOD OF QUALIFICATION, AND THE DATE THE  
INDIVIDUAL MUST BE REQUALIFIED**

<b>COVERED TASK NUMBER</b>	<b>NAME OF INDIVIDUAL</b>	<b>DATE QUALIFIED</b>	<b>QUALIFICATION METHOD</b>	<b>REQUALIFICATION DATE</b>
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				
16				
17				
18				
19				
20				

**EXHIBIT B CONTINUED**

<b>COVERED TASK NUMBER</b>	<b>NAME OF INDIVIDUAL</b>	<b>DATE QUALIFIED</b>	<b>QUALIFICATION METHOD</b>	<b>REQUALIFICATION DATE</b>
<b>21</b>				
<b>22</b>				

EXHIBIT B IS A SUMMARY OF THE OPERATORS QUALIFIED INDIVIDUALS AND THE COVERED TASKS THE INDIVIDUALS ARE QUALIFIED TO PERFORM. THE EXHIBIT IS NOT A STAND-ALONE DOCUMENT VERIFYING THAT THE INDIVIDUALS ARE QUALIFIED. THE OPERATOR MUST ALSO BE ABLE TO PROVIDE DOCUMENTS THAT SUPPORT THE METHOD THE INDIVIDUAL WAS QUALIFIED BY AND THE DATE OF QUALIFICATION.

CONTRACTORS SHOULD PROVIDE COPIES OF DOCUMENTS VERIFYING THEIR QUALIFICATION INCLUDING THE METHOD BY WHICH THEY WERE QUALIFIED AND THE QUALIFICATION DATE. LICENSED PLUMBERS SHOULD PROVIDE COPIES OF THEIR LICENSE TO THE OPERATOR.

THE OPERATOR MUST OBTAIN FROM THE GAS SUPPLIER COPIES OF THE QUALIFICATION DOCUMENTS FOR THE INDIVIDUALS THAT INSPECT AND MAINTAIN THE MASTER METER OR ANY OTHER COVERED TASK THE GAS SUPPLIER PERFORMS FOR THE OPERATOR.

INDIVIDUALS THAT WERE QUALIFIED UNDER THE "WORK PERFORMANCE HISTORY REVIEW," THE OPERATOR MUST HAVE ON RECORD DOCUMENTS THAT VERIFY THE INDIVIDUAL WAS PERFORMING THE TASK PRIOR TO OCTOBER 26, 1999, ON A ROUTINE BASES WITHOUT HAVING CAUSED A PIPELINE ACCIDENT.