

efficiency bulletin

Feb. 28, 2017

Efficiency Bulletin: 17-05

Simplified and Enhanced Management Observation Techniques

This efficiency bulletin increases management focus on conducting quality observations of workers, providing immediate feedback and performing additional targeted observations for identified performance gaps as needed. Principal actions to support this initiative are centered on the elimination of low-value, time-consuming data input activities that typically detract from managers' availability to perform field observations and coaching.

Addressees: Chief nuclear officers, NEI APCs and INPO APCs

Issue: OA-1, Simplified Process for Conducting Management Observations

Background

- Many utilities use management observation software tools that require extensive data input by managers and supervisors. In some cases, the time expended by managers and supervisors to enter post-observation data into the software system exceeds the time spent conducting the field observation. The extensive time and administrative burdens associated with data entry are principally driven by the broad level of information required by the programs. For example, in addition to observation data entries that identify performance gaps, many programs require data entries associated with observed positive behaviors and performance. Typically, most management observations conducted in the industry (more than 80 percent) are positive in nature, concluding that the majority of data entries provide minimal benefit in trending and resolving performance gaps. Also contributing to the data entry burden are multiple forms and extensive codes (inherent to many programs) that must be completed and selected during the entry process.

Color Code: GREEN

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The Nuclear Energy Institute is the nuclear energy industry's policy organization.

This bulletin and additional information about nuclear energy are available at nei.org.

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Summary of Efficiency Opportunity

- Desired end-state—Managers and supervisors spend less time performing field observation data entries, thereby increasing their availability to spend more time in the field observing workers and influencing behaviors.

Key outcomes:

- Efforts to document and trend worker behavior are significantly reduced.
 - Supervisors spend more time in the field observing worker behavior, developing worker strengths, and coaching and correcting identified performance gaps and behaviors.
 - Managers and senior managers spend less time reviewing metrics, observation data and emails.
 - Managers and senior managers spend more time in the field performing paired observations to further develop first-line supervisors.
 - Management teams improve supervisor coaching skills by conducting paired observations rather than performing lengthy reviews of supervisor coaching metrics and statistics.
- Value proposition (vision of excellence)—This efficiency bulletin provides a framework and methodology for implementing a simplified approach for conducting management observations that reduces burdensome paperwork associated with documentation. Additionally, it will establish a mechanism for addressing observed performance deficiencies or trends using management review of observations and additional targeted observations rather than employing more complex self-assessment processes when performance gaps are identified.
 - Why is it important?—The value of management observation is in monitoring performance and coaching for improved behaviors. Reducing the administrative burden of management observations increases the time supervisors can spend with the workforce to improve performance.
 - Industry benchmark value(s)—Management observations are documented while conducting the observation and no additional time after the observation is complete is spent documenting the performance shortfalls.
 - Measure of effectiveness—High human performance and error-free operations are achieved through strong supervisor coaching and mentoring with little to no time delay in documenting the observations.

Relevant Standards

- SOER 10-2, Engaged, Thinking Organizations, Recommendations 1d and 2b
- Performance Objectives and Criteria (INPO) LF.1 and NP.1
- SOER 96-1, Control Room Supervision, Operational Decision-Making and Teamwork; Rec. 1a, 1b, and 1
- ACAD 17-001, Guidelines for First-Line Supervisor Training and Development
- IER 11-03 Operations Fundamentals

Guidance

- INPO 15-008, Achieving High Levels of Human Reliability
- INPO-07-006, HU Tools for Managers and Supervisors
- INPO Industry Cumulative Impact Short Term Actions 11/13

- INPO 14-004, Performance Monitoring

Background

Over the past decade, industry processes for conducting management observations have evolved and expanded to a point where manager and supervisor post-observation data input activities have become more time-consuming than performing the actual in-field observations. As a result, manager availability to observe and influence direct reports in the field has diminished. Some observation systems include complicated databases, multiple entry forms to document one observation, and numerous and subjective codes associated with HU and fundamental attributes. Additionally, some observation processes include interfaces with self-assessment and talent management programs. This expansion of management observation processes has created additional administrative burdens on supervisors and management teams, impacting their availability to coach and correct behaviors.

Observations

The primary value of performing an observation is getting supervisors and managers into the workspace of the workers, observing how they "behave" (conduct their work), and providing immediate feedback to them concerning their performance and behaviors.

Over the past several years, observation software tools have evolved into sophisticated programs, requiring the use of complex forms, templates and codes to support tracking and trending of observed performance and behaviors. Typically, the process requires observers to go back to their desk following a field observation and enter the data on a computer using various entry forms and tracking codes. This post-observation data entry process can take up to 30 minutes, and in some cases, take longer than the time expended performing the field observation. The expected outcome of this bulletin is to increase manager and supervisor availability for conducting field observations by reducing or eliminating the activities typically associated with post-observation data entry.

While there is value in aggregating the issues at department and site levels, that effort does not necessarily need to be accomplished using an electronic database. Collective reviews of issues can be done as a part of the normal cognitive-level discussions between supervisors and their managers. The results of these department-level reviews can then be integrated into a broader review of site-level performance through routine plant performance monitoring activities. This makes a separate computerized database optional.

Expectations for conducting observations should be established and communicated to the managers such that it is a part of their routine leadership behavior. Observation databases should not be used as a tool to verify observations quotas are being met, nor to grade the quality of supervisor and manager input. Senior managers should verify through their own oversight activities that management observation frequency and quality are meeting expected standards. If formal tracking of completed observations and documentation is desired for aggregating issues to support trend analyses, the associated data templates must be simple, straightforward and require little time to complete.

Data trending and follow-up

Data trending is necessary to determine if a common performance gap is occurring among different employees or across multiple work groups. This can be done in two different ways. The traditional way is by entering the observation data into a database and then analyzing the data to determine common issues and trends. A more

Key to Color Codes:

Red: NSIAC initiative – full participation required for viability

Blue: Action expected at all sites, but is not needed for broad industry viability

Green: Utility discretion to implement, consistent with its business environment

simple method is for the managers to have periodic discussions (cognitive assessments) with supervisors performing the observations to determine if any common issues exist.

Follow-up on issues identified

In an effort to identify and correct issues internally, the nuclear industry has used simplified or "check-in" type self-assessments to address performance shortfalls identified during management observations. These check-in assessments have also evolved in process, creating burdensome tasks that require the development of low-value paperwork and obtaining approvals.

The primary value of performing check-in self-assessments has been the ability to immediately evaluate issues and develop prompt actions to correct problems. As a more efficient alternative to conducting check-in assessments, managers should consider the use of targeted observations and coaching when common performance shortfalls are identified. These follow-up observations could be done by a single individual (conducting several observations) or by a group of observers focused on the area of concern. This simplified method not only removes the burdensome assessment process and paperwork, but also provides for an immediate means of taking action to correct behavioral issues. Consider adopting the simplified guidance for conducting targeted observations with greater focus on coaching to correct behavior shortfalls as outline in Attachment 1. A simple tool or application for documenting these observations can be used if desired.

This bulletin is not suggesting that check-in self-assessment be eliminated; however, it encourages the use of targeted observation and coaching to support a more immediate and efficient response to performance issues.

Recommended Industry Actions

Phase 1

Revise the management observation programs to eliminate unnecessary administrative burden and streamline processes that improve management field presence and quality of observations.

Revise observation programs as follows:

- Reground site leadership on the purpose of observations:
 - Ensure the supervisors have the skills to provide the appropriate level of behavior observations as outlined in SOER 10-2.
 - Clearly define the purpose of the observation as a tool for modifying worker behavior through coaching.
 - Clearly define the purpose of paired observations as a tool to strengthen supervisors' ability to observe, coach and correct behaviors.
 - Ensure station leadership uses the process to drive the correct behaviors and that any revisions to the process do not affect the desired outcomes.
 - Reinforce the use of the chain of command—verify that observations are shared by the observer (supervisor) to the next level manager to ensure effective communications and issue awareness.
 - Consider eliminating the need to record/discuss positive observation data as this information can detract management focus addressing behavioral and performance issues.
 - Consider elimination of observation databases at your site. Roll up observations through the chain of command, and use cognitive trending as discussed above.
 - Develop and implement a "dynamic learning activity" (DLA) to ensure that supervisors, managers and senior managers understand their role in conducting observations and providing feedback. Ensure the DLA focuses on the required interaction between supervisors and workers.

- If the database is retained, streamline and standardize current observation processes with a limited number of categories and a short list of expected behaviors:
 - Standardize the number of observation categories to only four or five (such as):
 - HU behaviors
 - use of fundamentals
 - industrial safety behaviors
 - leadership behaviors
 - Standardize and minimize the number of observation criterion:
 - HU behaviors for field workers (from INPO 06-002):
 - prejob briefing
 - job-site review (2 min. drill)
 - questioning attitude
 - self-checking
 - procedure use and adherence
 - placekeeping
 - three-way communication
 - independent verification
 - peer-checking
 - flagging or robust barrier use
 - HU behaviors for nonfield workers (from INPO 05-002):
 - technical task prejob briefing
 - self-checking
 - questioning attitude
 - validate assumptions
 - peer review
 - turnover
 - technical task post-job review
 - work product review
 - use of work task fundamentals
 - operations fundamentals (from INPO 15-004)
 - monitoring
 - control
 - conservative bias
 - fundamentals for maintenance workers (from INPO 15-001)
 - work preparation
 - tools and work area
 - maintenance techniques
 - parts control
 - safety behaviors (from OSHA/Safety Manuals)
 - hazard identification/recognition/mitigation (see it, acknowledge it, do something about it)
 - proper tool/equipment use
 - use of safety equipment/PPE
 - stopping when unsure/unsafe
 - body positioning/self-awareness
 - material handling behavior
 - walking safety behavior
 - electrical safety behavior

- proper behavior for working at heights
 - adherence to radiation work permit requirements
 - leadership behaviors (as specified in INPO 16-008)
 - *implementation guideline for INPO 15-005*
 - Limit the number of characters for fundamental comments to 140 or less to alleviate observer perception that ‘stories’ are required to explain the observation to a cold reader.
- Streamline and standardize current observation processes:
 - Eliminate quality and quantity grading of observations.
 - Eliminate metrics that evaluate the quantity and quality of coaching.
 - Eliminate preplanned/template-driven paired observations—paired observations should be performed based on the needs of the station.
 - Limit the documentation of observation deficiencies in CAP to only those issues that meet the CAQ criteria.
 - Reduce the use of self-assessments for developing causal statements and corrective actions for problems that are well understood. *If the cause and corrective action(s) are obvious, go forth and immediately implement the necessary actions.*
 - Use collegial management review meetings to develop cognitive understandings of adverse behavioral trends—develop and implement prompt action to address the trends.
 - Eliminate duplicate observations systems.
 - Implement the use of targeted observations for observed performance shortfall in lieu of formal self-assessments.

Phase 2: Leverage Technology to Reduce Observation Data Documentation Burdens

Use technology to improve efficiencies associated with observation documentation activities. The goal in this phase is to provide a mechanism that allows observation information to be documented at the job site so no additional record input steps are required after the observation is concluded in the field. Implement one or more of the following:

- Create or purchase an off-the-shelf smart device (phone) application for observation data entry. Consider the use of a simple click and swipe interface that requires very little in-field typing.
- Create a simplified smart device (or other device) application to record data and have it converted to text.
- Utilize a manual “small notebook” to document observations where the common trends can be verbally communicated upwards during routine group discussions.
- Implement a simplified scan type observation form that can be filled out at the observation site and dropped in a box for subsequent automated entry.

Methodology

Consider adopting the attached simplified guidance for conducting management observations. Develop and implement a simple tool or application for documenting the observation.

Change Management Considerations

Industry Activities

- Industry webinar to provide background for initiative and an open forum to ask questions. Webinar information can be found at <https://web.inpo.org/Pages/Nuclear-Promise-Issues.aspx>.

Company Actions

- Station leaders should develop an effective communication and change management plan to ensure supervisors and workers understand the drivers behind these changes and the desired outcomes. This will help ensure those implementing these changes understand the intent and can provide feedback to station leadership if the intent is not being met.
- A method should be included for rollup of the observation data on a cognitive basis as a part of the normal monitoring and oversight functions. This should be done by the primary observers (supervisors) talking to their managers about what they have seen and the managers talking to their director about what they have seen and so on, up the line.
- Station leaders should assess the amount of time supervisors are coaching workers by engaging supervisors during discussions to develop this information. This should be done before and after implementation of these efficiency bulletin initiatives to support an effectiveness review of the changes.
- Supervisors should be trained on how to use targeted observations and coaching sessions in lieu of targeted self-assessments as a more efficient strategy for improving performance/correcting behaviors.
- Managers should use supervisor observations to determine the need for performing more in-depth assessments.

Guidrails

- Station managers will use existing station and industry indicators to their full potential to assess the impact of these changes on worker performance. Managers should evaluate coaching effectiveness by results, such as rate of human performance-related events and rule-based department clock resets, rather than metrics that focus on the quantity and quality of coaching.
- Perform periodic assessment to ensure observations are being conducted and performance gaps are appropriately identified.
- Provide supervisors with the knowledge and skills to conduct behavioral observations, measure observed behaviors against station standards and detect worker knowledge shortfalls. Verify through periodic management evaluations that supervisors are performing these behavioral observations appropriately (SOER 10-2 recommendation).
- Ensure the performance of field observations remain a management expectation of supervisors and is a part of their normal course of business.
- Managers should routinely verify observations frequency and quality are meeting expectations through frequent discussion with supervisors and workers.
- Managers should have routine discussion with supervisors regarding performance gaps they are seeing and what behaviors they are coaching.
- Senior managers should verify through their own oversight that observations of workers in the workspace are properly conducted.

Report Your Site's Results

Please report your company's implementation of this improvement opportunity, including the date of completion. Send this information along with your company point of contact to EfficiencyBulletin@NEI.org.

Industry Contacts

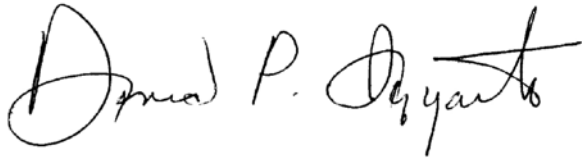
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Industry Approval:

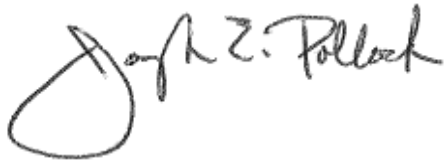
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Attachment 1

Targeted Observation Instructions

NOTE

Targeted observations are intended to be conducted as needed and/or at the discretion of the department manager upon identification of an issue or an adverse trend. Targeted observations are intended to be a prompt response to address performance and behavioral issues; they do not require senior management approvals.

All Employees

While conducting observations, consider the need for additional targeted observations when deviations from standards exist to determine corrective actions.

Manager

- Assign a team leader if trends have been identified that warrant the need for conducting targeted observations or an assessment.
- Determine the scope of the for-cause observations/assessment in conjunction with the assigned team leader based on the specific area of concern.
- Review corrective actions from 'for-cause' observation and ensure actions are adequate and completed in a timely manner.

Team Lead

- Execute the targeted observation.
- Debrief the manager and any affected groups or individuals on the targeted observation results.

Supervisor

- Consider the need for conducting targeted assessments as part of the teaching/coaching strategy for improving performance.
- Share individual team targeted assessment results with department managers.
- Implement corrective actions from targeted assessments with individual team.
- Perform follow-up observations to determine effective corrective actions.