

Tier 1 Working Group meeting  
November 6, 2014

Present: D. Bauer, J. Biemer, D. Cubillo, L. Davis, A. Emrick, J. Madaia, G. Mattson, W. Ng, E. Nowak, M. Paquette, B. Royce, G. Stuve, M. Van Essendelft  
Secretary: D. Mallon

The meeting began at 3:00 pm.

Wai Lin stated this had begun as a small working group that has expanded. G. Mattson, ALD for SHSD, attended the meeting to address any possible concerns.

The committee is composed of individuals from organizations across site and was created to review how Tier 1 assessments are conducted to make the system more efficient and better able to address concerns. It was noted that Tier 1s are not the only type of walkthroughs being performed – there is work planning, CMS, electric inspections, etc. Tier 1s are self-inspections for line organizations. The charter to improve the process has three parts:

- 1) Standardize inspection methods to better document and address trends;
- 2) Establish a centralized database for all findings – the current database only has broad reports and is not detailed;
- 3) Streamline the Tier 1 process, including limiting team sizes.

The Tier 1 is a 40 year old system that has evolved over the years to incorporate many different aspects. A suggestion was made to use a less consistent but more graded approach to the inspections. There are already many inspections by RSM and SHSD staff. The two questions that have been raised previously are what level of detail is needed for the database and how will the information be used. It was noted that there are other methods of obtaining the data. Hazard review should be appropriate for the space – walkthroughs for HVT, placards, ESRs, surveillance cards – a lot of information is obtained through these that could be used to complete Tier 1 checklists. It was questioned again what is the purpose of the Tier 1 process? What needs to be looked at in labs versus other areas? This type of information could be developed by the individuals working in those areas. It was noted that management would like the information from the database to use as an indicator of whether issues are corrected, how long it takes for the correction and why they occurred in the first place. What issues create the findings – costs? Accountability? It was noted that departments have developed their own processes for Tier 1 inspections that directly benefit the departments. Only critical issues get pushed up to management. It was noted that the institution is responsible for tracking all risks and reporting to DOE and should therefore be aware of all findings. The different systems used by the departments do now allow for a comprehensive assessment of the common problems at the institutional level. It was discussed that not all findings are addressed and corrected. There is a lab-wide need for better overall compliance with rules. Behavior is one of the major issues at BNL – it is not solved by the Tier 1 process, but the process can give a pulse of the Lab.

It was questioned why the Tier 1 process is still being used when there are so many other processes in place to gather data. It was noted the data is needed for tracking and trending and reporting to DOE. Wai Lin noted that PNNL uses checklists and all information is entered into a central database. She distributed samples of the PNNL checklists. A member questioned whether PNNL has shown any improvement in overall safety after using this process. Wai Lin did not have that information.

Wai Lin noted that ETQ will be used for assessment and audits and the system has flexibility if it is set up correctly at the start – it can be very helpful for trending. The working group can define what goes into the database. It was suggested a starting point could be looking at all the current BNL processes and what data is gathered by each. It was noted that it is often the small issues that can lead to large problems. It was discussed that it can be difficult to get people to comply with rules. Currently CSMs walkthrough their areas, find issues and help resolve them. It is good to have one person responsible and held accountable for the review.

If BNL had one database for the institution, it could be used to track and trend. It was questioned what level of detail is required. The data will be recorded and used to improve safety processes. It was noted the overall safety culture at the Lab needs to change. Currently people are scared to report issues since they think there will be repercussions.

Wai Lin stated she had sent out a survey and gotten responses on high and low values of the Tier 1 process – 9 departments responded. It was questioned what data is important to collect. Wai Lin stated the group should break up into smaller groups to discuss the issues that are relevant to the specific types of organizations (big vs. small science organizations) and the type of data to be collected by each group. It was noted that trying to complete more than one checklist at a time could be overwhelming. A suggestion was made to compare all methods of gathering data and all different databases to come to agreement on the type of data to collect. Members will be providing the various inspection reports and their database info to share. Buildings are inspected for OSHA once every 5 years and this is being accomplished by a consulting contract (VFA) under F&O; FY14 was the first year of this effort. The data is then reviewed and repairs are prioritized.

The meeting adjourned at 4:05 pm.