

Chapter 9

Quality Assurance

1 Hour

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Arkansas Basic Telecommunicator Course

References:

APCO Institute Public Safety Telecommunicator 1, Seventh Edition, 2016

National Emergency Number Association, www.nena.org

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

Training Aids:

Prezi Presentation
Computer

Coordination/Personnel:

Gary “Bud” Gray, North Little Rock Emergency Services

Steve Harrison, Central EMS

Shannon McCuin, University of Arkansas Police Department

Amy Barnette, White County 911

Nancy VanWinkle, White County 911

Elizabeth Jones, ALETA Instructor, Camden

Instructional Unit Summary:

Chapter 9 Quality Assurance

Lesson Purpose:

The purpose of this block of instruction is to teach the student

Instructional Objectives:

The student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate the definitions surrounding a quality assurance (QA) program.
2. Demonstrate the knowledge of a daily observation report (DOR) and what should be contained within the DOR.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of subjective and objective documentation.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of a quality assurance program.
5. Demonstrate knowledge of the components of quality assurance and quality improvement (QI) forms.
6. Demonstrate the knowledge on how to identify trends from quality assurance program to address in continuing education/in-service for quality improvement.
7. Demonstrate knowledge on how to use a quality assurance for employee recognition.

I. INTRODUCTION

Using metrics to measure the success of performance ensures if a training program is effectively meeting the needs of the Telecommunicators and the organization. Items such as daily observation reports (DOR) and skill performance testing are beneficial in gauging progress and identifying areas needing improvement. Applying the same process to all Telecommunicators ensures the organization is providing a uniformly high level of service to its citizens.

II. BODY

A. Definitions of Quality Assurance Forms

1. **Daily Observation Report (DOR)** – Is a report documenting a daily observation of a Telecommunicator in training, who are monitored on their knowledge, skills and ability, which are measured against established guidelines of the agency.
2. **Standard Evaluation Guidelines (SEG)** – Are specific guidelines for each performance category being evaluated using specific and objective standards for failure to meet standards, meeting standards, and exceeding standards.
3. **Weekly Observation Report (WOR)** – Is a report documenting a weekly observation of a Telecommunicator in training, who are monitored on their knowledge, skills and ability, which are measured against established guidelines of the agency.
4. **Quality Assurance (QA)** – “Actions taken to ensure standards and procedures are adhered to and delivered products or services meet performance requirements” (APCO Institute, 2013).

5. **Quality Improvement (QI)** – Is an action to improve or to reduce performance gaps in knowledge, skills and abilities.
6. **Quality Assurance and Improvement Program (QAIP)** – Is an ongoing program designed for using evaluation data for making decisions to improve training, performance, compliance and/or remediation.
7. **Quality Assurance Process (QAP)** – Is a formal process in which the actual performance of a Telecommunicator is assessed to determine if their knowledge, skills and abilities are meeting set standards.
8. **Quality Improvement Process (QIP)** – Is a formal approach to correct performance gaps, to establish improvement goals and or strategies to improve performance.
9. **Performance Standards** – Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute defines performance standards as “providing the employee with specific performance expectations for each major duty. They are the observable behaviors and actions which explain how the job is to be done, plus the results that are expected for satisfactory job performance”. As a Telecommunicator, you are held to a higher standard and your work should reflect that.

B. Telecommunicator Training Program

1. DORs should include measurable categories and in each category, a point rating scale should be utilized to reflect the performance level of the Telecommunicator in training. Besides using a point rating scale, the DOR should include:

- i. trainee name, trainer name, date, DOR number, etc.
 - ii. section for Not Observed (NO)
 - iii. narrative (NAR)
 - iv. time
 - v. remedial (REM)
 - vi. not Responding to Training (NRT)
 - vii. area for most/least acceptable area of performance narrative
 - viii. narrative area for documentation of performance not meeting standards
 - ix. REM and NRT
 - x. Telecommunicator's/Training Officer's/Supervisor's signature and date.
2. When Telecommunicators do not meet minimal acceptable standards, the DOR should reflect the score, the narrative box should be checked, and specific and objective narrative regarding that category should be included to indicate why the Telecommunicator is not meeting the standard.
 3. If the Telecommunicator is not progressing to the point of not responding to training, the NRT box should be checked and specific and objective documentation added as to why the Telecommunicator is not responding to training.
 4. If at any time the Telecommunicator in training is not responding to training, remedial training should be given, the REM box should be checked as well as how much time was spent giving remedial training for each category in NRT status.
 5. Narratives should be objective and not subjective in nature.

C. Quality Assurance Program

1. Using a QA program assures Telecommunicators are adhering to the agency's policies or procedures, eliminates errors or deficiencies, increases customer service, increases productivity, as well as employee satisfaction.
2. QA's are performed by reviewing recordings of telephone calls for service along with radio traffic with the purpose to provide Telecommunicators with feedback regarding their knowledge, skills and ability to specific job tasks associated with their job position.

D. QA Forms

1. Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement forms should include specific steps of job tasks associated with the telecommunicators position.
 - a. Each QA/QI form should be based on a point based rating scale for each specific task associated for each review.
 - b. Some QA reviews include, police dispatching, fire dispatching, EMS dispatching, non-emergency call taking, 911 call taking, and MDIS traffic, etc.
2. When a Supervisor discovers there is lack of performance that does not meet standards, they should create an improvement plan to correct the deficiencies.
3. Quality control ensures that each Telecommunicator is following the same rules and regulations of the agency. This better enables the PSAP to prevent future mistakes and ensures that the public receives proficient and timely assistance.

- E. Identifying Trends from QA to address in Continuing Education/In-Service for QI
 - 1. Any QA/QI Plan must have a variety of approaches in order to create a comprehensive net to improve the overall quality of services.
 - 2. During QA review if the Supervisor is noting several Telecommunicators are making errors in the same area a deficiency in the training programing should be noted.
 - a. This improves the training program and provides the Telecommunicators with the identified needs to improve their performance.

F. Employee Recognition

- 1. QA is not only looking for errors or areas that need improvement, it also should include recognition to Telecommunicators that completed a call above standards and could have possibly improved an outcome of a call. Something as simple as a letter of commendation or as elaborate as an awards banquet can be used to recognize employees for their outstanding performance and dedication to the department.

III. CONCLUSION

Quality Assurance programs enhance services provided by PSAPs and proves to the public the PSAPs dedication to offer the utmost highest level of care. It also is a means of gauging employee's performances and assist management identify areas in need of improvement.