Lawrence Berkeley National Lab
Information Technology 2012 Safety Self-Assessment
Information Technology Communication and Collaboration with Facilities on Construction projects

Reviewed and accepted:

_____   7/27/12
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IT Safety Self-Assessment 2012
Information Technology Communication and Collaboration with Facilities on Construction Projects
7/27/12

Page | 1

IT Division Safety Self-Assessment 2012

Information Technology Communication and Collaboration with Facilities on Construction Projects

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Executive Summary

Information Technology (IT) and Facilities (FA) work closely together on many projects including remodeling work and new construction; however, the work order processes are separate and the systems which each group uses to schedule work are not linked. Several instances of communication breakdown between the two groups have also been observed. Concern has been raised that this might present a situation where the communication of safety hazards may be lacking, leading to this review. We interviewed multiple stakeholders and endeavored to understand the processes involved. We conclude that the current situation is acceptable and does not present obvious safety risks; however, we observed several opportunities for process and communication improvement detailed below.

Introduction

As the Division Safety Coordinator I have received feedback from the Communication Facilities work lead of poor communication with Facilities (FA) regarding various construction projects particularly around a need for respirators on the Building 74 project. In an effort to better understand the process, the IT Division decided to poll critical team members in Facilities and Information Technology (IT) to understand the process better and clarify that safety is addressed in this process.

Focus Area Description

This assessment evaluated two focus elements:

1. Review the current process between FA and IT for receiving and processing work orders, and
2. Evaluate the way hazards are reviewed on work orders in relation to construction projects only.

Current Requirements

Current requirements are not clearly documented. Much of the construction review and planning process with IT is via email.

Assessment Scope

Interview, via in person and online questionnaires, those in IT and FA who regularly work on construction projects together, specifically the Communication Facility Group under the Infrastructure

IT Safety Self-Assessment 2012
Information Technology Communication and Collaboration with Facilities on Construction Projects
7/27/12

Page | 2

group in IT, and Project/Program Managers under the Construction Project Group. Review if any online information regarding the process is easily available.

Assessment Methodology

The IT Division Safety Coordinator interviews IT and FA Division stakeholders to understand the process better and whether or not improvements are needed. Meetings with responsible parties on the Facilities side will be to follow a designated Line of Inquiry (see Appendix A).

Initial meeting was scheduled January 18, 2012 with Small Project Manager Glen Langstaff, Zone Manager Greg Nauman, Safety Manager Eugene Tucker, Safety Coordinator Janice Sexson and Work Planning and Control Supervisor for Facilities Melanie Woods. This was to better understand the way work is communicated on the Facilities side of the house. Shortly after this meeting Glen Langstaff, who was the key contributor to the discussion, left the Lab. Follow-up was conducted with Ken Fletcher the Deputy Director of Facilities via email, as to advise who was an alternate contact(s). Six names were provided of which 3 responded.

IT respondents were taken from the IT Infrastructure group who regularly interact with Facilities on construction projects.

Assessment Results

- Feedback proved unremarkable. There was some skepticism from FA personnel interviewed online questioning why there would be concern about a "two sentence process". No clear alternatives as to how to do the process.
- From a safety standpoint, it appears that hazards are discussed prior to work start. Workers are covered by the JHA or SJHA which covers the hazards that are of concern. Work leads on IT side only send fully trained technicians to complex jobs. IT new hires shadow experienced technicians when first working. No IT tech works alone on after hours or weekend jobs. Documentation in email is considered sufficient.
- IT Staff expect signage in nonresident areas where they have been requested to perform requested work to be current with regards to posting any hazards.
- Project Manager of work is expected to do the walk through of site prior to start of any work. No work can be started without this.

Findings (if applicable)

No findings.

IT Safety Self-Assessment 2012
Information Technology Communication and Collaboration with Facilities on Construction Projects
7/27/12

Page | 3

Opportunities for Improvement

- Initial meeting with Facilities personnel implied that communication challenges that are between IT and FA may also be internal to FA. This was discovered after meeting (on 1/18/12) broke up and the IT Safety Coordinator having a casual discussion with some of the individuals as to upcoming efforts that were mentioned by the highest ranking individual turned out to be unknown to the others represented. The question of internal communications within FA was beyond the scope of this assessment however.
- There is a concern that the breakdown may not be with Facilities but with EH&S. EH&S has made a number of corrective actions in the past year which hopefully will improve the communication (or perceived issue) of hazards between divisions on certain construction projects.
- Project time frames often slip or change for multiple reasons; e.g. increased complexity of projects, unplanned work needs, etc. The communication process could be improved for this if systems were more integrated, this might resolve the perceived exclusion or inclusion of IT services during a construction project.
- IT and Facilities track work in different systems (Pinnacle for IT, MAXIMO for FA). There should be some ability to work across platforms if only to view. Pinnacle hazards are uploaded from the Hazard Management System (HMS). Maximo has the same capability but it may be beneficial to link the two more directly so as to understand who are responsible parties on both sides of a job and included all in one area. As the Lab moves toward the Work Planning and Controls (WPC) model, consideration should be made as to integrating IT systems as well as FA for work orders. This has been communicated to the Project Lead for WPC (Michelle Flynn).

Noteworthy Practices

Within the Communications Cabling Infrastructure Group, the work lead who handles the day-to-day oversight of subcontractors manages training for said contractors in an efficient and thorough manner with often constantly changing priorities.

Conclusion

While not ideal, the current system seems to be working to the satisfaction of those involved. There may be an opportunity for improvement if the services rendered by the Communication Group were more formally integrated with Facilities Project Management. It may just be a matter of having work orders that are on the same system. It does seem to appear that individuals are doing the best they can with the tools they have, but communication may be limited due to the services being in different divisions with separate reporting structures.

IT Safety Self-Assessment 2012
Information Technology Communication and Collaboration with Facilities on Construction Projects
7/27/12

Page | 4

Developments being made with the Work Planning and Controls system could prove to be the answer assuming parties from both Facilities and IT Communications Facilities groups are fully engaged in its development.

IT Safety Self-Assessment 2012
Information Technology Communication and Collaboration with Facilities on Construction Projects
7/27/12

Page | 5

Appendix A – Line of Inquiry

The following list of questions was sent to the designees.

Your name:

Your Division and work group: (e.g. IT – Telephone services)

Are you a work lead/supervisor?

1. What is the work request process in relation to construction projects that involve IT and FA?
   a. If using work request how is IT contacted?
   b. If not using the work request system, how does IT get advised of project scope and requirements as well as whom to contact?
   c. Is the process documented? Where? How? And by whom?
   d. How would someone know this process?

2. How does IT get advised when services are needed by facilities?
3. How do non-work request activities get tracked?
4. If not tracked via work order, how are hazards assessed before work commences?
5. What do you do when a safety issue arises?
6. Does the current process work?
7. What could be improved?

IT Safety Self-Assessment 2012
Information Technology Communication and Collaboration with Facilities on Construction Projects
7/27/12

Page | 6