



MOVING PACP™ DATA BETWEEN SYSTEMS

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After many successful Pipeline Assessment Certification Program (PACP) inspection projects end, there is a large amount of collected data that some PACP-certified professionals, engineers and utility workers do not understand. Specifically, they do not understand how to put the new data to good use. As it turns out, this is one of the most misunderstood elements of PACP. For some end users and utility owners, the typical solution has been to file these away in a project file or archive them on an external drive and comb through them if there is ever a reason to review them in the future. There is, however, a better way. As most seasoned PACP-certified individuals know, the best way to get the most out of PACP data starts with importing these inspections into a NASSCO-certified PACP software.

When it comes to PACP-certified software, there are over a dozen different options available (see NASSCO.org/Resources for a complete list). While each software is unique in its own right, all PACP-certified software programs do have one thing in common: Each software has the ability to communicate with each other to transfer information.

As part of NASSCO's PACP software certification process, every PACP-certified software is evaluated to confirm its ability to import, export, and generate what is traditionally called a "standard PACP exchange" database file. The standard database file is always generated as an unlocked, password-free, Microsoft Access database (.mdb file extension) capable of being open and read in any PACP software program. As part of the software certification process, all software programs are reviewed to confirm that they can correctly import all standard data fields and data sets found within the standard database export file. This database standardization requirement allows for any PACP-certified software to transfer data from one PACP-certified software to another.

For most software platforms, the process to export a PACP database is fairly easy and can be accomplished with a few clicks of the mouse. The steps to generate the database differ slightly for each software company and each software vendor offers guidance on how to successfully generate the standard PACP exchange file with their software.

There can, however, be some misunderstandings regarding PACP databases. As there are previous versions of PACP, one must be mindful that older versions of the PACP exchange file may have different steps required to import it into a newer PACP database version (e.g., attempting to import a PACP V6 standard PACP exchange file into a PACP V7 database). Attempting to import mismatched PACP versions usually results in the software not accepting the standard PACP exchange file. Many software platforms also have their own proprietary databases and can generate their own proprietary database exchange files. These databases are software-specific and cannot be transferred to any other software platform. To limit these issues, it is recommended to always request the standard PACP exchange file as a deliverable that is the same PACP version of the overall PACP database.

In addition to being able to transfer data across different software platforms, PACP-certified software allows users to create searchable databases of all their PACP inspections and

track which storm, sanitary, or combined gravity sewers have been inspected and determine which ones have not. The implementation of a PACP database also allows for condition benchmarking as it permits users to compare conditions found during older inspections to those found in more recent inspections of the same line segment.

There are now a wide variety of tools and software utilities that can do even more with the PACP data that's being collected. One example is a tool that's integrated into some GIS applications which shows inspections on a map and symbolically shows all defects and observations. Many PACP software platforms also have built-in integration with computerized maintenance management software (CMMS) platforms that can link PACP inspections to specific work orders. As more advancements evolve within the industry, we can expect to see more improvements and advancements with PACP software tools to make evaluating our sewer systems easier and better.



PACP data files store assessment information, link inspections and work orders, and provide the foundation for advanced features still in development.

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