

# Recommended Practice for Pipeline Operator Qualification (OQ)

API RECOMMENDED PRACTICE 1161  
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## Introduction

### Background

The original purpose of API 1161 was to provide liquid pipeline operators (“Operators”) with a guidance document to aid in the development of a written operator qualification (OQ) program to comply with the new OQ regulation (49 CFR Part 195 Subpart G) which became effective October 26, 1999. At that time, the preamble to the final regulation was the only guidance available to assist Operators with program development and program compliance. Since then, the regulation has been revised; Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) has issued advisories, white papers, frequently asked questions (FAQs), protocols and other guidance documents; industry groups have formed and some have issued OQ standards; and Operators have gained compliance experience as their programs have matured. Therefore, it is the goal of the OQ workgroup to revise API 1161 to reflect the relevant additional information that was not available in 2000.

### Program Requirements

Each Operator is required to have and follow a written OQ program that includes provisions to address the nine required elements of the OQ regulation. While the Operator has the flexibility to exceed the requirements of the regulation, it is important to note that any and all requirements included in the written program become enforceable.

# Recommended Practice for Pipeline Operator Qualification (OQ)

## 1 Scope

The purpose of this recommended practice is to provide guidance for developing and maintaining an Operator Qualification (OQ) program. This document is comprised of the Recommended Practice along with normative and non-mandatory, informative annexes.

This RP is applicable for all pipelines, both onshore and offshore, subject to 49 *CFR* Part 192 and/or Part 195. References to 49 *CFR* Part 192 are applicable to gas-transmission-only tasks, and references to 49 *CFR* Part 195 are applicable to liquid-only tasks. Operators may choose to use all, part, or none of this document as applicable to their operations.

Operators should be aware that the OQ regulation is applicable only to United States Department of Transportation (DOT) jurisdictional pipelines. For purposes of this document, the word “pipeline” is used interchangeably with pipeline, pipeline facility, pipeline system, and any and all jurisdictional pipeline components as defined in 49 *CFR* Part 192 and Part 195.

## 2 Normative References

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

API 510, *Pressure Vessel Inspection Code: In-service Inspection, Rating, Repair, and Alteration*

API Standard 653, *Tank Inspection, Repair, Alteration, and Reconstruction*

API Standard 1104, *Welding of Pipelines and Related Facilities*

API Recommended Practice 2350, *Overfill Protection for Storage Tanks in Petroleum Facilities*

ASME *Boiler and Pressure Vessel Code*, Section IX: *Welding and Brazing Qualifications*

ASNT Recommended Practice SNT-TC-1A<sup>2</sup>, *Personnel Qualification and Certification in Nondestructive Testing*

U.S. DOT Title 49, *Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 192*<sup>3</sup>, *Transportation of Natural and Other Gas by Pipeline*

U.S. DOT Title 49, *CFR Part 195, Transportation of Hazardous Liquids by Pipeline*

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<sup>1</sup> ASME International, 2 Park Avenue, New York, New York 10016-5990, [www.asme.org](http://www.asme.org).

<sup>2</sup> American Society for Nondestructive Testing, 1711 Arlingate Lane, P.O. Box 28518, Columbus, Ohio 43228, [www.asnt.org](http://www.asnt.org).

<sup>3</sup> Department of Transportation. The *Code of Federal Regulations* is available from the U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402, [www.gpo.gov/fdsys](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys).