

## **Policy: Signing of the Quality Management Plan (QMP) Document**

In accordance with section 5(a) of the *Gas Distribution Act* (GDA), the Chief Officer expects all distributors and owners of low pressure distribution pipelines for natural gas to enter into an agreement with the province to ensure compliance with the standards referred to under s.2 of the Act. This agreement is referred to as the Quality Management Plan (QMP) under authority of s.5(b). To fully execute the QMP, it must be read and signed by the distributor or system owner and any individual empowered to operate and maintain the rural gas utility or low pressure distribution pipeline on behalf of the distributor or owner.

The QMP document is submitted to Rural Utilities annually to ensure that those ultimately responsible for the general direction and supervision of the affairs and business of the distributor/owner are aware of the key components and documents (inclusive of legislation) that governs the safe design, construction, operation and maintenance of their natural gas distribution system. This includes rural gas co-operative associations, municipal and urban gas utilities and the owners of low pressure distribution pipelines. For submission purposes, rural utilities incorporated under the *Rural Utilities Act* may consider submitting this document with their Annual Return.

As the QMP document is inclusive of design and construction considerations, standards, pertinent documentation, and legislation necessary to have a rural gas utility or low pressure distribution pipeline designed and built, the annual signature of the QMP fulfills the requirement for a "Standing Construction Approval" from the Chief Officer, as per section 13 of the Act.

The signed QMP, along with annual submission of pipeline as-built mapping and the successful on-going operation and maintenance of the system as determined by regularly scheduled operation and maintenance inspections (s.4 and s. 5(c)) collectively constitute what is referred to as the Chief Officer's annual "Approval to Operate".

Failure to submit a signed QMP to Rural Utilities may result in any or all of the following actions:

- a) The annual Approval to Operate will not be issued;
- b) All planned/future construction must be approved by the Chief Officer prior to the start of construction in accordance to section 13 of the GDA and until such time that the QMP is signed by the owner/operators;
- c) Any construction done without the Chief Officer's prior approval is in contravention of section 13, and is subject to an offence (s.8) and/or an order under section 9 of the Act.

Note that the signed QMP is part of the Operation and Maintenance Inspection that is conducted every three years on the Federation member gas co-ops. In accordance with the policy of the Federation of Alberta Gas Co-ops Ltd, failing to provide a signed QMP and the minutes in which the rural gas utility's Board of Directors discussed the QMP document is considered a "major" finding, and will be dealt with accordingly.