



Quality Improvement Story Board

Title: Environmental Complaint Guidelines
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PLAN

Getting Started—(Understanding the Problem)

The project began in June 2018, with a goal completion date of October 2018. The Environmental Department receives complaints all of the time. It is their responsibility to investigate complaints and follow-up appropriately. However, through working on accreditation, environmental staff realized there are no procedures/guidelines for standards for follow-up. They often receive complaints for which they have no authority over, and lack of knowledge in the community of what the Environmental Department does is a contributing factor.

Aim Statement

An opportunity exists to create descriptions for follow-ups for commonly received complaints. If complaint guidelines are created the department, employees, and the community will benefit through increased efficiency, improved quality of service, improved use of resources, reduced waste, improved teamwork and communications, enhanced employee performance, and satisfied clients. The purpose is to improve follow-up procedures so there is a common goal laid out for any general complaint received.

Examine the Current Approach

There are currently no written guidelines for following up on complaints. There is no clear description. While the Environmental Department is aware of the correct follow-up procedures, other staff and community members are not always aware of complaints that the health department can investigate; there is potential to change this with this project.

Identify Potential Solutions

- Write guidelines to follow for general complaints and specific program areas
- Educate staff and the community on guidelines
- Upload document to common drive so all staff have access

Improvement Theory

If complaint guidelines are created, **then** people will be aware of what complaints the department can follow-up on.

DO

Test the Theory

After meeting with the QI project team and discussing the need for guidelines, Emily drafted a complaint guidelines and protocols document and presented it to the rest of her QI project team. The team drafted a list of survey questions that will be sent to staff after Emily presents the document to them; she presented the document to all staff during training day on 8/23/18. Following the presentation, a survey was sent to all staff via Survey Monkey.

CHECK

Study the Results

After reviewing the protocols document, the QI project team suggested to Emily that she add an explanation for which complaints would be considered high priority and that should be handled first when one of the complaints come in. That way, e.g., if an Environmentalist is not on site but a complaint comes in to the health department that the guidelines would deem high priority, an Environmentalist would be contacted promptly. Emily added in a table identifying which protocols would be considered high priority before presenting the document at an all staff training.

Following the training, Emily sent the survey to all staff. Twenty-six people completed the survey.

Survey results:

Q1: Before the Environmental Complaint Guidelines and Protocols document was uploaded to the common drive, did you know the protocols for environmental complaints?

A1: 2/26 (7.69%) answered yes; 24/26 (92.31%) said no

Q2: Do you feel having access to the protocols will benefit the health department staff if they are asked about a particular complaint?

A2: 26/26 (100%) answered yes

Q3: Do you feel having guidelines and protocols will help the environmental department efficiently handle each complaint?

A3: 26/26 (100%) answered yes

Q4: Do you feel the environmental department is adequately responding to complaints?

A4: 21/26 (80.77%) said yes; 5/26 (19.23%) answered I don't know

Q5: Do you feel the public has the needed information to adequately file a complaint?

A5: 16/26 (61.54%) said yes; 1/26 (3.85%) answered no; 9/26 (34.62%) said I don't know

Q6: Do you feel like the community knows what the environmental department does?

A6: 10/26 (38.46%) answered yes; 11/26 (42.31%) said no; 5/26 (19.23%) answered I don't know



ACT

Standardize or Develop New Theory

Based on survey results, the guidelines and protocols document will be helpful. The majority of respondents were not aware of protocols and think access to them will benefit MCHD. Staff expressed mixed views on if the Environmental Department was adequately handling complaints, if the public had information to file a complaint, and if the community is aware of what the Environmental Department does.

Future Plans

Now that all staff have access to the guidelines and protocols on the common drive, consider posting the document to social media and the website so the community can be made aware of follow-up procedures and what the Environmental Department can enforce. Guidelines could be expanded to include additional protocols related to standards for follow-up, such as guidelines for dealing with complaints where investigation may involve personal risk.