



Dedicated Reactive Maintenance Crews

In last month's tip I talked about how good your reactive maintenance was. I also discussed some of the good and bad components of reactive work, and why it is important to ensure that when you must perform reactive work you do it with the highest quality, the highest efficiency, and as fast as possible.

Keep in mind we will never totally eliminate reactive or emergency work. The key however, is to minimize it and not shorten the life of our expensive assets. One solution to performing reactive or emergency work is to establish dedicated Emergency Crews. Their only function (80% of the time) is to handle the unplanned and chaos part of your daily and weekly work load. Keep reading...more on how to do this and without adding more \$\$'s and manpower is covered.

Many organizations allow any and or all dedicated technicians or teams of technicians to handle reactive work when it is dispatched. This is fine but it can also cause a higher level of chaos because they may not be prepared for the call when it comes in; and it may require them to drop a scheduled, or in some cases, a more important work order to complete a 'reactive' call. Bottom-line, dropping other work can cause the reactive job to take longer, definitely cause the job they dropped (or put on hold) to take longer to complete than originally scheduled, and may affect the overall quality of its completion as well.

So what is the key to efficient and well-performed reactive work?

The key is to make sure your technicians are prepared to complete the work as we discussed last month: right tools, parts, training, and transportation. To make it even more effective establish a dedicated emergency crew(s) whose sole responsibility is to handle all of your unplanned, unscheduled, and emergency calls.

My preference is to keep the dedicated emergency crews assigned to reactive work for no less than a couple of weeks and no more than a month and a half before I rotate them back into the planned and scheduled crews. Be careful however, not to leave them assigned to long as it may have an affect on the cross- training of the rest of you manpower. Performing reactive work is the best and the fastest way to train and expose all of your technicians to the entire site and all of its assets.

So, some of you are thinking right now, my crew size will not allow me to dedicate even one person to reactive work.

That's fine! The way you would handle that situation is to assign just one of your technicians to always be the reactive person when the calls come in. The others, even if a very small crew, always stay on their assigned work unless the on-call reactive technician needs an extra set of hands or assistance in troubleshooting if it is out of his experience and knowledge abilities. Based on your call history you will be able to adjust how you schedule the reactive technician.

Here is an example: If your history tells you that you average 20-30 hours of reactive work per week then only schedule the dedicated reactive technician 10-15 hours of planned work per week, knowing the rest of his week will be filled with the maintenance chaos we all get on a daily and weekly basis. The jobs you plan for the reactive technician each week should be relatively short, fairly simple, and easily dropped or canceled without affecting the asset or the outcome of the assigned task.



So to summarize,

- Analyze your work order history to determine how many hours per week are spent performing reactive work
- Assign a dedicated technician to be the 'First Responder,' if you will, for all of these types of work orders, and
- Lightly schedule his week with planned tasks to allow him some flexibility to handle the emergency stuff as well as your small weekly planned work orders.

Constantly track the work order types so you can make adjustments as needed over time.