In 2007, the Canadian Gas Association (CGA) created a Task Force to develop a Canadian Guideline – the CGA Competency Assessment Plan (CAP) - for best practices in qualifying workers for certain critical, high risk tasks/activities (also known as “Covered Tasks”) performed on pipeline facilities. Task Force members, drawn from various distribution and transmission companies across Canada, investigated several companies within the United States and Canada as well as relevant professional organizations to benchmark for best practices in assessing and qualifying workers in the natural gas industry.

The objective of the CGA Cap Guideline is to reduce the risk of accidents by ensuring that workers are properly qualified to perform Tasks/Activities on pipeline facilities. It recommends that transmission and distribution companies develop and follow a CAP to assess their workers’ knowledge, skills and abilities to perform such Tasks/Activities, including the ability to recognize and respond to unusual operating conditions, using the CGA CAP as a template or guideline.

The CGA CAP is comprised of 20 elements, including a glossary developed to assist CGA members in understanding some unfamiliar terms and definitions used in the CAP. These 20 elements contain guidelines for:

• Identifying the roles and responsibilities of the Company, CAP Administrator, workers, and managers under the CAP.

• Identifying and maintaining an up-to-date listing of the specific Tasks/Activities to be assessed under the CAP. These are critical tasks or activities that are performed on a pipeline facility; are performed as a requirement of the appropriate provincial legislation; and affect the operation or integrity of the pipeline. A list of 49 such Tasks/Activities identified by the Task Force as being the highest risk, most critical tasks or activities performed on pipeline facilities is included in Appendix 1 of the Guideline. This list is not exhaustive and may be supplemented by individual companies according to their needs. Additional Tasks/Activities can be identified by individual companies by using the risk assessment model developed by the Task Force and attached to Appendix 1.

• Selecting evaluation methods and re-evaluation criteria and intervals for each Task/Activity listed. Companies can choose any one or a combination of six different evaluation methods for both the worker’s initial qualification for the Task/Activity and for any subsequent re-evaluations. Samples of evaluation methods are included in Appendix 2 of the Guideline. Re-evaluation intervals for each Task/Activity can be determined by using the risk assessment model in Appendix 1 and the job-aid “Three Steps To Risk Ranking” in the same appendix.

• Identifying the workers who perform the Tasks/Activities.

• Creating a record keeping system capable of tracking qualified workers. The Guideline specifies the minimum standard for record keeping that's necessary to identify qualified workers.

• Qualifying contractor workers to perform Tasks/Activities and monitoring contractor compliance. The Guideline sets out three different methods by which contractors and other non-company workers can be qualified.

• Identifying organizations that can be used for emergency assistance and qualifying their workers to perform Tasks/Activities.

By setting out CAP guidelines for individual companies to follow, the CGA hopes to promote the adoption of a universal Canadian standard for assessing and qualifying workers performing Tasks/Activities in the gas industry. A sample CAP for a transmission and distribution company, as well as a sample CAP for a gas contractor, are included in Appendix 2 of the Guideline.

For more information visit the CGA website: www.cga.ca

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