

Attachment 95003.07
Guidance for Safety Culture Event Follow-up Studies

This attachment provides guidance for selecting and performing event follow-up studies to identify patterns of thinking and behaving related to the components of safety culture.

1. Overview

An event follow-up study is an in-depth investigation and analysis of an organizational event (e.g., a high-visibility disciplinary action, a significant management change, a human performance problem that resulted in an operational event) or organizational condition (e.g., weaknesses in the safety culture components). Event follow-up studies provide an opportunity to trace the progression of a single event, or the development of an organizational condition, using multiple methods, to observe how organizational behaviors impact the facility's ability to cope with that event or condition.

2. Strengths

- Allows for a thorough examination of a particular situation.
- Results are documented in a narrative format providing valuable examples to support the overall findings of the assessment.
- Most effective when the activity to be tracked is identified early in the assessment and at the beginning stages of the activity, although retrospective analyses are possible.

3. Limitations

- Results cannot be generalized beyond the single situation studied.
- Requires sufficient time devoted by one to two team members, detracting from time available for other assessment activities.
- Detailed information on the organization's assessment of the activity or event may not yet be available.
- If the event follow-up study requires retrospection, biases may be introduced by the effects of intervening events on individuals' memories.

4. Example Applications

- Understanding the history of a particular functional group or specific work unit that

may be demonstrating weaknesses in one or more safety culture components to identify the causes of the weaknesses and the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the licensee's corrective actions.

- As part of evaluating the licensee's organizational change management effectiveness by studying the implementation and impacts of a specific organizational change.
- As part of evaluating the licensee's decision-making processes by identifying the patterns of thinking and behaving that led to a specific decision.
- As part of evaluating the licensee's effectiveness in preventing, detecting, and mitigating the perception of retaliation by studying organizational events that did or did not create a chilling effect.

5. Guidance:

5.1 Identify the organizational event or condition to be studied.

5.1.1 Significant events and conditions that will provide useful information about the safety culture components can be identified from the team's other assessment and inspection activities, including individual and group interviews, the review of issues entered into the corrective action program, as well as the review of allegations, previous inspection reports, and licensee self-assessments.

5.1.2 Operational events are also typically organizationally meaningful and understanding the management, organizational, and human performance causes and contributors to the events, as well as the event's organizational consequences, often provides useful information about the safety culture components.

5.2 Use a combination of interviews, document reviews, and observations, if possible, to obtain a complete understanding of why and how the event or condition occurred and its relationship to the safety culture components. Investigation and analyzing a single event or condition often provides information related to multiple safety culture components.

5.3 Ensure that the information obtained that is related to the safety culture components is shared within the team.