

TEMPLATE

Choosing your observers

The observer is the most important part of the method. Good observers are trusted by the crews, so crews work as they normally would. Poor observers spoil the best programme.

■ What makes a good observer

- **Knows the ramp:** current or recent ramp experience, ideally at team leader or supervisor level, and up to date with the procedures. Observers never observe a team they supervise or work in that day
- **Respected by peers:** crews trust them and won't put on "best behaviour" when they're there
- **Trustworthy:** keeps what they see confidential and never uses it against anyone
- **Unobtrusive:** can watch without getting in the way or changing how the team works
- **Analytical and thorough:** notices detail, describes what happened without jumping to conclusions
- **Good with words:** can describe a turnaround clearly, out loud or in writing
- **Interested in safety and in how work really gets done**
- **Comfortable with a phone app**

■ How to select them

1. **Get the people side right first.** The programme lead and a management sponsor are in place, and management and the workforce have signed the **agreement**.
2. **Ask for names from both sides.** Management and workforce representatives each make a list of people they'd trust as observers. People can also put themselves forward.
3. **Start with the names on both lists.** A trusted representative approaches them and explains the role.
4. **Check for objections, quietly.** If someone on the observer team has a real reason not to trust a candidate, don't use that person.
5. **Try them out.** Ask candidates to describe a short piece of ramp work in their own words, then use the practice exercises in training. Recruit a few more than you need, as some will find it isn't for them.

■ Shaping the team

- **How many:** enough that each observer does a few turnarounds a week without it becoming a burden. For a first cycle, 3 to 6 observers is typical.
- **Mostly ground personnel:** a small number of others can join if they understand the turnaround well.
- **Observe away from home:** where you can, observers watch at a port, terminal or shift other than their own. They see the bigger picture instead of the familiar detail.

- **Fresh eyes:** one or two observers from outside the operation can spot things that insiders have stopped noticing.

■ A short role description

Ramp observer, Normal Operations Monitoring. Watches normal turnarounds, speaks short notes of what they see, and codes them afterwards. Takes part in checking sessions with other observers. Keeps everything confidential and non-jeopardy. Needs: current ramp experience, respect of peers, attention to detail, clear communication. Time: about [hours] a week for [weeks], plus [days] of training.