WHAT IS A PIPELINE SMS ASSESSMENT?

A Pipeline SMS Assessment looks beyond regulatory compliance, providing operators insights on continuous safety improvement opportunities in their operations and programs. During a Pipeline SMS Assessment, a team of independent, pipeline safety experts spends about a week on-site, working with employees and leadership - across operations - to evaluate the health and maturity of the organization's Pipeline SMS.

PIPESLINE SMS ASSESSMENTS DEMONSTRATE A COMMITMENT TO A CULTURE OF SAFETY AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT ACROSS THE PIPELINE INDUSTRY.

HOW DOES THE MATURITY EVALUATION WORK?

Assessors use the Pipeline SMS Maturity Model to evaluate operators' Pipeline SMS maturity in each of the 10 elements. The model has 5 levels, outlined below. It assesses industry-approved key performance indicators based on an operator's scope and allows for benchmarking across peer groups. Levels 1-3 indicate Conforming, Level 4 Sustaining, and Level 5 Improving. Evaluation at Levels 4 and 5 is based on data that shows a Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle is in place and working.

LEVEL DESCRIPTION
0 Learning: Requirements are not addressed, and there is no plan to address. The organization or unit thereof may have considered implementing a management system or a component of it but has not formally committed to doing so.
1 Planning: The organization or unit thereof is developing an understanding of the management system and has developed and approved an implementation action plan.
2 Developing: Pipeline SMS processes, procedures, programs, or organizational structures to support the management system are being developed. Implementation is not yet complete (50%).
3 Implemented: Organizational structures are in place, processes are fully developed, procedures and programs documented and functional.
4 Sustaining: Processes and procedures are being applied consistently over time. Performance measures have been developed and are being used and reported.
5 Improving: There is evidence of continual improvement in the management system components (processes, procedures, programs and their performance indicators) and in the organization's performance against standardized industry key performance indicators.

ENHANCING SAFETY AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IN PIPELINE OPERATIONS

CONTACT INFORMATION:
For more information, contact: PipelineSMSAssessment@api.org or call (281) 978-4940.
PROCESS

The entire process – from the establishment of an assessment schedule to the final assessment report – takes about 6 months. The assessment team works with the operator to complete contracting, information requests, and planning activities to ensure the on-site assessment schedule meets operator needs and assessment requirements.

While each assessment is flexible, based on the size of the operator and scope of operations, a typical on-site assessment takes about five days, with many opportunities to learn through engagement with the assessors.

Pipeline SMS assessors work with an operator to schedule meetings with the operator’s subject matter experts (SMEs); additionally they spend a considerable amount of time on-site, working with operators to determine how procedures and programs are being used and implemented.

There are daily de-briefs and a closing conference to review key highlights and improvement opportunities for each element and area assessed.

Following the on-site assessment, an assessment report is developed and provided, including a collection of what is working well, gaps in system implementation, and a set of observations about the implementation and effectiveness of existing policies, processes, and procedures.

THE 10 ELEMENTS OF RP 1173 ARE THE FOUNDATION OF THE PIPELINE SMS ASSESSMENT PROGRAM AND ADDRESS KEY AREAS OF PIPELINE SAFETY PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES FOR A PIPELINE’S LIFE CYCLE.

API Recommended Practice (RP) 1173 Pipeline Safety Management Systems, was developed through API’s American National Standards Institute (ANSI) accredited standards development process and the collaborative efforts of subject matter experts. The assessment also provides insights into system maturity and effectiveness.

For each element, the assessors focus on assessing program, process, and system conformity with RP 1173, implementation across operations and in the field, promoting a robust safety culture, and learning from leading industry practices.

ELEMENTS:

1. Leadership and Management Commitment
2. Stakeholder Engagement
3. Risk Management
4. Operational Controls
5. Incident Investigation, Evaluation, and Lessons Learned
6. Safety Assurance
7. Management Review and Continuous Improvement
8. Emergency Preparedness and Response
9. Competence, Awareness, and Training
10. Documentation and Record Keeping

INTERNATIONAL PIPING SYSTEMS AND THERMAL AMERICAN NATIONAL STANDARDS INSTITUTE (ANSI) ACCREDITED STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT PROCESS AND THE COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS OF SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS.

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Benchmarking is one of the most valuable offerings of the Pipeline SMS Assessment Program. With the operator’s permission, maturity evaluation level summaries, across the RP 1173 expectations and elements, are aggregated and blinded in a database to compare your performance to the industry and identify areas for improvement. This also allows the industry to measure its progress over time.