

Maintaining Quality in PACP Inspections

By Ted DeBoda, P.E.

In the March edition of “NASSCO Corner”, my predecessor, Irv Gemora, communicated the importance of verifying the credentials of contractors certified in PACP (NASSCO’s Pipeline Assessment Certification Program). As the newly-appointed executive director of NASSCO, there are many important ongoing initiatives that I plan to see to fruition – and maintaining the integrity and quality of PACP is one of them.

In addition to ensuring that the people doing the work are truly PACP-certified, a larger area for concern is the potentially decreasing quality of pipeline assessments completed under PACP. For example, consultants are expending excessive QA/QC costs to review video and data just to make sure they meet PACP standards. When these deliverables do not meet PACP standards, they must be revised in order to meet the customer’s specifications, as well as to provide a satisfactory assessment of the pipelines. These are issues that we do not take lightly, and ones that I personally aim to keep at the top of my agenda as the new executive director.

PACP was introduced by NASSCO in 2001 and has become the national standard for the collection of CCTV data, revolutionizing the pipeline assessment industry. However, as with any set of standards, PACP needs to be monitored to make sure standards are met consistently and completely.

NASSCO has a responsibility to the industry to maintain the quality of training, and provide trainers and operators with the tools to meet the requirements of PACP. Some of the steps that NASSCO is taking include:

- Improving the level of the PACP training by adding videos and practical exercises.
- Formalizing the recertification process to include on-line components as well as proctored testing in locations in and near all metropolitan areas.
- Providing on-line exercises accessible to all PACP Certified Operators for practice and reference.
- Assessing in-house training to ensure it meets NASSCO standards.

NASSCO is not alone in this effort. As an industry we need to take the appropriate steps to minimize the level of substandard work that is packaged as PACP compliant. These efforts include:

- Providing appropriate levels of Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) before deliverables are considered complete.
- Neither submitting nor accepting substandard work. Do not approve payment for substandard work.
- Training operators by pointing out their errors found during QA/QC. Operators do not want to perform substandard work.
- Ensuring the quality of in-house training. Otherwise, none of the other steps will matter.

Not everyone will be happy with these steps. Training and QA/QC efforts can detract from short term productivity goals, and can add expense. However, these efforts always have long term benefits that far outweigh short term goals. As PACP matures, our industry as a whole needs to understand the challenges involved with obtaining PACP compliant data and reports, and take responsibility in making sure CCTV providers are properly trained and held accountable to meet PACP standards.

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