

NAVIGATING THE SHIFT FROM CETP TO PEP: HOW TO KEEP YOUR FIELD TEAM COMPLIANT IN A CHANGING REGULATORY LANDSCAPE

As CETP sunsets & PEP rolls out, propane marketers must reassess training, documentation & licensing requirements to keep field teams compliant

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As a more than 30-year veteran of the propane industry and a director of safety and compliance, I have rarely seen a transition as significant as the sunset of the Propane Education & Research Council's (PERC) Certified Employee Training Program (CETP). The phased introduction of the Propane Education Program (PEP) represents much more than a rebranding. It is overhauling the way propane marketers across the United States must approach their training, documentation and daily procedures.

For propane marketers, the challenge is twofold: maintaining compliance with state and federal requirements while ensuring that every technician, driver and customer service representative (CSR) has the skills, credentials and confidence to operate safely. Understanding the road map from CETP to PEP and how it impacts employees' roles is key to a smooth transition. At this point, it's important to distinguish and understand which combination of PEP and CETP courses your employees will need for their job and/or state licensing.

FROM CETP TO PEP: UNDERSTANDING THE ROAD MAP

Since the beginning of my career, PERC's CETP has been the industry's cornerstone for propane safety and workforce training. CETP standardized instruction across core job functions, including delivery, installations, plant operations and service work, helping to ensure those handling propane and its equipment had consistent safety knowledge no matter where in the country they were located.

Now that the requirements and standards are changing to PEP, however, propane marketers are facing changes and standards they must work to keep up with. Few have yet invested the time and energy to stay up to date with the shifts and fluctuations we are seeing under the PEP system thus far.

Key differences in the CETP-to-PEP transition include:

- **Varying training delivery methods:** PEP courses are designed around specific job tasks, altering the learning paths that technicians,

drivers, CSRs and managers are expected to follow. This varies from CETP, which combined classroom learning, field training and hands-on training as the structure to this education. While hands-on learning has historically been successful in our industry, PEP focuses more on online modules and knowledge assessments, which may be more challenging for technicians and delivery drivers to grasp due to its dramatic difference from being out in the field and applying the knowledge.

- **Adjusted proficiency tracking:** PEP incorporates skill verification built into the program, changing the way marketers track their employee training. They will have to adjust their documentation and recordkeeping to track, qualify and record new PEP training modules, including when and by whom they were completed.

While CETP certification remains valid until its expiration, PERC's rollout of PEP signals a new direction that will

soon overshadow former requirements and bring to light new ones marketers are expected to comply with. For propane retailers, now is the time to assess where their teams stand and develop a transition strategy.

STATES WITH LICENSING REQUIREMENTS

Various states have specific and unique licensing and operator qualification requirements tied to CETP credentials. For marketers operating in states that require formal licensing, such as in the Northeast, this ever-evolving transition carries additional weight. The sunset of CETP brings about questions surrounding how these states will recognize or integrate PEP standards.

Regulatory bodies in each state are working with PERC to define how PEP credits and competency verification align with existing licensing expectations. However, the interpretation of these new standards varies by state and, in some cases, by local jurisdiction. This is one of many reasons why it's essential for propane marketers to stay closely engaged with internal or third-party safety consultants to avoid compliance gaps and risk to their customers, employees and company.

If your business operates in a state that mandates CETP completion for licensing, you'll need to adjust your employee training road map accordingly. Working with a compliance partner who understands both CETP's legacy structure and PEP's evolving criteria can make this process far more manageable. A third-party safety provider can help you navigate those requirements and align your training plan with the new PEP framework to maintain regulatory compliance without disruption.

STATES WITHOUT LICENSE REQUIREMENTS

For propane marketers in states without licensing requirements, a propane safety trainer can still help propane marketers navigate the shift to PEP as well as provide hands-on training for your field

teams. Technicians learn best in hands-on situations, which is why I encourage everyone to get out of the office and experience real-world training on the jobsite. This can help improve retention and prompt questions and answers that would not necessarily come up in a classroom setting. Hands-on training is particularly important for high-skill, high-liability positions such as plant operators, delivery drivers and service technicians.

While PEP's flexibility allows online learning to handle much of the theoretical instruction, live classroom or field sessions continue to provide the best environment for team-based learning, situational safety practice and problem-solving.

By combining PEP learning modules with tailored field instruction and skill verification, a safety trainer can help ensure that propane marketers like you help their teams meet both the letter and spirit of compliance. This blended training approach reduces accidents, strengthens company culture and helps employees feel more confident in their daily responsibilities. It also helps customers feel more confident in your employees' ability to manage their propane system and communicate important safety information effectively.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR PROPANE LEARNING PATHS

Some states are already offering pilot programs of PEP, while others are still finalizing how to link new training to existing licensing frameworks. This makes 2026 a pivotal year for propane marketers and their training managers alike. Staying proactive will significantly help to protect your business from potential compliance interruptions and ensure field employees don't lose momentum in their training progress. Reviewing your current training records, identifying which CETP credentials are expiring and planning migration to the equivalent PEP modules will help you stay one step ahead of the ever-changing landscape.

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These rapid changes also emphasize the importance of having a dedicated compliance assessment process — a road map that evaluates your company's current training alignment, identifies upcoming gaps and plans an orderly transition to PEP. I recommend contacting a third-party safety expert for this service, as they can come in with fresh eyes and outside knowledge to identify and prioritize areas of your training, compliance, reporting and documentation that have room for improvement.

MAKE THE TRANSITION SMOOTH & SAFE

Propane marketers now have a unique opportunity to modernize training, strengthen safety culture and simplify compliance tracking across their operations and locations. The key is early action and informed guidance from a propane safety expert who is comfortable keeping up with the changing licensure.

Reach out to your preferred propane safety professional today to start the conversation. Every business has a different training footprint, and your road map to compliance should reflect your size, structure and state-specific regulations.

With the right strategy and support, your company can lead the way safely and confidently into the next generation of propane workforce training. 📌

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