

PIPELINE CONSTRUCTION INSPECTION: WORKFORCE FACTS

SERIES 1 | REPORT 7

THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

A new and creative model for helping young people get the work experience required for the API 1169 exam is to hire engineers-in-training (E.I.T.s) to work with seasoned pipeline construction inspectors. Many E.I.T.s are self-directed learners, pay close attention to detail, and will have had field experience through summer jobs.

“Barriers to becoming a pipeline inspector are surmountable with an intentional and focused effort to mature the pipeline construction inspection career path.”

REFERENCES

¹ Jiva Consulting. (2019). *Pipeline construction inspection benchmarking survey*.

² <https://jivaconsulting.com/cpk/career-resources>

³ <https://alis.alberta.ca/occinfo/occupations-in-alberta/occupation-profiles/pipeline-construction-inspector>

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Overcoming the Barriers to Career Entry

BARRIERS TO BECOMING AN INSPECTOR

Individuals considering a career as a pipeline construction inspector may encounter the following barriers (Figure 1):

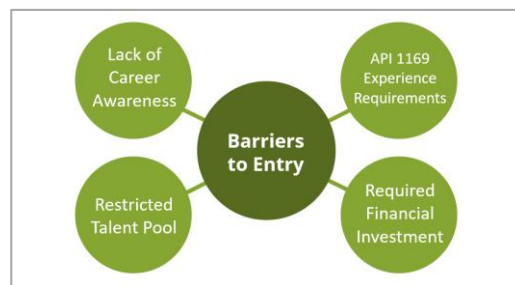


Figure 1: Barriers to individuals considering a career as a pipeline construction inspector.

1. Lack of Career Awareness

Pipeline construction inspection is part of a hidden oil and gas job market. As such, only people with ties to the oil and gas industry may be aware of this career. Also, information about this career, such as the required skills, education, training, and experience, is limited.

2. Restricted Talent Pool

Due to the lack of a structured training program, previous pipeline construction work experience is regarded as a proxy for expertise in pipeline construction inspection. When employers hire inspectors, they often limit their search to this small talent pool, hiring directly from pipeline construction companies and other oil and gas service providers. Consequently, individuals without pipeline construction experience have a low probability of being hired.

3. API 1169 Experience Requirements

Most pipeline owners require that inspectors have API 1169 Certification. To qualify for the exam, a university or technical school graduate needs four years of work experience in the pipeline industry or five years of work experience in other heavy industries (e.g., road building, blasting). Without a degree or certificate, the experience requirements increase.

Employers looking to hire inspectors immediately may not be willing to wait 4–5 years to hire people from outside the industry. Therefore, changing current hiring practices will be difficult unless a mechanism for new entrants to gain experience is created.

4. Required Financial Investment

Pipeline construction inspectors are independent contractors. To become a contractor, individuals must buy a business license, insurance, and their own equipment. People considering this career may not have the resources (e.g., money, expertise) to incorporate, purchase the required equipment, or pay for training.

OVERCOMING BARRIERS

To improve career awareness and provide information about pipeline construction inspection, Jiva Consulting² and the Government of Alberta³ have information geared toward potential inspectors.

Overcoming the other barriers to career entry requires a fundamental shift in how the industry develops talent:

- To broaden the talent pool, industry could develop a structured training pathway for new talent to enter pipeline construction inspection.
- To help individuals get the experience needed to take the API 1169 exam, industry could develop a work-experience training program (e.g., apprenticeship program).

Once a structured training pathway that includes work experience is in place, students can take advantage of financial aid programs and government grants, thus reducing the impact of the required financial investment.

The four barriers to becoming a pipeline construction inspector are surmountable with an intentional and focused effort by industry to mature pipeline construction inspection from a hidden career to one more widely known by the broader population.