



## Supervision

Supervision is charged with the tasks of planning and organizing the job as well as enforcing the methodology chosen by the company to get the job done. Positive and proactive enforcement requires supervisors to take a look at what is going on. It asks them to evaluate to ensure staff is meeting a specific target. It is therefore important to set benchmarks and then measure it. Confined space operations create three areas that can be measured.

The easiest benchmark to set is the quality of paperwork. In general:

- All required paperwork (permits, logs, inspection sheet) must be turned in.
- All not applicable blanks need to be crossed out or filled in with N/A.
- There should be slight deviations in penmanship, placement of checks, timing, etc..
- Completed blanks in the forms must have accurate information.

Have all completed forms come back to you for review? Are they done right? If not, are you informing the workers how to complete the forms better?

The second area where auditing is effective is on the job. Randomly (eg. 15% or 3 out of 20) visiting your people while they perform the job enables you to view their performance. A form (see next page) to guide you in what to look at ensures consistency from job to job, but enables you to really look at what the workers are doing. If you find problems, correct them right there if they warrant it, further training (either formal classroom sessions or informal safety talks may be required. However, the greatest advantage comes when you look at all completed surveys. Over time you can see trends and possibly find inherent weaknesses in the system that need addressing. Again, it may mean training, new tools or new procedures are required.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> area of supervision is the hardest as it examines your training program. Are you getting the right information delivered to help your workers do their job? You must “see” what goes on in the classroom. To do this effectively means you MUST see the testing results. Training can test 4 areas. Theory tests questions (asked before and after the course) provides a way to measure how much someone learned. If you only test after the course, you’re solely evaluating memory. The third area are skill tests which are practical demonstrations that can indicate what are your people’s competency in using the equipment. The 4<sup>th</sup> area is evaluating practical scenarios or real jobs which enables you to determine how the training is helping candidates make better decisions. All four evaluations can provide key data that can help supervisors identify potential weaknesses that may require further coaching, mentoring and/or training. But you have to ask for both the evaluations (test questions, skill critiques, etc.) and the outcomes of each student.

Remember, supervising is not a race as there is no finish line. Supervisors are a key part of a continuous improvement program that enables us to be better, faster and stronger than the competition. We all use instinct many times to evaluate the boat load of data we collect on a daily basis. However, our instinct many times has a bias (for a variety of reasons) that may hide the actual picture we need to do our jobs well. Get collecting.

