



Charting Your Course to Success

Safety Community Communicator

A Newsletter for Naval Civilians in the Safety Community
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The Safety Civilian Workforce of Today

The previous edition of the Safety Civilian Community Management (CCM) Newsletter, Spring 2004, provided insight into the Chief of Naval Personnel's Civilian Community Management Division (N11), the Safety Leader's vision, and addressed some questions about the CCM process. This article provides key findings, conclusions and recommendations derived from an analysis of the Naval Safety workforce community health, and skills assessment survey that was conducted in February and March, 2004. This article focuses on the DON data and briefly discusses an approach to moving from assessment, to workforce planning and, ultimately, to strategic human capital management.

Based on DON data on the average safety civilian worker, the safety workforce is aging, there is a relatively small percentage of younger workers replacing those who will be leaving within the next ten years, and although most safety professionals have a high school diploma, only about 17 percent have a college degree.

The Naval Safety Civilian Community faces many challenges as it moves into the future: dwindling resources; a maturing workforce looking towards retirement; few, if any, recruitments of young college educated and Certified Safety professionals, or those with private sector experience; and tenuous philosophy on how to transfer knowledge from the experienced to the inexperienced while maintaining existing workers enthusiasm and relevant skills. Workforce planning is essential to developing executable strategies that will manage the many challenges.

A First Step In Workforce Planning

Using SkillsNet, safety workforce information was transformed into knowledge by capturing work, worker, and workplace characteristics and their relationships to performance. Starting with broad descriptions and legacy data, the tasks were fine-tuned until there was a comprehensive list of tasks, tools, knowledge's, skills, and abilities that were evaluated by a diverse group of safety worker in the Navy and Marine Corps. Based on the tasks developed from this data, and approved by a group of Naval Safety professionals. To validate the findings, the information was placed in survey format and the survey was made available to all in job series 018 and 019 to determine validity of the collected data. Although the response to the survey was relatively small, the data was appropriately validated

The results of the survey are now being used to refine the scope of the Naval Safety Community skills and knowledge, and ultimately ensure that training matches future needs. The process focus is on growing individuals from the

Profile of the DON "Average" Civilian Safety Worker

- ...is between 45 and 54 years of age**
- ...is a GS-12**
- ...has little, if any private sector safety experience**
- ...is likely to retire in the next 10 years**
- ...has a high school diploma, but not a college degree**
- ...has at least 20 years of federal government experience**
- ...is a white male**

moment they are hired through assignments to GS-15 and SES by using a career range of training and education that gives safety professionals the knowledge and skills they need to operate in an increasingly demanding and dynamic environment.

The career path development for safety professionals is well under way. It captures requirements (and eventually progress) along five vectors - professional development, personal development, leadership, certifications and qualifications, and professional performance. Use of this process will help employees and supervisors better understand individual growth and development and highlight strengths and skills to work on. The 5 Vector Model will be linked to the job requirements defined by SkillsNet and will help develop the right knowledge, skills, and abilities and complete an important personnel-training association. It will allow employees to assess themselves against the job requirements to determine skill gaps.

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In the past safety, tasks were linked to "functions." In the SkillsNet process, tasks relate to "SkillsObjects," and there are eleven. From there, each task is related to a SkillsObject. The SkillObject is then related to the knowledge and tools required to perform the function.

In terms of Safety SkillsObjects, many of those in which the workforce indicated were most often done by the most survey respondents were tasks considered basic or universal skills, such as using written or verbal information to anticipate, evaluate, recognize, and control hazards. Conversely, many of the lower-rated skills are highly specialized, such as identifying training and non-training solutions from safety and health case studies.

In general, most safety professionals do not hold nationally recognized safety certifications, even though OSHA provides information and guidance on the value of safety and health professionalism and accredited certifications. When comparing tasks, skills and certifications to the specialized job activities they are related to, i.e., radiation safety, explosive safety, it appears that DON safety workers' competency proficiencies are adequate and may not require a concerted effort at further development.

Generally, skill or competency proficiency is appropriately matched to time spent on specialized job activities; for example, those who spend an extensive amount of time on a specialized job activity have "advanced" or "expert" level proficiency in the related skills, while those who have "intermediate" or lower proficiency only perform the activity on a limited basis. However, skill proficiencies tend to be more of a mixed result, with some skills indicating a lower proficiency level than expected.

What is the Next Step?

The DON CIO Human Capital Management (HCM) Model includes five major components or building blocks. The SkillsNet survey of the safety civilian workforce supports the third component - Workforce Assessment. The next building block is Workforce Planning. While trends and initiatives can be identified at the DON level to address broad deficiencies, the greatest value of HCM is realized at the organizational level - where individual development can be assessed against specific mission requirements.

The survey results will be incorporated into the workforce strategy human capital strategy as a critical baseline and a means for measuring over time against future assessments. The survey data will also be made available to Navy and Marine Corps organizations so they can perform more in-depth comparative analysis and develop strategies to mitigate identified competency and skill gaps to meet their specific workforce planning needs.

The Safety Civilian Community Management team will further analyze the survey results, focusing on DON specific requirements in competencies, skills and certifications to continue developing the 5 Vector Model career path. Additionally, the Safety Civilian Community is collaborating with the Army Safety Center's Safety Intern Program to determine the value of partnering with them, or developing a Navy Intern Program. This fall, one Marine Corps safety employee and one Navy Safety employee will be attending the Army's Intern Class at Fort Rucker, Ala. Developmental assignments, mentoring programs and suggestions for personal development will also be developed. These programs are examples of approaches that could be valuable professional development opportunities.

Skill Objects

1. Communications
2. Professional Development
3. Compliance Evaluation
4. Inspection, Investigation, and Monitoring
5. Review of Documents and Plans
6. Risk Assessment
7. Training
8. Data Analysis
9. Records Maintenance
10. Develop Programs and Program Guidance
11. Hazard Identification

Enabling the Naval Safety Workforce

The SkillsNet process and survey validated some of the assumptions and conclusions from prior safety enterprise-level workforce planning efforts. The results reflect the ability of the safety workforce to manage complex jobs and activities and to understand underlying technology.

Now, to enable this extraordinary safety workforce, everyone must understand, and be provided with, the training, tools, and resources not only to continue an effective safety program, but also to develop skills and awareness for the future safety. Everyone must take responsibility for his or her own career!



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