



PETROLEUM COMPETENCY PROGRAM (PCP) OCCUPATIONAL STANDARDS of COMPETENCE FACT SHEET

BACKGROUND

- The Petroleum Competency Board was formed in 1995 to address the skilled labour shortage in the petroleum service industry. It was suggested that more workers might be attracted to the sector if there was a visible, well-defined career path to follow.
- An examination of the conventional trades approach was conducted. Typically, this includes formalized training, examinations and practicum work. Ultimately, the competency route, which entails observations of competency, was chosen and adapted from the National Vocational Qualification system in the United Kingdom.
- In 2001, the Petroleum Human Resources Council of Canada was formed and took ownership of the Competency Program. The Council revised several of the competencies and implemented a Standards Management Plan. This new program was established nationally as the Petroleum Competency Program (PCP).
- Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training recognizes the PCP Standards of Competence for Oil and Gas Transportation Services, Snubbing Services and Well Testing as “Designated Occupations”, equal in status to a Journeyman’s Certificate in a trade.



Photo courtesy of Kodiak Wireline Services Ltd.

WHAT IS A STANDARD OF COMPETENCE?

- Itemizes the tasks and skills involved in doing a job.
- Describes the safe and effective application of these skills in typical working conditions.
- Specifies the criteria that should be used to evaluate a worker’s competency in that particular job.
- Determines the ability of a worker to properly perform a job to industry standards.
- Provides the framework for a training program.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF IMPLEMENTING A STANDARD OF COMPETENCE?

Benefits to employers

- Enhances an employer’s competitive advantage by providing a mechanism for regulatory compliance. Companies that hire competent certified workers are meeting or exceeding OH&S regulations. For example, it proves to the Workers’ Compensation Board (WCB) and Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) that workers are competent to perform the job based on an industry standard.
- Increases staff recruitment and hiring efficiency. With tasks and skills clearly defined, qualifications can be easily matched and gaps identified.
- Training needs and employee promotions are also streamlined through detailed worker assessments. Employers are better equipped to identify training gaps and provide the necessary skills development training to ensure continued competence and facilitate career promotion.
- Raises safety levels. Competent workers are safer.
- Enhances corporate profitability. Skilled workers are more productive and efficient.



Photo courtesy of Ensign Energy Services Inc.

Benefits to employees

- Provides national recognition of competence to employers, industry, and government. A Certificate of Competence is proof of competence to an industry standard.
- Increases job satisfaction and self-confidence. Being recognized for your skills creates pride and a sense of identity.
- Enhances career planning and promotion opportunities. Competency assessments ensure that a worker understands his or her skill level. This encourages a worker to strive towards achieving the next level of competency. For example, having attained assistant operator status, one might work towards being assessed as an operator.
- Promotes a safer work environment. Knowing that co-workers are also certified creates a comfort level that the job will be done safely.
- Makes skills more transferable within the industry. Workers may be able to transition into other oilfield service positions where that skill set is needed or would be an asset.
- Improves mobility within Canada and access to international opportunities. A nationally recognized certificate increases a workers' marketability elsewhere in Canada and internationally.

Benefits to the oil and gas industry

- Assists E&P companies in their due diligence requirements. OH&S regulations and Industry Recommended Practice (IRP) #7 require competent workers on a site. Workers holding Certificates of Competence satisfy that requirement.
- Promotes the industry as one that strives to improve worker safety and injury reduction.
- Educates youth and under-represented labour groups about job options and career paths. As traditional pools of labour shrink, new people need to be attracted to this sector.

Benefits to the general public

- Reduces injuries, lowers health care costs and decreases risk to the environment. Skilled workers on site mean fewer incidents. Fewer incidents mean fewer WCB claims and lower health care costs for Canadian taxpayers.
- Educates the public about the industry and how it operates. It creates awareness and improves the industry's profile, attracting more young people looking for a career path.

HOW IS COMPETENCE DETERMINED?

Competence is determined through an assessment process. The company or the individual can initiate the process. Specifically, competence is determined:

1. **On the job:** By demonstrating an ability to carry out the job to the established standard of competence.
2. **Beyond the job:** Additional evidence of competence may be collected through interviews, documentation, discussions with supervisors, managers, client representatives, or others familiar with the performance of the individual/candidate being assessed. If the individual successfully completes the assessment, a Certificate of Competence is issued. If the individual does not pass the assessment, skills and/or knowledge deficiencies are identified and a training plan can be implemented.



Photo courtesy of Nabors Canada

CERTIFICATION

Candidates judged competent by a certified Assessor receive a renewable Certificate of Competence. Holders of Petroleum Competency Program (PCP) certificates should note that additional recognition of their competence is available from the Government of Alberta. The Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training (AAIT) department of Advanced Education will grant certification under its Designated Occupation program to workers in some occupations who hold a valid PCP certificate and apply to the Minister of Advanced Education. AAIT certification is recognized nationally and is available to anyone who works and resides in Canada.

Requirements for Certification

Candidates who wish to receive certification under the PCP must:

- Possess the core competencies of the occupation, plus additional competencies, if required;
- Work in the petroleum industry in a job directly related to the type of certification they are seeking; and
- Have the support and co-operation of their employer.



Photo courtesy of DC Energy Services Inc.

WHO DOES THE ASSESSING?

Certified Assessors who have experience in the occupation being assessed and who meet established criteria are permitted to assess individual candidates in this program.

Companies will often choose individuals from within their own organizations to become trained as PCP Assessors, namely those who have the experience and skill level to judge the capabilities of a company's workforce. These individuals are required to attend a two-day training course hosted by Enform and be audited while doing their first assessment of a candidate. This will enable them to become certified under the PCP program.

Once certified, Assessors must maintain their certification by conducting two assessments per year over the three-year certification period.

Assessors can evaluate only the specific occupation(s) for which they have been certified. The occupation an Assessor is qualified to assess is listed on their PCP Assessor Certificate.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING A STANDARD OF COMPETENCE?

Development

- Industry sectors interested in participating in the project make a financial contribution to cover the costs of development.
- A competency expert will work with a group of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) provided by participating companies to write and/or revise the standard(s). Depending on the scope and complexity of the occupation, the time commitment required of each SME can be several days per occupation. For example, it may take two days for volunteers to write a Standard of Competence for an Assistant Operator position.

Validation

- Once a Standard of Competence is written, broad industry approval is sought to ensure that it is an accurate and valid industry Standard and to obtain support from as many stakeholders as possible. Standards are validated first by the SMEs and then by each of the participating companies.
- Participating companies may also decide that the Standards should also be validated by industry. This could include sign-off by other service sectors or by the producer community.
- The PCP Steering Committee, a committee consisting of employer and employee representatives from other PCP occupations, then formally validates the Standards and chooses when they will come into effect.

Implementation

- Once the Standards have come into effect, companies will choose individuals from within their organization to become trained PCP Assessors. (See "Who Does the Assessing?"). PCP Certified Assessors can then conduct competency assessments of workers within their company.