

Making the Choice for Safety is Always the Right Choice: Evaluating Service Provider ESH Performance in Your Workplace

**L. Rene' Graves, CSP
Texas Instruments, Inc.
Dallas, Texas**

Introduction

Is it worth jail time, lost productivity and revenue due to taking short-cuts and skipping steps in the implementation of your safe process? This document provides a methodology, with examples, for conducting and implementing a service provider self-assessment program, provides a cost estimate for conducting service provider assessments versus service provider self-assessment, presents an example of assessment tool identification, demonstrates how the self assessment process functions and shows results of the program based on four years of data collection.

Methodology for conducting and implementing a service provider self assessment

Do you have service providers at your workplace? Are you relying on service providers to perform installations or other related tasks? When we began the process of evaluating the service providers for environmental safety and health (ESH) compliance, many lessons were learned. In 2002, we had reduced our internal Lost Restricted Day Case (LRDC) rate from greater than 5 in 1992 to below 1. We were confident; however we could reduce LRDC even more thereby providing a safer workplace. This reduction would only be possible through a buy in to this reduction process by our company's service providers. Although the service provider's injuries do not count on your company log they can impact your workplace by causing injury to employees working in the area. In 2002, according to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the service industry had a 27.3 percent of Non Fatal Workplace Injuries. This percentage was the highest percent of all groups reviewed. Manufacturing accounted for 23.3 percent of Non Fatal Workplace Injuries. Locally in our facility, we experienced 13 human error events in 2002 and in 2006 this number reduced to 11. There are two contributing factors which we believe led to the reduction in human related events: 1) implementation of a service provider safety committee, and; 2) the implementation of a reliability reduction team.

As with all industry it is important to identify a problem, establish a roadmap to correct the problem, implement a corrective action plan and verify this plan to ensure your corrective action

plan is working. We are no different in this area. In 2002, we identified a need to evaluate service providers performing work within our facility. This task was going to be conducted initially by the Safety Professionals within each site however, there were some potential limitations to this methodology. The first was the amount of time it would take to conduct a thorough review of our service provider program. This process would require us to request safety manuals, OSHA logs, and inquire on the insurance modifier, liability insurance and injury illness reports associated with the work being performed. Once this information was obtained it would require someone within our company to review the insurance and OSHA logs, read the safety manuals; determine if the service provider had identified all the programs under which they are currently performing work. This process would also call for our company to establish criteria for acceptance and finally meet with the service provider to provide feedback and request a corrective action plan (CAP) to ensure all identified potential gaps were closed. After conducting a few of these evaluations we found it was averaging approximately 45-50 hours per review. These hours were, of course, in addition to current required ESH activities. It was quickly determined that we did not have adequate resources to continue with this practice, so we began searching for alternative methods.

Cost estimates for conducting assessments

Company assessments versus service provider self assessments

One of the alternatives proposed was to hire someone full time to conduct these assessments. During the infancy of this process we were in a hiring freeze and could not increase headcount within our facility however, we could possibly work on having a third party hired and conduct these assessments for us. The estimated cost for each review was \$4,000 to \$6,000. This cost was not feasible for the company at this time. This alternative method also was not an acceptable solution as we were considering reviews for 20-30 service providers. We were encouraged by our managers to continue to search for an alternative solution and finally we conducted our own run-off assessment which focused on a combination of two approaches. The first approach was to conduct assessments, utilizing an internal Safety professional. The second was to allow the service provider to perform self-assessments. After the two assessments, we would determine if the two assessments would be comparable to thereby justifying service providers conducting self assessments and providing feedback on the state of their processes and programs. The two methods of assessment were conducted and during the review, of the service providers, we found that the service providers were often times more critical of themselves than we were and therefore we determined that allowing the service providers to perform self assessments was a meaningful process. The process placed ownership back on the service provider to ensure compliance of their programs; it emphasized our commitment to ensuring they had an ESH process and that they owned their process. Another benefit to this process was it helped the service provider identify the need to have an ESH professional on staff or on contract.

Assessment tool identification

As with any new process, training is a critical aspect to the success of the program and this self assessment process was no different. Our company hired a consultant to assist in the creation of an assessment tool that would call on service providers to examine questions addressing critical areas deemed necessary by our company and provided criteria to service providers for answering these questions so that a comparison of all service providers would be equivalent.

Assessment tool process

This assessment tool identified several performance areas for each service provider to provide information regarding their own program execution. The assessment tool allowed service providers to perform subjective and objective evaluations of their processes. This assessment tool included a series of questions focused around the following areas: 1) Written programs; 2) Management involvement; 3) Training and Recordkeeping; 4) Job Planning and Execution; 5) Environmental Aspects; 6) Field Performance, and; 7) Sub-contractor performance. These seven areas were selected because we felt they gave a good picture of how service providers were meeting their commitment to ESH performance. To ensure the criteria were being evenly applied we established a scale ranging zero to three. A zero rating identified the lack of a program or process or it indicated service providers had failed to meet the minimum criteria and a three rating indicated that all company criteria was met and the minimum guidelines as identified by OSHA were also met. When we initially deployed the process, service providers were slow to provide updates but they did state that the assessment tool was a helpful tool as many companies did not have a focus on safety nor did they have any resources that could assist in the application of required OSHA standards. Once the initial evaluation was conducted by service providers they returned the assessment tool documentation to us for review. During the first year of the self assessment process and associated company reviews, it was determined that only six self assessments and reviews could be conducted. We still required all service providers to complete the self assessment documentation but with only time for six self assessments and company reviews, a method for determining the identification of six critical service providers self assessments and company reviews was created.

Identification of six service provider self assessments

The method for determining the six service providers was established utilizing a ranking matrix. This matrix involved determining the frequency of the task, the hazard(s) associated with the task, the number of different locations the service provider performs service, the number of events the service provider was involved in and the financial commitment to the facility. A team of safety professionals established scores for the company's and began notifying the top six service providers of the schedule for reviews. We found that with the safety professionals' current job duties and this additional task, one per week was fairly manageable. We did evaluate if additional assessments could be conducted but found that more than one per week was difficult due to three reasons: 1) normal job duties; 2) required field observations, and; 3) the required roll-up of the scores. Even with this new process it still required approximately 6-8 hours per week to conduct field assessments, host the meeting with the service provider, evaluate the scores and follow-up on the corrective action plans established by the service provider. When the program was first reviewed in 2002 the service providers doing jobs with the greatest perceived risk in our minds were the six service providers we deemed should be evaluated immediately to ensure they had adequate programs and processes to prevent injuries or events that could impact us or them.

Implementation review after four years

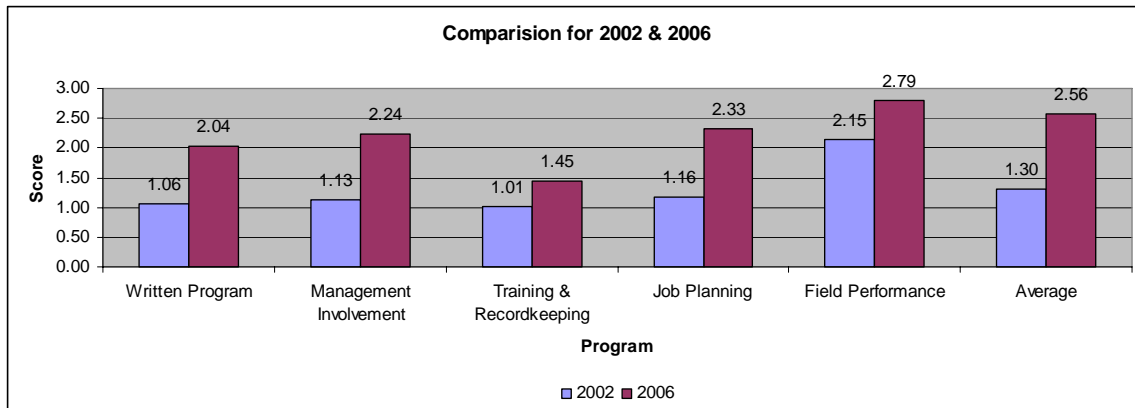
We all had aspirations to review every service provider on the site but knew the limitations of our current schedule so, to ensure we continued to emphasize the importance of safety, we held monthly safety meetings with all service providers in addition the six service providers identified with the highest risk were tapped for an additional meeting. Each service provider self assessment meeting lasted approximately 2 hours with preparation and follow-up pushing the

total number of hours spent the first year to over 100 man-hours. Man hours involved solving inadequate documentation issues, resolving issues surrounding identification of persons to complete documentation and re-teaching the initial instructions on how to complete the self assessment to the service provider representatives.

As identified earlier the assessment tool is made up of seven different criteria. These criteria are: 1) Written programs; 2) Management involvement; 3) Training and Recordkeeping; 4) Job Planning and Execution; 5) Environmental Aspects; 6) Field Performance, and; 7) Sub-contractor performance. Each section has its own set of subjective and objective questions. The number of questions range from 1 to 5 with criteria for self-assessment on a scale of zero to three. The questions for each category are self explanatory and fairly detailed to assist the service provider with establishing his or her own score.

The assessment tool that was developed utilizes a series of questions to guide the service provider through self assessment process. For example in the Written Program evaluation section a question ask “are your written ESH programs site specific (Contain programs identified in the Service Provider Handbook), contain OSHA /EPA requirements, define accountability, and are located where managers, supervisors and employees have access to them.” In order to provide your score the following criteria is linked to this question: 0 – Service provider has no written ESH Program; 1 – Service provider has written ESH programs, however it is not located where site managers, supervisors and employees have access to it; 2 – Service provider has written ESH programs and it is located where all site managers, supervisors and employees have access to it, and; 3 – Service provider has written ESH programs, it is located where all site managers, supervisors and employees have access to it and can demonstrate use of it. If the service provider has a program but the program is not accessible to the managers, supervisors or employees you score yourself a 1 and continue to the next question. Each section has both subjective and objective questions along with the criteria for each question and a recommendations feedback section. Under the recommendations feedback section once you have completed the subjective and objection questions it is expected that the service provider proceed to the recommendations section where we request the service provider to tell us what outstanding accomplishments you have completed since the last review, identify opportunities for improvement and finally identify a corrective action plan based on opportunities you identified. All seven sections have the same format and individual criteria for the corresponding questions. The scale throughout the entire document is a zero to three with three being most desirable. Up to this point we have not seen any service provider which scored themselves a rating of three however we have seen great improvement in the service provider’s ESH accountability and processes.

During the review of the scores from 2002 through 2006 there were two areas that stood out. The first area we considered to be of significance was the Job Planning and Execution. The scores reflected a 45 percent improvement from 2002 to 2006. Secondly we saw a 46 percent improvement in the area of Field Performance. Both of these sections have assisted in establishing priorities for maintaining a safe work environment.



Those conducting the reviews opined that the overall ESH focus for the service providers has greatly changed in many different ways including the hiring of Safety professionals, additional training for the managers and supervisors in classes including OSHA 501 and the collaboration between the service providers and us have increased ten fold. In the past service providers did not employ safety representatives to be a part of their workforce. Today each service provider has identified a safety representative for their company. They have established a president for participation in the monthly Safety Meeting and they have identified corrective actions to assist them in their development of their ESH programs.

Summary

Although this process did not happen overnight there are many outstanding success stories to share. The time and cost associated with provision of a methodology for conducting and implementing a service provider self-assessment program, provision of a cost estimate for conducting service provider assessments versus service provider self-assessment, assessment tool identification, evaluation of the self assessment process functions and four year results of the program were very profitable. The process of service provider evaluation has taken more than 4 years to get to where we are today however we still believe there are many more opportunities for success to be experienced. Firstly, the service provider is now beginning to conduct their own assessments for any sub contractor they utilize to represent them. Secondly, we believe it is important to continue the open dialog that has been developed between the service provider and us. Thirdly, the service provider has identified a method through the review process to allow them to track their training performance on a daily basis. A spreadsheet was developed and provided to the service provider that provides updates depicted in color representations. If the color is red, an employee is considered out of compliance based on the class, date and frequency of training identified by the service providers training program. If the color is blue, the employee of the service provider is not required to attend the training course and if the color is green, the employee is considered within the range for attendance to the required training course.

If you are considering a process to identify your service providers compliance to OSHA or if you are considering some management system whether it be ISO 14001 or OSHA 18001 it is strongly recommend you begin a process to evaluate your service providers and identify a process that will assist your service providers in conducting a self assessment and a hazard assessment for all tasks they perform within your facilities. The success that has been presented here can only represent a

partial picture for all the positive results that come from making a safer work place to having the non ESH professionals achieve realization of the importance of safety programs which assists all of us in achieving a safe, healthy and environmentally conscious work place.

Bibliography

Bureau of Labor and Statistics. *Workplace Injuries and Illnesses in 2002*.

<http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshwc/osh/os/osnr0018.pdf>

OSHA Regional News Release;

http://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=NEWS_RELEASES&p_id=216

OSHA National News Release;

http://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=NEWS_RELEASES&p_id=12170

OSHA Regional News Release;

http://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=NEWS_RELEASES&p_id=207

OSHA Regional News Release;

http://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=NEWS_RELEASES&p_id=135

OSHA Regional News Release;

http://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=NEWS_RELEASES&p_id=393