Section 3.1 Terms and Definitions

3.1.14

Remote Evaluation

An evaluation which is conducted and controlled by an evaluator with assistance from a host facility representative where the evaluator is not physically present during the evaluation.

Section 6.2.6 Evaluations

6.2.6.1

Alternative Methods of Evaluation

Operators may qualify individuals using alternative methods. Examples of these alternative methods would include the use of remote software applications when performing performance verifications. There are many applications that are currently available to perform alternative methods of evaluation. Some examples of these types of tools include video conferencing platforms, as well as computer-generated simulated environments such as augmented reality and virtual reality.

Operators are responsible for accepting the results of all evaluations. Operators should track and maintain an individual's qualification to promote safety and the verification of an individual's knowledge, skills, and ability to perform a task. The records should identify if a qualification was performed using an alternative method. Alternative methods should have well-defined processes and be properly documented.

As defined in Section 3.1.6, the term "evaluation" identifies e) other forms of assessment as a qualification option. Section 6.2.4 describes evaluations as formal, structured observations to measure knowledge, skills, and ability. Evaluations should be performed in real-time or in a simulated environment while an evaluator assesses the individual's skills based on a set of predetermined and documented criteria. These criteria should not vary whether the evaluation takes place remotely or with an evaluator physically present, but there are some important considerations when an operator determines if a covered task can be remotely evaluated:

1. **Active System versus Simulation:** A Remote Evaluation presumes the Evaluator is not physically in control of the performance evaluation. If an evaluation is taking place on an active system, and the candidate is not currently qualified for the task being evaluated, span of control oversight rules apply, and the task performance shall be directly observed by a qualified individual. Because of this reason, any evaluations taking place on an Active System should not be eligible for remote evaluations due to safety and security concerns of the pipeline, personnel, equipment, and the environment. Tasks that have been identified by the operator as more critical or more complex may not be suitable for simulated evaluations.

2. **Initial versus Subsequent Qualification:** Initial Qualification presumes the individual has not yet been evaluated on the covered task. When performing an Initial Qualification, it must be recognized that there is an additional layer of novice risk that could lead to an evaluation needing to be shut down immediately. Without physical control of the situation, it is more challenging for a remote evaluator to manage that risk. Tasks that have been identified by the operator as more critical or more complex may not be suitable for initial evaluations.

3. **Covered Task Considerations:** There are covered tasks (e.g. Task 40.8, *Installing a Tap Larger than 2 in. on a Pipeline System)* that may not be safe to perform without additional assistance or on-site physical control of the evaluation, regardless if they are 'simulated'. For this reason, the Operator should assess and determine which evaluations of tasks on their covered task lists are eligible to be performed remotely. Tasks that have been identified by the operator as more critical or more complex may not be suitable for remote evaluations.

When qualifying using an alternative method the following should be taken into consideration.

1) Before performing the evaluation, the evaluator should verify all equipment is working properly. Evaluations through a conversation on a phone will not be allowed unless using some form of a video-capable app.

2) The evaluator shall ensure that there is an observer on premises to verify the individual and the environment is safe.

3) The evaluator shall verify that the individual being evaluated is the person to be qualified. This should be done through the verification of an individual's picture identification (such as Company ID, government issued ID, etc.).

4) The evaluator shall verify that no other person(s) are assisting the individual during the evaluation. The onsite observer or any other person that is needed to assist with holding the phone, camera, microphone, etc., cannot speak, or in any way assist the individual being evaluated.

5) The evaluator and individual performing the qualification should be in an area that limits distractions.

6) Unless used as part of the evaluation phones or other communication devices should be turned off/silenced before beginning the evaluation.

7) Neither the individual being evaluated or the evaluator shall leave the evaluation until it is complete. In the event that an individual must leave for any reason, the evaluation should be discontinued and started over when he/she is available.

8) The evaluator should take detailed notes. Notes should document that the individual indicated comprehension and demonstration of the concept and skills of the task. The name of any additional person(s) in the room shall be documented. This includes the onsite observer and others that might be required to assist.

9) The evaluation should be done in a real-time simulated environment. The task steps shall be completed in a manner that the evaluator can easily determine that the individual qualifying has the proper knowledge, skills, and ability to perform the task both safely and correctly.