Implementing Personnel and Organizational Management of Change Processes

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Abstract:

Within the process industry, managing changes to technologies, equipment and procedures has become routine for most facilities covered by the Process Safety Management (PSM) regulation; however what is generally not routine today is formally managing changes to personnel and organizations. Managing changes that involve people and their assignments, especially professional assignments, is often overlooked or is often managed in an informal way. Yet, as robust as any management system may be, it will not perform at its best unless changes of personnel and organizations are managed just as carefully as changes to the facility.

Initially, both facility management and non-management personnel may be resistant or even fearful of the idea of yet another prescriptive program. There are several reasons for this angst: 1) PSM programs already include many formal systems so anything that generates more paperwork or formality is not favored, 2) the PSM regulation does not have specific requirements for a formalized system for these changes so additional requirements may seem burdensome, 3) management of personnel is often considered an HR function so the relationship between organizations and process safety is not understood. The seemingly compelling arguments could continue.

However, the arguments for implementing a sound, value added Personnel and Organization Management of Change (P&O MOC) program are just as compelling. Simply stated, PSM covered facilities cannot afford to change key personnel without good transition planning. It makes good safety sense and it makes good business sense.

The P&O MOC process may be perceived to be cumbersome and time consuming yet the process can be described in four steps: determination if required, evaluation of effects, implementation of change and closure of change. Like any management system, planning, execution, accountability and auditing/tracking must also be included.

This paper will present the arguments for and the concepts behind one P&O MOC process as well as lessons learned through the implementation of the program at a major chemical manufacturing facility.