USA Process Improvement Committee

OUTCOME DOCUMENTATION FORM

Improvement Number: 0097

Process Improvement Request(s):

The USA Process Improvement Committee received feedback about instances of overstaffed maintenance support requests. The campus perspective is that more maintenance team members come to a job than are needed.

Examples are:

4 team members respond to a request to move 4 bankers’ boxes to archive.

4 team members respond to a request to rearrange office furniture.

3 team members respond to a request to hang a picture.

The Process Improvement Committee gathered information about the following:

1) Is there a standard process for determining the number of maintenance team members that are dispatched to a job?
2) Is the process defined by a policy? If so, what policy?
3) Is it possible for the USA Maintenance Office to relook at the process / policy so that jobs could be appropriately staffed and the perception/practice of overstaffing jobs is alleviated?

Additional maintenance support request topics that were explored:

1) Is there a way for a requester to track that a maintenance support request has been received? Scheduled?
2) Can a requester recommend the number of support staff that a job may require?
3) Does the maintenance support office request clarification about job requests so as to tune the staffing plan to the specific job?

Process Improvement Committee Member Activities:

This information was presented to the Asst. VP, Facilities Management on June 19, 2015. In response, the Asst. VP, Facilities Management and the Assoc. Director Maintenance, met with the Process Improvement Committee member assigned to address this request on June 24, 2015 to discuss the maintenance support staffing process. The following report summarizes the information obtained during the afore referenced meeting.
The USA Facilities Management Division is responsible for:

- Maintenance
- Central Utilities
- Renovations
- Facilities Services which consists of: Engineering Design and Construction
- Transportation, Grounds & Custodial

Facilities Management operations cover all USA Campus locations.

In FY 2014, the USA Maintenance Office responded to over 5,000 work requests. All totaled, the Division responded to over 8,800 requests. The Maintenance Office has a staff of 30 that cover all of the trade services (plumbing, electrical, etc.). Since 2006, the USA has added over one million square feet of maintained space in the form of new buildings, Shelby Hall, Stokes Hall, New Hall, Health Sciences, LID etc.; over this same period of time the number of Maintenance Office staff members has remained the same.

The Maintenance Office uses a Work/Reporting Management System called USA – HELP that was developed in-house by the USA Computing Center. This system supports the on-line maintenance request form/process and with manual data input and manual data transfer will support various reporting outputs including status of a work order: open, closed, on-hold. Ideally the Facilities Management Division would like to replace the USA – HELP system with an updated management system that would allow increased functionality in response to a work request, inventory control, job specific attribute recording including time and staff assignment details. The use of an updated management tool, similar perhaps to what other universities use, would allow for modular integration of essential functionality such as work management, inventory control, and construction project management and would greatly enhance the reporting activities of the Division.

The process of requesting maintenance support begins with the requestor. The requestor has the option of completing the on-line form (http://www.southalabama.edu/usahelp/index.html) or calling to schedule a maintenance support request.

Maintenance requests (work orders) fall into two general categories: Maintenance Repair Requests and Moving Services.

Moving services requests are addressed by teams consisting of two individuals and one truck (minimally); the number of teams assigned to a moving service request/work order depends on the scope of the request and what other work order assignments a team or teams have bundled into their schedule for the day. Moving services requests/work orders are bundled by building/campus region to ensure efficient use of maintenance trucks. The number of maintenance trucks is the limiting factor when the team schedules are developed. The need to maintain a team of at least two individuals and bundled assignments could lead to a multiple team response to a work order (moving service or maintenance repair), regardless of the scope of request.
When maintenance support requests are not clear, the Maintenance Office contacts the requestor to clarify the scope of the request. This practice was established so as to fine tune the number of teams that respond to a request and to efficiently utilize the available transportation resources. A clear description of the work needed will ensure that the appropriate number of maintenance staff are assigned to the work order.

Maintenance repair requests such as hanging a picture or changing out a light bulb are staffed according to the scope of the project. Due to limitations in the number of vehicles and bundled assignments additional staff may be on-site but not assigned to a specific work order.

There is not a specific university policy that mandates the number of staff that must be assigned to a maintenance request.

The Maintenance Office reviews and considers all information conveyed in a work request, including an estimate about the number of staff that may be needed to complete the work. Vehicle availability and bundling of work orders take precedent when staff assignments are made.

The Maintenance Office schedules the date and time of the work to be completed with each requestor. If a requestor modifies the work order request through the on – line USA – HELP system the Maintenance Office does not receive notice of updates/changes to the request. If a work request must be revised, requesters are directed to call the Maintenance Office directly, 251-460-7111. The requester is able to ascertain whether a work request/order is open or closed but no additional status information about the work request such as whether it has been received, scheduled, etc. is available through the USA – HELPS system. Ideally, an updated management tool would provide status, scheduling and revision functionality within the on-line work request system.

One additional significant caveat, in relation to moving services requests, was discussed. This caveat relates specifically to requests to dispose, transfer, or liquidate - essentially remove, property. This type of moving service request differs fundamentally from a moving service request to move office furniture or move boxes to archive. The Maintenance Office receives notice of the request from property services via the #10 Form. The Maintenance Office may not however, respond to a property moving service request until the Property Control Office (Business Office) authorizes the action. Moreover, the Maintenance Office may not respond to a property moving service request, even with approval from the Property Control Office, if there is not sufficient space to move property to (when applicable). Property is moved to the surplus warehouse (if applicable) when space is available and when the surplus warehouse is open to accept property. For example, the warehouse closes for the sale of surplus property at which time no additional surplus can be transferred in. In 2008 property disposal, transfer, and liquidation was back logged 2.5 years. In 2015, that back log has been reduced to five (5) months. The reduction in the back log is due largely to an increase in warehouse space and increased efficiency practices.