

Quality Assurance at EPA Region 9

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Agenda

What is QA?

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What is Quality Assurance?

- **Quality Assurance** is the general name for an organization's system of planning, performing & documenting its activities, reviewing those activities & making systematic or project improvements.
- QA is a required element of the EPA's planning & implementation process.

Quality Assurance Authorities

These citations are valid at the time of issuance of the QAPP Standard. Since these documents are subject to periodic review, users of this Standard should refer to the most recent version.

- [U.S.C. App.; Pub. L. 98–80, 84 Stat. 2086](#) (Reorganization Plan No. 3 of 1970): Establishment of the Environmental Protection Agency and its role to “...research the adverse effects of pollution and on methods and equipment for controlling it, the gathering of information on pollution, and the use of this information in strengthening environmental protection programs and recommending policy changes”.
- [Information Quality Act](#), Section 515 of Treasury & Government Appropriations Act, 2001 (PL 106-554, 31 USC 3516)
- [2 CFR 1500.12](#): Uniform Administration Requirements, Cost Principles & Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, Quality Assurance Requirements
- [40 CFR Part 35](#): State & Local Assistance Grants & Cooperative Agreements
- [48 CFR Part 46](#): Contracts
- [40 CFR Appendix A to Part 58](#) – Quality Assurance Requirements for Monitors used in Evaluations of National Ambient Air Quality Standards

Quality Assurance Authorities: Updates Supporting Existing Authorities

Under U.S.C. App.: Pub.L. 98-80, 84 Stat. 2086 (Reorganization Plan No. 3 of 1970):

- [Quality Policy](#)
- [Quality Procedure](#)

Under Information Quality Act:

- [OMB Memo re: Agency Responsibilities](#)
- [OMB Guidelines](#)
- [EPA Information Quality Guidelines](#)

Under Uniform Administration & 40 CFR Part 35 Requirements:

- QA Grant Terms & Conditions in Grant Awards
- QA Grant Term & Conditions in Cooperative Awards

Under 40 CFR Part 46: Quality Assurance

- [EPA Acquisition Regulations \(EPAAR\)](#)

What was the Process for Updating the Quality Assurance Standards?

- Office of Mission Support (OMS) conducted a robust outreach effort while updating the QA Standards
- Participation included:
 - Regions
 - National Program Offices
 - 37 States/Interstates
 - 23 Tribes
- Received 1400+ comments on initial drafts & accepted most comments.
- Received formal concurrence from all EPA Organizations on the QAPP Standard.
- Conducted formal Tribal Consultation & Coordination.



What Has NOT Changed.

- The QAPP Standard continues to define the minimum requirements for QAPPs.
- A QAPP continues to be unique to its specific project.
- Implementation of the Quality Policy & Procedure allows for the graded approach to be applied to the systematic planning, development, & approval of QAPPs.
 - The graded approach establishes the QA & QC requirements appropriate to:
 - the complexity & type of work,
 - how the results will be used,
 - the available resources, &
 - the unique needs of the organization or the customer (for contracts).
 - The Graded Approach is not a mechanism to waive requirements. If an element is not applicable, an explanation as to why it is not applicable shall be provided in the QAPP.
- EPA Organizations may define additional requirements in their Quality Management Plans (QMP).

What Has Changed?

All work performed by or on behalf of EPA involving **environmental information operations** shall be implemented in accordance with an approved Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP).

The EPA's Quality Assurance Standards are located at these links:

- [Quality Management Plans \(QMP\)](#)
- [Quality Assurance Project Plans \(QAPPs\)](#)

When is a QAPP Required?

A QAPP is required by the EPA when **environmental information operations** are conducted by & for EPA.

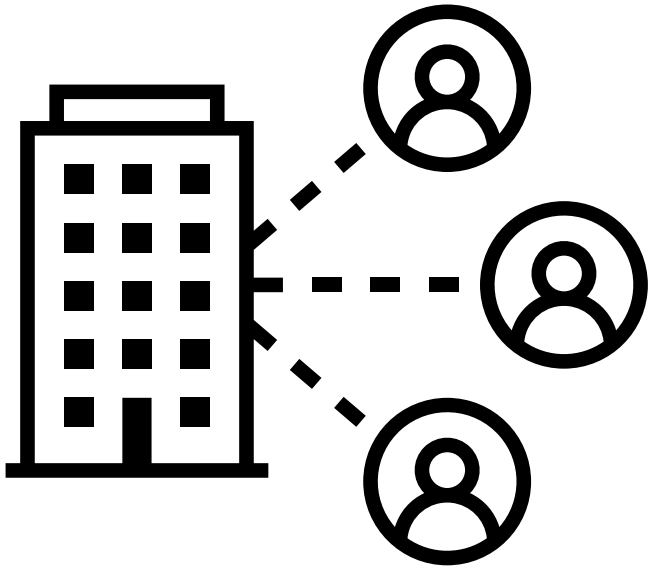
Environmental information operations is a
“collective term for work performed to collect,
produce, evaluate, or use environmental
information & the design, construction, operation
or application of environmental technology”

When is a QAPP Required Cont'd

Examples of **environmental information operations** include, but are not limited to:

- direct measurements of environmental parameters or processes.
- analytical testing results of environmental conditions (e.g., geophysical or hydrological conditions).
- information on physical parameters or processes collected using environmental technologies.
- calculations or analyses of environmental information.
- information provided by models.
- information compiled or obtained from databases, software applications, decision support tools, websites, existing literature, & other sources.
- development of environmental software, tools, models, methods, applications; &
- design, construction, & operation or application of environmental technology.





Roles & Responsibilities

QA Branch

Implements Region 9's Quality System.

Ensures key environmental decisions by the Region are based on environmental information operations of the correct type & of appropriate quality.

Provides quality assurance oversight of the collection, production, evaluation, or use of environmental information supporting the EPA's mission or national program priorities, as defined by & in accordance with Federal laws, regulations, or extramural agreements.

Is independent of environmental information operations conducted in R9 & reviews & approving all Quality Assurance documentation.

Reviews & approves all Quality Assurance documentation.

QA Branch

The benefits of following the Region 9 quality system include:

- Scientific Data Integrity
- Reliable & Defensible Decisions
- Transparent & Effective Management of Internal & External Activities
- Reduced &/or Justifiable Resource Expenditures

We operate on the underlying principle that quality is everyone's responsibility & ensure the quality system is employed throughout the lifecycle of a project.

Project Officers:

Review Workplans, Scope of Work, Proposals, etc to determine if **environmental information operations** will be used &/or collected during the project & budget period.

Communicate the EPA's QA Requirements by ensuring an approved QAPP is in place before environmental information operations occur.

Make sure the development or revision of the QAPP is included in the Scope of Work or Workplan for the extramural agreements.

Work with Grantees to ensure resources are budgeted in extramural agreements to comply with the EPA's Quality Assurance requirements.

Grantees:

Develop Workplans, Scope of Work, Proposals, etc to support improving or maintaining human health & the environment in their community during the project & budget period.

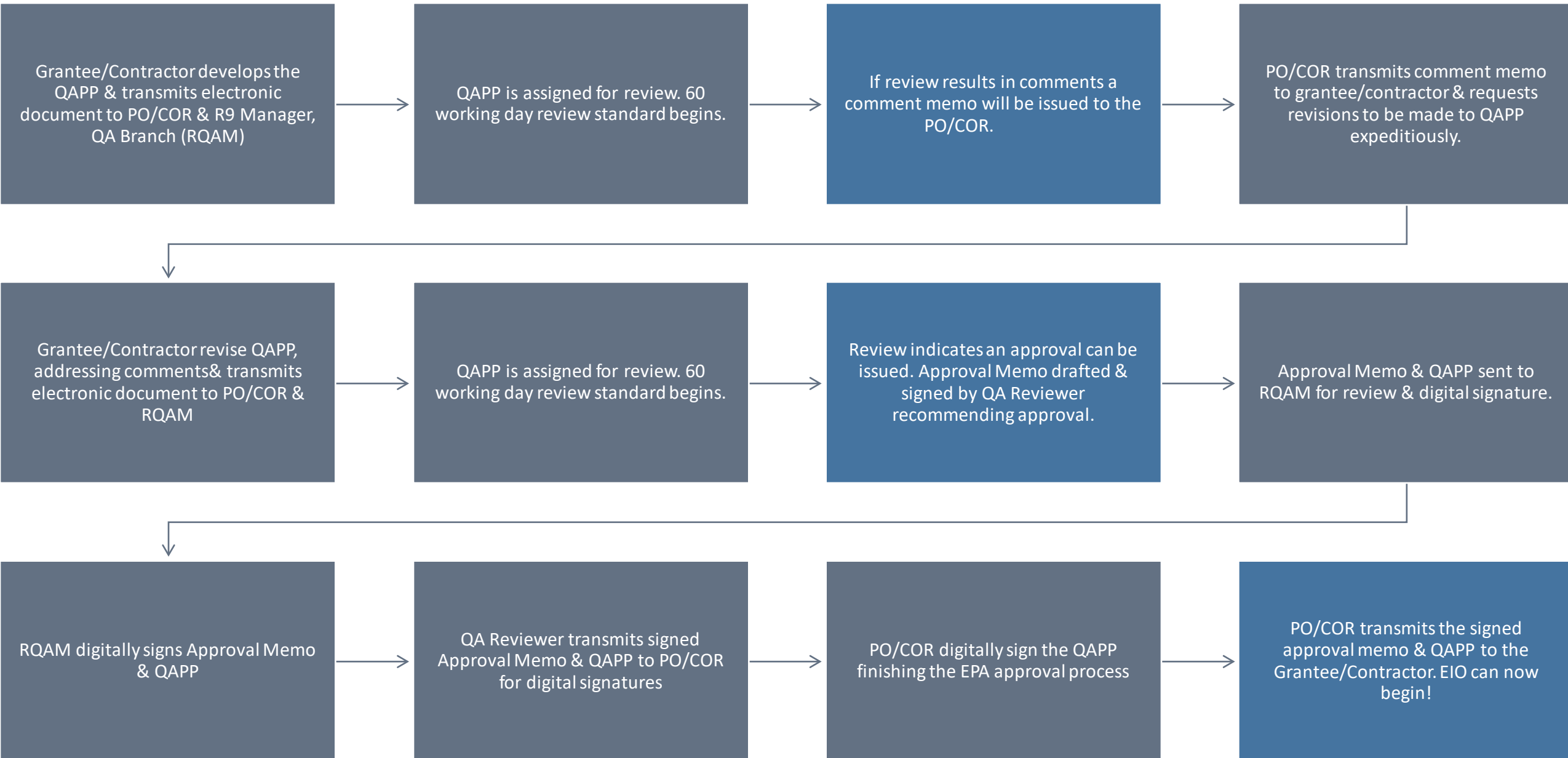
Understand the importance of implementing the EPA's QA requirements during the budget & project period.

Ensure resources are budgeted in extramural agreements to comply with the EPA's Quality Assurance requirements.

Develop or revise a QAPP if environmental information operations are included in the Scope of Work or Workplan.

Review QAPPs annually to ensure all environmental information operations are included during the 5-year lifespan. Update QAPPs when significant changes occur or when the QAPP reaches 5 years.

Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) Review Process



EPA's Two Signature Approval Process

A QA Document is NOT considered
Approved & Final until:

- i. R9 Regional Quality Assurance Manager reviews & signs.
- i. QA reviews ensure the environmental information operations produced will be of known quality & is appropriate.
- ii. &, the R9 PO/COR signs.
 - i. Project reviews ensure the QA document matches the goal & objective of the environmental information operations being performed.
 - i. Is the correct media being sampled?
 - ii. In the correct location?

Questions? Insert in Chat

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