Consistency of Root Cause Analysis in the Process Industry

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ABSTRACT

In the chemical manufacturing arena, the utilization of varied root cause analysis methodologies in combination with an industrial site’s wide spectrum of expertise, efficiency and analyses tracking may lead to inconsistencies at several levels, providing a recipe for ‘reinventing the investigation wheel’. This paper is based on in-plant experience involving nearly seven hundred Root Cause Analysis reports from a four year period at a major chemical production site. Post-RCA and action item effectiveness reviews contributed to the analysis.

RCA consistency at this site is further enhanced with the help of an electronic RCA tool, the establishment of an oversight resource, as well as development of a rigorous report approval process. Dramatic reduction in the life-span of RCA investigations has been achieved. More importantly, a consistent RCA process may be expanded to included review of chronic causal themes, including continued establishment of templates for a more efficient analysis building in repeat or similar incidents. Long-term utilization of a consistent RCA philosophy can be the desired reducing agent for incidents currently being dealt with by scattershot.