IMPROVING COMMUNICATION AT SHIFT HANOVER

07 September 2006

FINAL VERSION

This shift handover audit methodology is an adapted version of methods prepared by The Keil Centre for the UK Health & Safety Executive’s Offshore Safety Inspectors. It is reproduced with the kind permission of HSE.
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1. About this Audit Methodology

A BACKGROUND

Recent research\(^1\) has highlighted that failures in communication between shifts have been amongst the contributory causal factors in several accidents/incidents offshore. At present, no single document exists which defines good practice or suggest how to assess or improve current practice.

PURPOSE

The aim of this methodology is to characterise the type and quality of shift handover activities and to influence the improvement of current practice.

Specific objectives include

- Review of organisational policy and procedures
- Review of selection and development of key staff
- Identification of critical incidents
- Gaining ideas for continuous improvement
- Examining shift handover (and crew change offshore)
- Questioning and observing key post holders

DEVELOPMENT OF METHODOLOGY

This methodology is based on HSE contract research conducted by Ronny Lardner, a Chartered Occupational Psychologist employed by The Keil Centre, Edinburgh.

Prior to launching this inspection project, a briefing seminar was held which was attended by over 60 senior safety and operations personnel from major offshore operators and contractors. The seminar outlined developments on the topic of offshore safety, explained the implications of recent research and outlined this methodology.

Delegates found the proposed project relevant, and suggested extra attention should be paid to specific areas. Approximately 50% of delegates present indicated they knew of accidents/incidents or near-misses in their company related to failure of communication at shift handover.

2. Overview of Shift Handover

This section of the manual summarises the key points contained in HSE Offshore Technology Report OTO 96 003, see http://www.hse.gov.uk/research/otopdf/1996/oto96003.pdf.

IMPORTANCE OF SHIFT HANDOVER

There are three published incidents in the UK offshore sector in which failure of communication or misunderstandings between shifts have led to loss of life, property damage, serious injury, lost production and adverse environmental impact.

CRITICAL INCIDENTS

Whilst major incidents have highlighted the importance of shift handover, it is not known how typical these incidents are of less high-profile failures of communication at shift change.

ORGANISATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Given the proven importance of effective communication at shift handover, operators should give this activity a high priority. Shift handover should be included in the safety-critical topics supervised and audited periodically by management. They should identify its importance in policy and procedures, assign responsibilities and set minimum standards. A description of how to conduct an effective handover should be available so individuals can assess and improve their own practice. High risk handovers needing extra attention should be flagged up.

The importance of effective communication skills during shift handover and throughout other work activities suggests this attribute should be amongst the selection criteria for key posts. Furthermore, opportunities should be available for existing staff to develop their communication skills if required.

OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

One reason for mis-communication at shift change is that the key information needed by incoming personnel has not been analysed or recorded. Analysing information requirements and providing a reliable method of capturing this information, for example a structured log or computer-generated display, aids accurate communication.

The three offshore incidents referred to earlier in this report all occurred during plant maintenance which continued over a shift change. This is a high risk activity, as unless the incoming personnel are given an accurate “picture” of work in progress, they may take actions based on an incomplete or inaccurate understanding. Other potentially high risk handovers where a large gap in understanding has to be bridged include:
• Following a lengthy absence from work (eg at crew change)
• Between experienced and inexperienced staff
• During a plant or process upset

EFFECTIVE SHIFT HANOVER AT AN INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

To maximise effectiveness, individual handovers should be conducted face to face, with relevant information present (eg logs, computer displays). Incoming and outgoing personnel should both participate in a two-way dialogue, which allows for questioning, explanation and clarification.

It is important that individuals are aware of company standards for handover, what is expected of them and which handovers are high risk or potentially problematic.
3. Overview of Methodology

3.1 Topics

This methodology is split into onshore (or head office) and offshore (or operational) topics as shown below. Key individuals to be interviewed and/or observed are indicated opposite each topic.

Onshore (or head office)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Interviewee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organisational policies and procedures</td>
<td>Person responsible for operational safety standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• minimum standards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• guidance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• high risk/problematic handovers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• crew change</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• supervision/auditing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection and development of key staff</td>
<td>Person responsible for training and development of operational personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• selection criteria</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• opportunities to develop communication skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Onshore (or head office) and Offshore (or operational)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Interviewee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical incidents</td>
<td>All people interviewed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous improvement</td>
<td>All people interviewed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Offshore (or operations)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Interviewee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operations</td>
<td>Operations Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• analysis of information needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• high-risk handovers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• maintenance work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• crew change</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key post holder 1 and 2</td>
<td>Key post holders 1 and 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• knowledge of company standards and expectations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• high risk handovers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• observation of 1 handover</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### PEOPLE TO BE INTERVIEWED/OBSERVED

Identify the following people, both on and offshore

#### Onshore

1. **Person responsible for operational safety standards**
   - Name
   - Address
   - Phone no
   - Email

2. **Personal responsible for training and development of operational personnel**
   - Name
   - Address
   - Phone no
   - Email
Offshore (or operational)

There may be up to 3 people who need to be interviewed/observed. The following chart may be helpful in identifying individuals.

(*Key roles in front line co-ordination of production/intervention activities)

1. The Operations Manager
   Name
   Address
   Phone no
   Email

2. The Operations/Superintendent/Supervisor who plays a key role in the front line co-ordination of production and intervention activities.
   Name
   Address
   Phone no
   Email

3. An operator responsible to the Operations Superintendent/Supervisor. This operator should be at the bottom of the organisational chart, ie a first line operator rather than a lead operator.
   Name
   Address
   Phone no
   Email
3.2 Methods

This inspection uses a mix of structured questions, observations and collections of documentary evidence to gather objective information. This information can then be used for internal comparison (eg to compare policy with practice within one organisation) and to compare with other inspections on the same topic. Questions have been carefully chosen and phrased, so please do not reword them.

OPEN QUESTIONS

Open questions are those which do not confine the recipient to a particular response. Open questions are particularly good for getting people to talk, seeking opinions or testing knowledge. For example, the open question “How did you spend last weekend?” could lead to a very wide range of answers, levels of detail and given impression of your satisfaction with how you spent you time. Open questions are indicated throughout this report by the symbol above and are followed by a box for you to record the persons answer below. When asking open questions, remember that it takes people time to formulate their reply. Allow time for people to think. Avoid the temptation to ask another question or help them answer your question.

CLOSED QUESTIONS

Closed questions are good for factual matters. They clearly limit the range of possible answers, often to “yes” or “no”. For example, “Did you enjoy your weekend?” invites a “yes” “no” response. Closed questions are indicated throughout this report by the symbol above and are followed by responses for you to tick, eg Yes ☐ No ☐. Each closed question is also followed by a box for you to elaborate on the persons answer to the closed question if required.

OBSERVATION

In this inspection project we ask you to observe one handover, and provide guidance on what you should look for, and an observation check list to categorise what you saw. Where observation is required this is indicated by the observation symbol.

DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Where copies of document are required this is indicated by the book symbol.
4. Organisational Policy and Procedures

EXPLANATORY NOTES

The interviewee should be the person with overall responsibility for operational safety standards.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4.1</th>
<th>Are shift handover arrangements described or referenced in the safety case?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes ☐  - go to 4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No ☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4.2</th>
<th>Copy of reference in safety case obtained?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No ☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes
A minimum standard makes it clear what is expected of individuals and provides a basis for monitoring/auditing. It might include a requirement that shift handover takes place face-to-face with relevant documentation present and identify key topics to be included.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4.3</th>
<th>Does this organisation define a minimum standard for shift handovers?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes □ - go to 4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4.4</th>
<th>Copy of minimum standard obtained?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No □</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes
Investigation into previous incidents highlighted that although handover was identified as important and responsibilities were assigned to individuals, no guidance was provided on how to conduct a handover. Without such guidance how can people know whether they are doing the right thing? Such guidance can also be used for training and development of existing staff.

One effective way of developing such guidance is to use the “critical incident technique”. This involves asking experienced personnel to think of examples of good and poor handovers they have given or received. Through careful questioning and encouragement, it is possible to identify effective behaviours which can be presented as a “how to” guide to effective communication on shift handover.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4.5</th>
<th>Is written guidance available to operational personnel on how to conduct an effective shift handover?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes □ - go to 4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No □</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes**

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4.6</th>
<th>Copy of written guidance obtained?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No □</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes**
EXPLANATORY NOTES

4.7 There is compelling evidence from accident analyses that miscommunication of maintenance issues over a shift change can have serious safety implications. Incoming personnel may take actions without a full understanding of current status. Also, handovers following a lengthy absence or between experienced and inexperienced staff require extra effort to bridge their gap in understanding.

4.8 The types of handover shown opposite include those considered high risk or potentially problematic. Do not read these to the interviewee. Check only those mentioned by them without prompting.
4.7 Does this organisation regard specific types of handover as high risk or potentially problematic?

Yes [□] - to 4.8

No [□]

Notes

4.8 Which types are regarded as high risk or potentially problematic? See notes opposite.

Write answer here

Check those types mentioned below

- During maintenance which continues over a shift change [□]
- At crew change [□]
- During abnormal operations [□]
- After a lengthy absence from work [□]
- Between experienced and inexperienced staff [□]
- Other (specify) .......................................................... [□]
EXPLANATORY NOTES

4.9 Monitoring/auditing is a visible statement of the importance management attaches to a topic. In any continuous process operation, shift handover is a key activity with a direct impact on production and safety.
4.9 Is there a written requirement for periodic monitoring or auditing of shift handovers?

Yes ☐ - go to 4.10 and 4.11

No ☐

Notes

4.10 Copy of written requirement for monitoring/auditing obtained?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Notes

4.11 How frequently are shift handovers audited?

Write answer here
5. Selection and Development of Staff

EXPLANATORY NOTES

The interviewee for this section should have responsibility for a) selection of personnel for operations and b) training and development of operational personnel. It may be that these responsibilities are split between two people. We are particularly interested in selection, training and development of the operations supervisor/superintendent.

5.1 Effective communication skills are an important managerial attribute, not only at shift handover. In some organisations people are selected for supervisory and managerial posts solely on the basis of their technical excellence, without sufficient regard to their interpersonal or managerial skills.

5.2 Most organisations produce a job specification for each post, which lists tasks and responsibilities. A person specification details the personal qualities required to effectively discharge the tasks and responsibilities of the post. This may be further refined to produce selection criteria, which are the characteristics on which a selection decision will be made.
5.1 Are communication skills amongst the selection criteria for the operations supervisor/superintendent?

Yes  □ - go to 5.2 and 5.3

No   □

5.2 Copy of person specification or selection criteria obtained?

Yes  □

No   □
There are many techniques for assessing communication skills. The most common technique is the interview. An increasingly popular and reliable method of selecting staff is to combine several of the techniques shown opposite in an assessment centre, where evidence from multiple techniques and observations is collected to reach a selection decision.

Examples of key post holders include operations or maintenance supervisors, lead operators, rig superintendents and drillers.
5.3 How are communication skills assessed when selecting key post holders?

Write answer here

Check those selection techniques mentioned above

- Interview
- Verbal presentation
- Written exercise
- Occupational personality questionnaire
- References
- Role play
- Group task
- Ability tests
- Other (specify)
EXPLANATORY NOTES

Please complete details of interviewee, if different to interviewee for Questions 5.1 to 5.3

5.4  In many organisations, how to conduct a shift handover is learned informally on the job by trial and error and observation. Training and development may be available specifically on communication at shift handover, or on communication skills in the more general sense of the word.

5.5  This question is not aimed specifically at communication skills for shift handover. For example a training or development event intended to cover more general communication skills may be relevant to improving communication skill levels at shift handover. Many communication skills are transferable. Ask for examples, eg courses, resources and attendees.

5.6  Training courses are not the only means of developing communication skills. Other techniques include coaching by experienced staff and computer or video based training.
Interviewee

Name: ..............................................................

Position: ..........................................................

Date: ..............................................................

5.4  Is training provided for new or existing staff in *how to conduct a shift handover*?

Yes  □

No  □

Please describe training

5.5  What resources are available to new or existing operational personnel to develop their communication skills?

Write answer here

5.6  Details of courses and resources obtained?

Yes  □

No  □

Notes
6. Critical Incidents/Continuous Improvement

EXPLANATORY NOTES

6.1 Although there are several well-publicised incidents where failures of communication at shift handover had very serious consequences, it is not known how typical these incidents are of less serious examples.
6.1 Are you aware of any incidents where failures of communication at shift handover have led to problems or near-misses?

Yes □ - go to 6.2

No □

6.2 Brief description of incident(s) and circumstances leading up to incident(s)

What happened?

Consequences?

What was learned?

Who to contact for further information?
EXPLANATORY NOTES

6.3 You may provide further information, guidance or materials to help your business improve their current practice. This question is designed to assess what type of further help will be most useful.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Selection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examples of good practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case studies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyses of incidents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video demonstrating good and poor shift handover communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training materials</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes

...
7. Operations

EXPLANATORY NOTES

The interviewee for this section of the inspection should be the person with overall responsibility for day-to-day operations. Some of the questions refer to the “key post-holder”, This is the person who plays a key role in front-line co-ordination of production and intervention activities. On larger sites this will be the operations superintendent/supervisor. You need to identify who the “key post-holder” is.

The methodology concentrates on the “key post-holder” as this person has oversight and control of ongoing maintenance, and responsibility for successful co-ordination and communication of such activities over shift changes.
Interviewee’s name ..................................................................................

Position .................................................................................................. 

Date of interview ....................................................................................

Key post holder’s name .......................................................................... 

Please describe shift system employed on offshore installation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of tour offshore</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of break onshore</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of shifts in one day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start and finish times of each shift</th>
<th>Day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                                      | Evening |
|                                      |        |

|                                      | Night   |
|                                      |        |

List start and finish times of any groups who work different shifts to those listed above

Please describe how different crews overlap each other. Draw a diagram if this helps to explain, or obtain a chart illustrating the shift system.
EXPLANATORY NOTES

7.2 Use of a well designed structured log and/or computer display helps to ensure the most important topics are discussed at shift handover.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7.1</th>
<th>Chart illustrating shift system obtained?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Yes</strong> □ □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>No</strong> □ □</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7.2</th>
<th>Have the information needs of the key post been incorporated into a common, structured method of shift handover?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Yes</strong> □ □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>No</strong> □ □</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes
7.3 If the log is structured, does the structure make sense and cover the key information needed? Is the handwriting legible? Look for annotations or additions to the form, which suggest the form design does not fully support the task it is intended for.

7.4 It is particularly important to identify how maintenance work is communicated across shift changes, as this has been a causal factor in several incidents.
7.3 Copy of the log for the last complete shift worked by the key post holder collected?

Yes □
No □

Notes

7.4 Can you tell me about a recent example of safety-critical maintenance work which continued over a shift change?

Yes □ - briefly describe example below.
No □ - go to 7.7

Briefly describe example
EXPLANATORY NOTES

7.5 By “all people involved” we mean both operations and maintenance staff. Analyses of incidents suggest accidents can occur when the status of maintenance work is not clearly communicated and coordinated across this interface at shift change.

7.6 Ensure that documentation examined includes both operations and maintenance. We strongly recommend that architects cross-check the co-ordination of work between operations and maintenance staff. This should include both a) communication and co-ordination across the shift change and b) between operations/maintenance staff and supervisors on their own shift.
7.5 How was accurate communication and co-ordination of this work maintained between all people involved across shift change?

Write answer here

7.6 Look at log pages and/or other relevant documentation for all of the shifts across which maintenance continued. Has the nature and progress of the work been accurately identified and recorded across all shifts?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Notes
Offshore operators report that little or no time is available for a face-to-face briefing at crew change, due to the cost of helicopter time. We are interested in knowing how crew change is handled, and in identifying the strategies adopted by operators. For example, some personnel phone their back-to-back the day before crew change for an update, then receive comprehensive written notes their arrival offshore, and phone their back-to-back about the content of the notes once they have arrived onshore.

We would appreciate a detailed reply to this question. Please include how much time (if any) is spent face-to-face on the platform at crew change.
In what way (if any) do arrangements for the key post-holder’s handover at crew change differ from other handovers?

Write answer here
Although there are several well-publicised incidents where failures of communication at shift handover had very serious consequences, it is not known how typical these incidents are of less serious examples.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7.8</th>
<th>Are you aware of any incidents where failures of communication at shift handover have led to problems or near-misses?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes ☐ - go to 7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No ☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7.9</th>
<th>Brief description of incident(s) and circumstances leading up to incident(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What happened?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consequences?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What was learned?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Who to contact for further information?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXPLANATORY NOTES

7.10 You may provide further information, guidance or materials to help operators improve their current practice. This question is designed to assess what type of further help will be most useful.

### 7.10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of good practice</th>
<th>□</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case studies</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyses of incidents</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video demonstrating good and poor shift handover communication</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training materials</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
<td>...............................................................</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes**
8. Key Post Holders

EXPLANATORY NOTES

8.1 Refer to the section entitled “Organisational Policies and Procedures”. There we asked whether the organisation had minimum standards and guidance on shift handover. Now we are interested in finding out whether the key post-holder knows what the minimum standards are and where to find guidance on how to conduct a shift handover.

8.2 See notes above
8.1 Can you tell me what the company standards for shift handover are?

Yes ☐ - write answer below

No ☐

Write answer here

8.2 Can you show me where to find a specification of how you are expected to conduct a shift handover?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Notes
There is compelling evidence from accident analyses that miscommunication of maintenance issues over a shift change can have serious safety implications. Incoming personnel may take actions without a full understanding of current status. Also, handovers following a lengthy absence or between experienced and inexperienced staff require extra effort to bridge their gap in understanding.
What do you regard as high-risk or potentially problematic shift handovers?

Write answer here

Check those mentioned above

- During maintenance which continues over a shift change
- At crew change
- During abnormal operations
- After a lengthy absence from work
- Between experienced and inexperienced staff
- Other (specify) .................................................................
8.4 Although there are several well-publicised serious incidents where failures of communication at shift handover had serious consequences, it is not known how typical these incidents are of less serious examples.
8.4 Are you aware of any incidents where failures of communication at shift handover have led to problems or near-misses?

- Yes □ - go to 8.5
- No □

8.5 Brief description of incident(s) and circumstances leading up to incident(s)

What happened?

Consequences?

What was learned?

Who to contact for further information?
You may provide further information, guidance or materials to help operators improve their current practice. This question is designed to assess what type of further help will be most useful.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8.6</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Examples of good practice</strong></td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Case studies</strong></td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Analyses of incidents</strong></td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Video demonstrating good and poor shift handover communication</strong></td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Training materials</strong></td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guidance</strong></td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Other (specify)** | ...............................................................

**Notes**
One common objection to observing people at work is that they will alter their normal behaviour under observation. This objection can be countered by acknowledging that what is observed is “best performance”. If shortcomings in “best performance” under observation are found, then this may be indicative of wider shortcomings under normal conditions.

When observing handover it is worth spending some time with the outgoing personnel before the handover commences to put them at their ease. It can also be helpful if the incoming personnel know in advance that they will be observed.

We recommend putting pen and paper away whilst you observe the handover, as many people find writing off-putting. Complete the page opposite when the handover has finished.
Observe one shift handover between the key post holder and their incoming colleague. Check whether the following behaviours were present:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Handover conducted face-to-face?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducted free from distractions and interruptions?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log book present and referred to?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-way communication, with both parties actively participating?</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Please comment on what you observed
9. Key Post Holders’ Direct Report

EXPLANATORY NOTES

9.1 The methodology should be extended to include personnel further down the management structure. It may be that communication is less structured at lower levels, and knowledge of risks is less well-developed.
Do you have a structured method of gathering key information for communication at shift change?

Yes ☐ - go to 9.2

No ☐

Copy of the log for the last complete shift worked obtained?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Notes
There is compelling evidence from accident analyses that mis-communication of maintenance issues over a shift change can have serious safety implications. Incoming personnel may take actions without a full understanding of current status. Also, handovers following a lengthy absence or between experienced and inexperienced staff require extra effort to bridge their gap in understanding.
What do you regard as high-risk or potentially problematic shift handovers?

Write answer here

Check those mentioned

- During maintenance which continues over a shift change
- At crew change
- During abnormal operations
- After a lengthy absence from work
- Between experienced and inexperienced staff

Other (specify) .........................................................
Although there are several well-publicised serious incidents where failures of communication at shift handover had serious consequences, it is not known how typical these incidents are of less serious examples.
9.4 Are you aware of any incidents where failures of communication at shift handover have led to problems or near-misses?

Yes □  - go to 9.5

No □

9.5 Brief description of incident(s) and circumstances leading up to incident(s)

What happened?

Consequences?

What was learned?

Who to contact for further information?
EXPLANATORY NOTES

9.6

You may provide further information, guidance or materials to help operators improve their current practice. This question is designed to assess what type of further help will be most useful.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examples of good practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case studies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyses of incidents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video demonstrating good and poor shift handover communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training materials</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes

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10. Review and Evaluation

REVIEW

This section is designed to help integrate the information gathered, in preparation for feedback and report-writing. Several questions are posed, which are intended to provide a guide towards drawing conclusions based on the evidence gathered.
ORGANISATIONAL POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Is shift handover regarded as important and relevant to safety? Is it clear what standard is expected of people, and how they are expected to conduct a handover? Is the organisation aware of high-risk or potentially problematic handovers?

Your notes

SELECTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF STAFF

Are communication skills seen as relevant when selecting key personnel? Is there a means for people to develop their communication skills? Is this used?

Your notes

CRITICAL INCIDENTS

Do incidents suggest anything about policy or practice? Have lessons been learned?

Your notes
Describe any examples of good practice you encountered, which could be used to promote good practice elsewhere

Describe examples here

OPERATIONS

Have information needs been analysed, and a structured method of gathering key information devised?

Your notes
Are you satisfied with arrangements for communicating safety-critical maintenance work across shift changes?

Your notes

Are you satisfied with crew change arrangements? (applies only to offshore operations)

Your notes
Are operational personnel aware of their role and responsibilities at shift change, and of how to conduct an effective shift handover?

Your notes

Are they aware of high risk and potentially problematic handovers?

Your notes

Any comments about the handover you observed?

Your notes
Please check you have obtained the following documents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Document</th>
<th>Obtained</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Copy of safety case</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Minimum standard</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>Written guidance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>Written requirement for supervision/auditing</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Person specification/selection criteria</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>Details of course/resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>Chart illustrating shift system</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>Copy shift log</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Examples of good practice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other documents (specify)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Finally, please review the following aspects of this methodology by ticking the appropriate boxes below, and adding your comments.

1. **RELEVANCE OF INSPECTION TOPIC TO SAFETY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very relevant</th>
<th>Relevant</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Not very relevant</th>
<th>Irrelevant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

Your comments

2. **RELEVANCE OF QUESTIONS TO SHIFT HANDOVER TOPIC**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very relevant</th>
<th>Relevant</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Not very relevant</th>
<th>Irrelevant</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

Your comments

3. **USEFULNESS IN CHARACTERISING YOUR ORGANISATION'S ACTIVITIES ABOUT SHIFT HANDOVER**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highly useful</th>
<th>Useful</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Not useful</th>
<th>Useless</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

Your comments
4. USEFULNESS IN INFLUENCING YOUR ORGANISATION TO IMPROVE PRACTICE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highly useful</th>
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<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Not useful</th>
<th>Useless</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

Your comments

5. USEFULNESS IN INFORMING YOU ABOUT SHIFT HANOVER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highly useful</th>
<th>Useful</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Not useful</th>
<th>Useless</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

Your comments

6. CLARITY OF LAYOUT AND INSTRUCTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very clear</th>
<th>Clear</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Confusing</th>
<th>Very confusing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

Your comments

Please add any further comments, suggestions or observations

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