Nuclear Safety and Quality Culture

Case Study: Quality Over Deadline

As part of the WTP Project's efforts to continue to build a strong Nuclear Safety and Quality Culture (NSQC), case studies have been developed for use in staff meetings. Supervisors and managers are encouraged to read the situation, and then lead their work group in discussion, using the questions provided to engage employees. The purpose is to enable all WTP employees to recognize and put into practice the NSQC focus areas and attributes.

Situation

Today, Molly, a junior engineer, was working on a task when it appeared a step was missing from the associated procedure. She stopped her work and requested a meeting with Beth, an engineering lead, to present her findings. Beth doesn't think there is a problem with the procedure and feels her deadline does not allow time to stop work to address the issue.

Discussion Questions: Options

1. What are Beth's options in this situation?

2. What are some outcomes, both positive and negative, associated with each option?

Beth's Decision

Beth understands it is important to support a questioning attitude and decides to welcome Molly's comments. As Molly provides her feedback, Beth listens and asks questions. When Molly is finished, Beth thanks Molly for her attention to detail, initiative and ownership of the procedure. After the meeting, Beth decides to suspend work on the task until the issue is investigated. She knows supporting procedure adherence is important to a strong NSQC and doing the job correctly is more important that meeting a deadline. She follows up with Molly after a final determination is made.

Discussion Questions: Contributing to a Strong NSQC

1. In making this decision, what NSQC focus areas and attributes is Beth supporting?

2. How do Beth's actions support a strong NSQC? The project's 2013 behavior goals?

3. Is Beth required to investigate Molly's suggestions? Why or why not?

4. How is addressing a possible missed procedure step different than addressing a suggestion for improving a procedure?

5. If, after the meeting, Beth decided not to act on Molly's comments, what should Molly have done if she still felt there was an issue with the quality of the procedure?

More Information

For more information about the NSQC focus areas and attributes, including how you can demonstrate it on the WTP Project, see http://wtp.becweb.ibechtel.com/Wtp/PROJECT/NSQC/topics.asp.

NSQC Focus Areas & Attributes

✓ Leadership

- Clear expectations and accountability
- Management engagement and time in the field
- Risk-informed, conservative decision making
- Open communication and fostering an environment free from retribution
- Demonstrated safety leadership
- Staff recruitment, selection, retention, and development

✓ Employee Engagement

- Personal commitment to everyone's safety
- Teamwork and mutual respect
- Participation in work planning and improvement
- Mindful of hazards and controls

✓ Organizational Learning

- Performance monitoring through multiple means
- Use of industry experience
- Trust
- Questioning attitude
- Reporting errors and problems
- Effective resolution of reported problems
- Training