



**Royal Mail Group
Safety, Health and
Environment**

SHE Instruction

**1.6 Sustainable Behavioural Based SHE Programmes
Guidance Document**

Behavioural Based SHE Programmes

SMAT Guidance

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Introduction

The aim of SMAT is to change behaviours and improve our SHE culture so that we can continue to reduce the likelihood of injury when people come to work.

This guidance document contains some principles and techniques to enable you to undertake good SHE observations and have effective coaching conversations. It also sets out the required frequency for SMATs.

SMAT is about having coaching conversations with our colleagues that relate to safe and unsafe behaviours. 'Doing a SMAT' means to observe a person or work area and provide feedback and coaching to one or more individuals on their behaviour. This may be done on a 1-2-1 basis or in discussion with small groups – the purpose is to recognise and commend good behaviours so that they are reinforced as custom and practice and to eliminate unsafe behaviours through constructive challenging and coaching.

Conversely, if we don't talk to people about how they could work more safely or commend people when they are, we won't be able to change behaviours in the longer term.

By recording a SMAT it allows us to identify trends across a wider area of the business and consider what further activity is needed to make improvements such as communications, instructions or training.

Guidance

Definitions

Safe Act – is behaviour (whether witnessed or not) that demonstrates a good understanding of site rules, SHE standards or safe systems of work and therefore the risk of injury to self or others is reduced. 'Safe act' conversations reinforce the expected behaviours and contribute to an improvement in SHE culture.

Unsafe Act – is behaviour (whether witnessed or not) that unnecessarily increases the likelihood of injury and is contrary to site rules, SHE standards or safe systems of work. ‘Unsafe act’ conversations aim to correct the behaviour and reduce the likelihood of injury occurring in the future.

Unsafe conditions – a hazard which may lead to an incident or injury but has not been created by the action or inaction of any of the employees in the work area. The key point that differentiates unsafe conditions from unsafe acts is that unsafe conditions are normally beyond the direct control of employees where the condition is observed. Whilst they aren’t recorded on the SMAT form, action should always be taken to address unsafe conditions and these can be noted in the free text box if required – for example if follow-up action is needed.

Unsafe act or unsafe condition? This is determined by the level of control those in the workplace had over the issue, however in some cases they could fall into either category depending upon the circumstances.

Let’s take damaged containers or overweight containers as an example. If they were delivered to a unit like this they would be classed as unsafe conditions – this is because the damaged or overweight container would have been caused by a person other than an employee on site and therefore it would have been outside of their control. However, if the containers were filled on the site then the fact that they were damaged or overweight would be entirely down to action or inaction of the managers and employees on the site.

Who coaches who?

It’s important that coaching takes place at the right level – SMATs aren’t just about coaching frontline employees – **it’s about providing feedback and coaching to improve safety culture at all levels or grade.** Therefore, each level of management coaches the level below them. For example, in UK Operations an Operations Manager should coach a Delivery Office Manager, a Plant Manager should coach a Shift Manager, a Delivery Line Manager should coach frontline OPGs. It is inappropriate for all levels of management to observe and coach frontline employees while ignoring the behaviours of managers. This is because **leaders are so influential in shaping the behaviours of others.** We must understand how the actions and behaviours of the manager(s) contribute to unsafe or safe behaviours occurring.

Demonstrating strong, visible leadership is an important part of developing a high quality and positive SHE culture. Managers with line responsibility should be observing what goes on, encouraging good safety behaviours and challenging where those behaviours do not meet the expected standard. **Managers must also lead by example** – employees are unlikely to work safely and adhere to standards if their manager isn’t doing so.

Senior leaders within the Business should demonstrate a clear commitment to safety, and promote a **First Class safety culture.** This can be achieved through carrying out SMATs themselves, and talking to colleagues about safety in the workplaces that they visit. Leaders should never walk by an unsafe act.

All levels of management and frontline employees are encouraged to constructively challenge unsafe acts so that the risk of injury to employees, members of the public, contractors or visitors is reduced.

How long should a SMAT be?

SMATs where practical, should be planned activities where the coachee knows that they are being coached and takes an active part in the process. A SMAT should ideally last a minimum of 30 minutes. However, the most important part of a SMAT is having conversations with people rather than how long you are carrying out the observation process.

How often and where?

The required minimum frequency of SMATs varies according to role. However, there is no reason why these cannot be increased if a unit requires it as an enabler to improve safety culture.

The tables below show the required frequency and audience for coaching, for key operational roles. Some units may also agree schedules which include peer to peer coaching involving frontline employees or safety representatives. In those circumstances the frequency is to be agreed locally.

Post and Parcels

Coach	Frequency	Who should they be coaching?
Service Delivery Director (or equivalent) and their direct reports.	One per week	Plant Manager, Area Distribution Manager, Operations Manager (Delivery), Area Collections Manager, RMSS Regional Manager
Operations Manager (Delivery) Area Distribution Manager Area Collections Manager RMSS Regional Manager	One per week	Unit Manager (e.g. Delivery Office Manager, MPU Manager, RMSS Unit Manager) Lead Distribution Manager Collections Manager
Unit Manager (e.g. Plant Manager, Delivery Office Manager, MPU Manager, RMSS Unit Manager) Lead Distribution Manager	One per week	Shift Manager Delivery Line Manager Traffic Office Manager Frontline employees in their area of responsibility
Shift Manager	One per week	Work Area Managers Frontline employees in their area of responsibility
Work Area Managers Collections Manager Delivery Line Manager Traffic Office Manager	One per week	Frontline employees in their area of responsibility

Parcelforce and International

Coach	Frequency	Who should they be coaching?
Executive Board and Operational Leadership Team	One per month	Managers of large units e.g. Large Depots, Processing Centres, National and International Hubs.
Regional Operations Manager	One per month	Operations Manager
Unit Manager (e.g. Operations Manager, Processing Centre Manager, Hub Manager)	One per week	Shift Manager (e.g. Delivery Collections Manager, Hub Shift Manager (HM3, HM2, HM1), Section Lead (EL1, EL2), Frontline Manager (ML3, ML4)) Frontline employees in their area of responsibility
Shift Manager (e.g. Delivery Collections Manager, Hub Shift Manager (HM3, HM2, HM1), Section Lead (EL1, EL2), Frontline Manager (ML3, ML4))	One per week	Shift Manager (level below) Frontline employees in their area of responsibility

Non-Operational Managers

Coach	Frequency	Who should they be coaching?
Non-operational managers (all functions)	One per month	Where possible, coaching should take place with operational managers (e.g. Delivery Office Manager, MPU Manager, RMSS Unit Manager, Lead Distribution Manager, Collections Manager)

		However, coaching can also take place with colleagues in non-operational sites.
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Operational managers are expected to set up a schedule so that they cover all work areas and employees in their areas of responsibility. The schedule should take account of:

- Locations with the highest risk – in processing this is likely to be onsite, yards, MHE areas or manual handling work areas. In delivery and collections this is likely to be outdoors – for example where there are a high number of reported hazards.
- Locations which have had the highest number of accidents or greatest severity of accidents.
- People who may be higher risk – e.g. new to the business, new to the role, returned from long term absence, previously injured themselves at work.

Recording a SMAT

SMAT template forms are accessible on the SHE Knowledge database. Using the template is optional – some managers may prefer to use a notepad because they are familiar with the information that needs to be recorded in the [on-line SMAT site](#).

Several SMAT templates are available tailored to business function and location. These are:

- Offsite – function specific for Delivery, Collections, Logistics, Parcelforce, RMSS
- Onsite – function specific for Delivery, Collections, Logistics, Parcelforce, RMSS, International, Non-Ops, Engineering
- Yard – function specific for Delivery, Collections, Logistics, Parcelforce, International, Engineering
- Management – same template for all functions

The basic template is the same for each – it's only the reverse side that is different as this lists the behaviours that you will want to look out for during the SMAT based on the function and location. This doesn't mean you need to look for all these behaviours during one SMAT – it's just there to provide guidance.

Information that must be gathered during the SMAT:

- Where the observation took place
- Conversations held with a person or people in relation to safe and unsafe acts
- Action taken/required (e.g. arranging training or gaining commitment that the person will work safely)
- Type of accident that *could occur*. For example, putting fingers through the letter box could result in an animal attack. Leaving obstructions on the floor could result in slips, trips or falls. This enables us to analyse data in relation to our most frequently occurring accident types.
- Any other relevant information that the coach wants to record (captured in a free text box).

Please note that SMAT forms should not be displayed and where a form contains personal information it must be kept securely and accessible only to those who may need to see it (e.g. other managers in the unit, the line manager of the coach or local SHE Business Partner).

SMATs must be recorded on the SMAT on-line site. As well as providing trend data, it also gives visibility of whether the required numbers of SMATs are being carried out. A short user guide is available to support people in entering SMATs on the site.

Reviewing and monitoring

The business will review SMAT data captured through the on-line site to identify trends and areas for improvement. In units, managers must review their SMATs to check that any outstanding actions have been completed which may include arranging a follow-up SMAT for an individual. Managers in multi-managed sites must review their SMAT outputs together periodically – normally monthly – to identify any trends and unit wide actions. This can be done as part of a management meeting or as part of the monthly SHE committee meeting. Managers can also look at Qlikview to check the SMAT data for their site. Unit wide actions might include things such as delivering a huddle or briefing on a hazard type, doing a check on PPE, revisiting site or yard rules. It's also important to share the outputs with employees – managers can keep the conversation going with their people through WTLL or huddles and discuss any trends coming out of their SMATs.

Senior Leadership teams should put in place arrangements to monitor the observations and coaching in their area of responsibility, to ensure it is completed to an appropriate standard. They should use Qlikview to track completion of SMATs – where they are taking place and if managers are completing them to the required frequency. They should also periodically check that follow up actions have been completed.

How to do a SMAT

An e-learning product is available on Success Factors called 'how to be great at SMATs' (click [here](#) and search SMAT). Some hints and tips are also provided below.

Good observation techniques include:

- Stopping for 10 to 30 seconds on entering a work area to see where employees are working
- Being alert to unsafe practices that are corrected as soon as you enter an area
- Looking all around to observe what's going on
- Maintaining a balanced approach by observing all aspects of the job
- Using all your senses sight, hearing, smell, touch
- Being inquisitive
- Observing for ideas, not just to determine problems
- Recognising good performance as well as identifying poor performance
- Adopting a questioning approach to determine what injuries *could occur* if the unexpected happened and how the job might be accomplished more safely e.g. "What could happen if ...?" and "How can this job be done more safely?"
- Make frequent observations of the work area

Feedback must be provided in a constructive manner – the coach should:

- Introduce themselves and explain the purpose of the SMAT
- Try to start with positive comments wherever possible
- Adapt their coaching and observation style to the situation and the coachee. (Different people react better to different styles of coaching)
- Not be critical of the person or apportion blame
- Spend time ascertaining the reason(s) why an unsafe act is taking place and not jump to conclusions. Some questions might include:
 - Was it due to habit, lack of awareness, insufficient training or supervision?
 - Did the person know they had done anything wrong?
 - Does the person know the expected standard or safe system of work?
 - Is there another factor which is the reason for the way the task is being done?
- Discuss the potential for injury and how it might affect those involved

- Ensure action is taken to resolve the issue, when safe to do so
- Follow up with coaching at a later point to ensure the unsafe act has been eliminated and:
 - Gain agreement that old habits and unsafe practices will not continue
 - Gain understanding that the unsafe act was unnecessary
 - Improve understanding of the safe systems of working
- Ensure findings are fed back to the unit manager in a timely fashion to enable them to follow up issues appropriately.

Where managers are coaching managers, in addition to the points above the coach should:

- Observe how the manager functions in the work area.
- Discuss with staff why they operate in the way they do.
- Seek opportunities to discuss how and where the behaviours of the manager influence the behaviours of others in the work area.
- Take time to check understanding of key SHE standards, site rules or safe systems of work applicable to the manager’s area of responsibility.
- Encourage the manager to coach individual(s) on unsafe acts where these have been observed during the SMAT. The manager’s own coaching techniques can then be observed and commented upon.
- Take time to discuss routine violations of safety standards and explore the reasons why these activities are occurring. For example, staff routinely pulling Yorks or not using PPE.
- Discuss and agree actions to improve safety culture in the office.
- Discuss the manager’s own SMAT schedule and process for monitoring and review.

Note

Where a coach observes an unsafe act that is so serious as to cause an imminent risk of serious injury to anyone then they should stop the operation as soon as it is safe to do so. The matter must be discussed with the manager and those carrying out the unsafe act to remove the risk or at least reduce it to an acceptable level. Where the act does not present an imminent risk of serious injury, the operation does not need to be stopped. This is to allow the coaching to take place in a live situation where the work area can be seen and discussed while it is functioning in its normal way.

Conduct Code

Application of the Conduct Code does not part of the SMAT process unless an act is observed that amounts to gross misconduct and is so serious that it puts the individual or someone else at serious risk of injury. It may also be applicable in circumstances where the observed behaviour is one of a series of repeated breaches by the same individual, and that person is already being dealt with under the Conduct Code.

References

- SMAT templates – accessible on the SHE Knowledge Database
- How to be great at SMATs e-learning module – [link](#)
- User guide for inputting a SMAT – accessible on the SHE Knowledge Database

Version No.	Date of Change	Author	Element Owner	Description of change	Review Date
1.1	13/08/2019	Sarah Foord	Sarah Foord	Updated frequency table	13/08/2020