2024 CAASE Award Submission

CAASE Awards Submission

Submission Category:

Employee Programs

Submission Title:

In-The-Loop: Enhancing Communication and Collaboration

Contact Name:

Katie Palmatier

Organization:

LifeLine Ambulance

Email:

Preferred

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Number of Annual Service Requests:

95.000

Number of Ambulances:

11

Business Type (check all that apply):

Business

Privately Held Corporation

Project Participants (Names, Job Titles & Email Addresses of individuals involved in the project):

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Situational Analysis (Background of Project):

The "In-The-Loop" initiative at LifeLine EMS was launched in late 2022 in response to identified challenges within the EMS industry as a whole, particularly concerning communication and operational efficiency. Recognizing a potentially disconnect between backend operations and frontline experiences, the initiative was designed to integrate innovative technologies like Smartsheet and Blink, supported by a robust framework of well over; 30+ forms, 15+ interactive dashboards, 50+ detailed reports, and more than 75+ automated processes. Prior to the initiative's inception, LifeLine EMS identified critical gaps in real-time communication and data transparency, hindering effective service delivery and employee engagement. These insights prompted a collaborative effort between the Performance Improvement Department and departmental leadership to develop a comprehensive solution. By early 2023, the program's infrastructure was solidified, aligning strategic goals with frontline needs to enhance operational agility and decisionmaking. The "In-The-Loop" initiative aims to foster a cohesive organizational culture centered on shared goals and informed decision-making. By leveraging integrated tools and processes, the program ensures seamless data capture, analysis, and dissemination, empowering teams with actionable insights. This initiative represents LifeLine EMS's commitment to bridging industry gaps through technological innovation and data-driven strategies, ultimately enhancing service delivery and employee satisfaction across the organization.

Project Goals:

Automatic In-The-Loop Communication•Implement automated In-The-Loop communication systems and workflows to ensure leaders and team members stay informed and responsive amidst daily operational complexities.•Provide timely updates and notifications across departments, enhancing decision-making responsiveness and enabling proactive management of operational challenges.•Facilitate seamless information flow between field providers, departments, and leadership, thereby promoting transparency and accountability throughout our organization.Improved Operational Efficiency•Streamline data capture and communication processes using web-based forms and automated workflows, resulting in communication response times and improved resource allocation.•Enhance operational effectiveness by promptly addressing issues and optimizing workflow based on real-time data insights. Insightful Data Utilization•Utilize captured data to generate actionable insights and trends that inform strategic decision-making and drive continuous improvement initiatives.•Disseminate comprehensive data analytics and reports organization-wide, empowering teams and providers to make informed decisions and gain a holistic view of the operational landscape.

Planning & Implementation (describe process from the planning phase, including research, through implementation phase. Include the overall length of your project in weeks/months):

The "In-The-Loop" program was meticulously built in several phases over the past 2 years. The process began with the Performance Improvement (PI) department evaluating existing processes, with a focus on key operational workflows. This evaluation involved detailed research into current practices, identifying bottlenecks, and pinpointing areas where efficiency and communication could be enhanced. Following the initial assessment, the PI department engaged in a series of meetings with departmental leadership to discuss the identified points of improvement and opportunities. These collaborative discussions revealed a recurring theme: effective and timely communication and follow up was crucial, and its absence was adversely impacting organizational culture. With a mission rooted in transparency, communication, and effectiveness, In-The-Loop was conceived. The development phase initially involved designing and implementing automated communication systems and workflows based on the specific needs identified during the evaluation phase. After

determining best practices, we created new workflows and systems to fill any other gaps/opportunities identified in the development phase. Over two years, the program evolved, incorporating feedback and continuous process reviews to become increasingly robust. The program continues to grow as we always seek opportunities for improvement. Consequently, the "In-The-Loop" program has significantly enhanced our work culture, ensuring seamless information flow and proactive management of operational challenges, ultimately fostering a more positive and informed environment for all employees.

Results (Did you achieve your goals? How did you measure results?):

LifeLine EMS is proud to announce the successful achievement of our goals through the In-The-Loop program. Since its launch in late 2022, we have seen significant improvements in communication, operations, and transparency. These advancements have not only empowered leadership to focus more on critical operations, free from the burden of routine follow-up tasks, but have also positively affected employee communication across the organization. The program has fostered a more engaged and responsive workforce, enhanced collaboration and ensuring that voices are heard at every level. The data collected through the program not only highlights our progress but also fosters a big picture perspective across the organization. The results below compare our performance from 2022 to the year-to-date figures for 2024. Communication ResultsOur measurement of success is substantiated by the data collected from the In-The-Loop program, revealing substantial increases in feedback and communication, alongside a notable positive impact on employee culture. Specifically, we have observed a remarkable 244% increase in Fleet Department communication via the In-The-Loop automated closed loop communication. General Employee Feedback communication has increased by 155%, indicating a more engaged and responsive workforce. Employees now have a reliable platform to voice their opinions, concerns, and suggestions, which fosters a culture of continuous improvement and mutual respect. This surge in feedback has also facilitated the early identification and resolution of operational issues that might have otherwise gone unnoticed. The platform's accessibility and automatic notifications ensure that concerns and feedback reach the appropriate person swiftly and efficiently. In terms of equipmentrelated communication, there has been a 61% increase. This uptick signifies more proactive field provider reporting and quicker leadership resolution of equipment issues. As a result, our team can track and trend issues to predict any unforeseen issues that may arise .Safety reporting has seen a significant rise, increasing by 200%. This increase indicates that employees feel more empowered to report safety hazards, contributing to a safer working environment. The closed-loop communication system ensures that each report is acknowledged and addressed, reinforcing the importance of safety within our organizational culture. To facilitate this increased communication, we utilize interactive dashboards that provide real-time insights and updates. Automated reports are generated to keep all stakeholders informed about the latest developments and trends. These tools and methods are essential in maintaining transparency and ensuring that all team members are up to date with the latest operational insights. Overall, the In-The-Loop program has not only improved the volume of communication but has also enhanced the quality and responsiveness of our interactions, contributing to a more connected and collaborative organizational environment.collaborative organizational environment.Operational ResultsThe In-The-Loop program has significantly enhanced operational efficiency at LifeLine EMS. Automated workflows have reduced communication response times and resource allocation inefficiencies, allowing leadership to focus on critical operations. By eliminating routine follow-up tasks and communication, which averaged 1.5 hours per day for each leader, the program has freed up approximately 390 hours per leader annually. With 30 leaders benefiting from this program, the total time saved amounts to 11,700 hours annually for the leadership team. This substantial time savings has enabled leadership to concentrate on strategic decision-making and proactive management of operational challenges, rather than being bogged down by administrative follow-up tasks. Closed-loop communication is a core feature of the In-The-Loop program, ensuring that operational bottlenecks are identified, decreased and eliminated. This system provides real-time feedback and status updates, enhancing the speed and effectiveness of problem-solving across the organization. As a result, operational issues are identified and tackled more efficiently, minimizing downtime and optimizing resource utilization. The program's impact is further evidenced by the significant improvements in workflow and process management. Automated notifications and reminders ensure that critical tasks are not overlooked, and employees remain informed about the status of their requests and reports. This systematic approach not only improves operational efficiency but also boosts employee satisfaction by providing transparency and accountability Fiscal PerspectiveThe In-The-Loop program has also resulted in significant financial savings by automating the average 1.5 hours per day previously spent on follow-up communication by leadership team members. Using the average salary (inclusive of Supervisors, Managers, Directors, and C-Suite) of approximately \$80,000 per leadership member, we can calculate the financial savings: Estimated annual savings per leader: \$15,000 • Total estimated annual savings for all leadership positions: \$450,000These savings demonstrate the substantial financial impact of the program, allowing leadership to focus more on critical operations and strategic initiatives. The reduction in time spent on routine tasks translates directly into cost savings, which can be reinvested into further improving our services and infrastructure. Overall, the In-The-Loop program has significantly bolstered LifeLine EMS's operational and financial health. By streamlining processes and enhancing communication, we have created a more efficient, responsive, and financially sound organization, better equipped to meet the needs of our patients

Impact (What impact has this project had on your service? Information can be given as narrative. However, if possible, please provide qualitative and quantitative information.):

The "In-The-Loop" program has significantly improved our service at LifeLine EMS by integrating automated communication systems and workflows. This has enhanced operational efficiency, allowing leadership to focus on strategic decisions rather than routine tasks. Real-time, closed-loop communication ensures all employees are informed and engaged, fostering transparency and accountability. The program has also empowered our teams with interactive dashboards, automated reports, and town hall-style meetings, revolutionizing how we share and utilize data. Employees feel more valued and heard, with quicker issue resolution and a stronger sense of collaboration. Overall, the "In-The-Loop" program has created a more connected and responsive organization, improved communication, and strengthened our ability to deliver exceptional patient care, all while aligning our team with our mission and goals.

Budget (Did you have a budget? Budget numbers can be provided as a percentage of overall operating or departmental budget.):
The total budget was approximately \$79,000 annually. This includes around \$70,000 allocated for

The total budget was approximately \$79,000 annually. This includes around \$70,000 allocated for salaries, covering the time the Performance Improvement Team, Operations Team work on this project, and employees who attended training on different workflows. Additionally, software programs and licenses either fully or partially dedicated to the In-The-Loop program cost

approximately \$9,000 annually. These budget allocations were essential in ensuring the successful implementation and ongoing support of the program.

Supporting Documents #1:

In The Loop, LifeLine EMS.pdf

Supporting Documents #2:

Supporting Documents #3:

Supporting Documents #4:

Supporting Documents #5:

Supporting Documents #6:

Comments:

CAASE Awards Submission Fee:

CAASE Awards Submission - \$100.00

General Section



2024



AMBGEANCE SERVICE



BRIDGING OPERATIONAL REALITIES WITH FRONTLINE EXCELLENCE DEPARTMENT OF PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT



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LifeLine-EMS's In-The-Loop Program



Overview

Introduction

At LifeLine-EMS, we acknowledge a prevalent gap in the EMS industry between operational realities and frontline experiences. This disconnect has spurred the development of our robust "In-The-Loop" program, which uses innovative technologies such as Smartsheet and Blink alongside data-driven processes. Designed to bridge these gaps effectively, the program ensures closed-loop communication, delivering timely feedback to all stakeholders who utilize our extensive array of web-based forms.

The "In-The-Loop" initiative encompasses 30+ forms, 15+ interactive dashboards, 50+ detailed reports, and more than 75+ automated processes. This robust and comprehensive infrastructure enables seamless data capture, analysis, and dissemination across our organization, empowering teams with actionable insights and facilitating informed decision-making. Through these integrated tools and processes, LifeLine-EMS aims to foster a culture of transparency, collaboration, and continuous improvement, ensuring that every team member remains informed and engaged in our mission to deliver exceptional patient care and company culture.

Objectives

Automatic In-The-Loop Communication

- Automated in-the-loop communication systems and workflows help leaders and team members stay informed and responsive amidst the complexities of daily operations.
- Timely updates and notifications across departments, these systems enhance decision-making responsiveness and promote proactive management of operational challenges.
- Seamless information flow between field providers, departments, and leadership, enhancing transparency and accountability throughout our organization.

Improved Operational Efficiency

- Streamlined data capture and communication processes through the use of web-based forms and automated workflows, reducing communication response times and improving resource allocation.
- Enhanced operational effectiveness by promptly addressing issues and improving workflow based on real-time data insights.

Insightful Data Application

- Captured data is used to generate insights and trends that inform decision-making and drive continuous improvement initiatives.
- Comprehensive data analytics and reports shared organization-wide, empowers teams and providers to make informed decisions and understand the broader operational landscape.

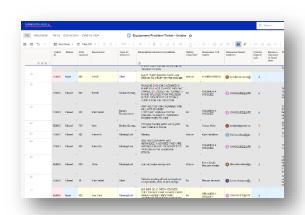




Training & Support

The Performance Improvement (PI) Department plays a crucial role in ensuring the smooth operation and effectiveness of the "In-The-Loop" program. The PI Department offers comprehensive training sessions on workflow creation and understanding, empowering team members to utilize the system efficiently. They are always available for support, providing assistance whenever needed to ensure that workflows are optimized and functional. Moreover, the PI Department collaborates with other departments to bring their workflows to life, ensuring that each department's unique needs are met with tailored solutions.

Data Capturing



LifeLine-EMS uses robust proprietary webbased forms tailored to capture critical operational data in real-time using Smartsheet, a powerful software platform. These forms are integral to our daily operations, enabling swift and accurate reporting of various aspects crucial to our service delivery to our patients and employees. Each submission triggers automated notifications and ensures that users receive updates on the status of their reports or requests. Built-in logic within these forms dynamically adjusts fields and

questions based on earlier data inputs, optimizing the user experience by prompting only for relevant information. This intelligent approach improves data quality and consistency while streamlining our data capture processes. It underscores our commitment to using technology for smarter, more effective operational workflows, supporting our mission to deliver exceptional emergency medical services.

Workflow Examples

(Illustrations of additional workflows can be found in the Appendix)

Equipment Ticket Captures and addresses equipment concerns promptly to ensure operational readiness, with automated feedback provided on resolution progress. Weekly reports on open tickets are generated and sent to relevant leadership.

Vehicle Ticket: Documents and manages vehicle maintenance needs efficiently to support fleet safety and reliability, with automatic status updates provided to the submitter. Weekly reports on open tickets are generated and sent to relevant leadership.

Employee Feedback: Solicits feedback from all employees to enhance workplace culture and operational effectiveness, ensuring that responses and actions are communicated back. Immediate notification is sent to HR and Leadership of any employee feedback. The employee may choose to remain anonymous when submitting their feedback.





Safety and Hazard Reporting: Enable employees to report safety concerns promptly to mitigate risks and maintain a safe working environment, with incident follow-up communicated to reporters.

Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) of Patient Care Reports

(PCRs): Monitor and analyze patient care data to drive continuous quality improvement initiatives, with feedback loops incorporated into quality improvement processes. The CQI Supervisor monitors and reviews patient care reports that are completed by the field providers. Feedback and or coaching is provided for every PCR reviewed. Report card scores are communicated back to providers, with additional training and education provided as needed.

Communication CQI: Record and analyze communication data to improve response protocols and service delivery, with feedback on call outcomes provided to involved parties.



Ride Along Requests and Tracking: EMT students submit ride-

along requests via a web-based form. LifeLine-EMS Division Managers are automatically forwarded the requests. Requests are reviewed, and ride-along details are communicated, with follow-up messages sent to potential candidates.

Regular Review, Monitoring, and Compliance Checks of Workflows

The PI Department is dedicated to the continuous monitoring and review of all workflows to ensure they operate optimally. Regular audits and compliance checks are conducted to maintain data integrity, security, and adherence to industry standards. Any challenges or issues encountered in the workflows are promptly reported to the PI Department for immediate support. This vigilant approach guarantees that workflows remain efficient and effective, contributing to the overall operational excellence of LifeLine-EMS.

The PI Department is always reviewing existing workflows for improvement and finding innovative solutions to support the operations of the organization. This ongoing effort to enhance workflows ensures that LifeLine-EMS remains agile, efficient, and responsive to the ever-changing demands of the EMS industry. By fostering a culture of continuous improvement, the organization can consistently deliver high-quality patient care and maintain operational excellence.

Automated In-The-Loop Communication

Automation in Data Handling Automated workflows streamline data processing from form submission to reporting, minimizing manual intervention, and ensuring data integrity and timeliness. Automated notifications and updates keep stakeholders informed throughout the process.

Bi-Directional Communication Automated alerts and notifications facilitate seamless, closed-loop communication across departments and employees, ensuring that all relevant parties are kept informed of progress and outcomes.





Inter-Departmental and Leadership Communication

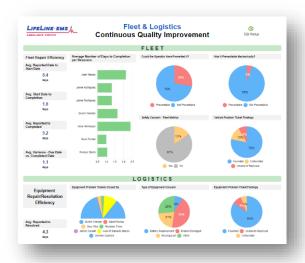
Enhancing Communication: These automated systems enhance inter-departmental communication by providing real-time updates and reports, fostering collaboration and informed decision-making. Closed-loop feedback ensures that information flows effectively between departments and leadership.



Dashboard Utilization

To ensure transparency, collaboration, and continuous improvement, LifeLine-EMS utilizes a series of detailed dashboards to present data to departments, team members, and providers. These dashboards provide real-time insights and are integral to our "In-The-Loop" program, showcasing key metrics, trends, and operational performance.

One of the key dashboards in our program is the **Fleet and Logistics CQI** dashboard. This dashboard tracks the efficiency of resolving equipment issues, a critical aspect of maintaining operational readiness. It illustrates average resolution times, types of equipment concerns reported, and findings from equipment inspections. For instance, it shows the breakdown of concerns into categories such as battery replacement, broken or damaged equipment, and missing or lost items. Additionally, it displays who closed the tickets and the outcomes of the inspections, whether the issues were founded, unable to be replicated, or unfounded. By monitoring these metrics, we can ensure timely resolution of equipment problems, enhancing the reliability and availability of essential equipment.



From the Fleet prospective this dashboard provides a comprehensive overview of fleet repair efficiency and safety concerns. It illustrates the average number of days from the reported date to the start date and from the start date to the completion of repairs, highlighting the efficiency of our maintenance processes. The dashboard also categorizes issues based on preventability, distinguishing between preventable and non-preventable incidents, both from an operator's and a mechanical perspective. Furthermore, it displays safety concerns related to the fleet, showing the proportion of issues marked as safety concerns. This detailed visualization

helps us identify areas for improvement in fleet management and ensures that maintenance practices are both effective and efficient.

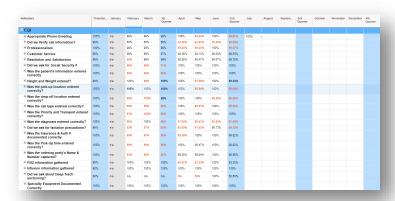




CQI Indicator Tables

A vital component of our "In-The-Loop" program is the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) indicator tables, meticulously built from the extensive data collected through our robust system. These tables are tailored to display department-specific compliance and performance indicators, each benchmarked against predefined goal thresholds. The tables provide a detailed monthly breakdown, culminating in quarterly averages to offer a comprehensive view of performance trends

over time. By sharing these indicator tables with our employees, we aim to foster a culture of communication and transparency, enabling everyone to stay In-The-Loop about their department's performance and actively participate in the continuous improvement process. This approach not only supports accountability but also empowers our team members with the insights needed to drive excellence in their respective roles.



Impact on Organizational Efficiency and Quality

Efficiency Improvements

The "In-The-Loop" program has significantly enhanced operational efficiency at LifeLine EMS by automating workflows, which has reduced response times and improved resource allocation. This has allowed leadership to focus on critical operations without the burden of routine follow-up tasks, leading to considerable time and cost savings. The freed-up time has enabled leadership to concentrate on strategic decision-making and proactive management of operational challenges. Additionally, the program's closed-loop communication system ensures that operational bottlenecks are quickly identified and resolved, further boosting our efficiency.

Quality Enhancements

Continuous data analysis and feedback integration have elevated service quality and patient care outcomes, reinforcing our commitment to excellence. Regular automated feedback loops enable proactive adjustments, ensuring all team members remain informed and engaged. To further support these enhancements, we utilize interactive dashboards, town hall-style meetings, and automated reports. The program has led to significant increases in communication and reporting across various areas, demonstrating its success in fostering a more efficient, transparent, and positive workplace culture. Ultimately, this has resulted in a more connected and responsive organization.





Supporting Programs

At LifeLine-EMS, our internal social media platform, Blink, serves as a dynamic hub where our team members engage with daily updates and resources essential to their roles and professional growth. Blink hosts a variety of content, from policy updates and upcoming events to Quality Quips offering bi-weekly insights into our continuous quality improvement initiatives. It also features training and education opportunities, including pop quizzes to reinforce learning, and a wealth of resources. Employees actively interact on Blink, sharing kudos and staying informed with company-wide updates.

While Blink and its posts and resources are not automated, they exemplify our commitment to communication and transparency with our employees, facilitating a culture of engagement and mutual support across our organization. This platform plays a vital role in fostering a connected and informed workforce, promoting collaboration, and ensuring everyone is aligned with our organizational goals and values.



Conclusion

The "In-The-Loop" program underscores LifeLine-EMS's commitment to closed-loop communication throughout all operational processes, innovation, data-driven decision-making, and excellence in EMS. By leveraging technology and fostering a culture of continuous improvement, we are bridging the gap between operational realities and employee experiences. This program is a testament to our dedication to providing exceptional patient care and maintaining a responsive, transparent, and efficient organizational environment. As we continue to evolve and enhance our processes, LifeLine-EMS remains steadfast in its mission to lead the industry in operational excellence, workplace culture and quality patient care.

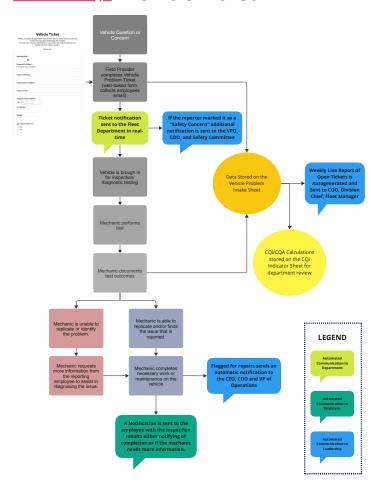




Appendix: Workflow Mapping Examples

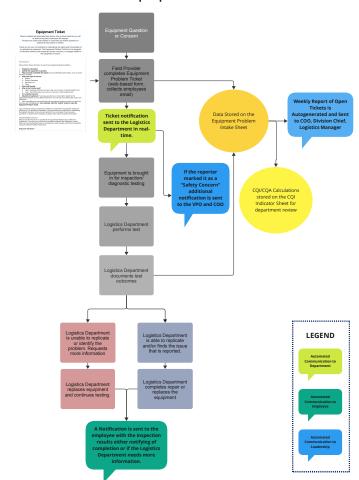


LIFELINE-EMS / Vehicle Ticket



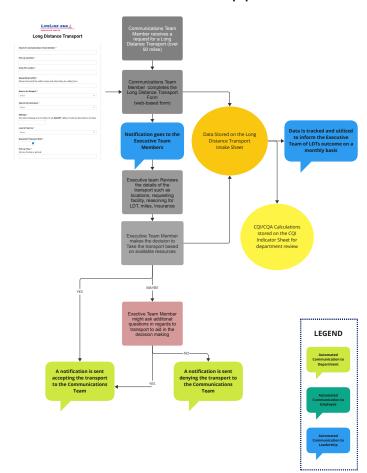


Equipment Ticket



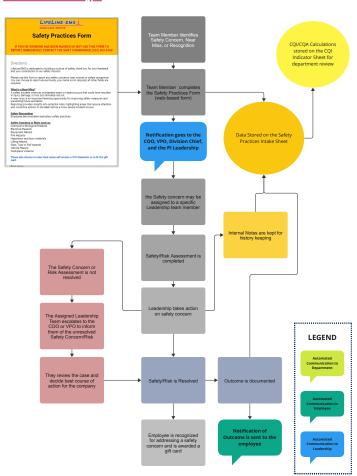


LDT Approval



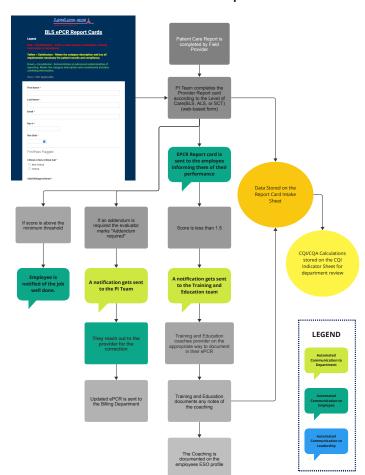


Safety Practices Form



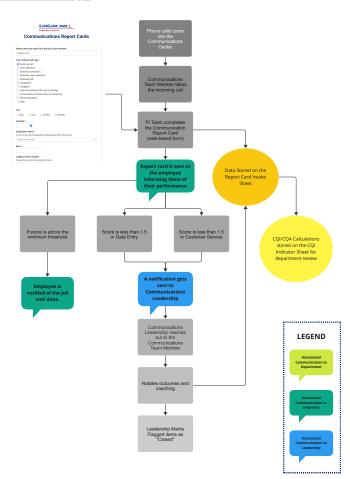


LIFELINE-EMS Provider Report Cards



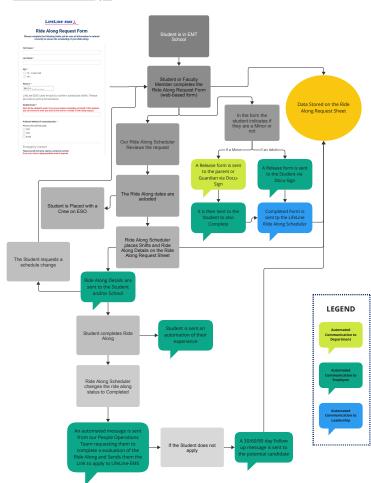


Communications Report Cards





Ride Along Requests and Tracking





LIFELINE-EMS A Shift Commander Turnover Reports

LIFELINE-EMS ...

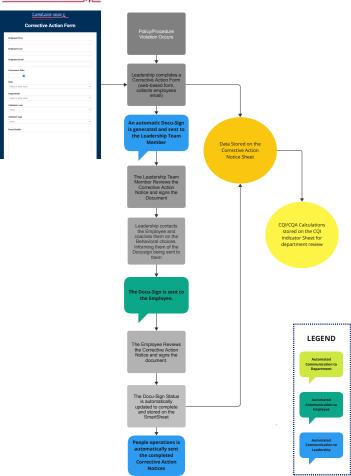
Change of Shift Report (SC)

The Shift Commander must complete this report at the end of every shift. Thank you. Shift Commander Change of Shift nears ○ Commerce ○ North Hollywood ○ Santa Ana Call Count Goal Shift Commander Data Stored on the SC completes a Change of Shift Report Form Current Call Count Change of Shift Sheet (web-based form) ALS Bag check off * ○ Yes ○ No Did you have a FIELD Candidate shadowing you today * O Yes O No 5 Vibe Checks completed? * generated and sent to Current Shift Commander gives a the oncoming Shift O Yes O No verbal turn over to Commander What operational events took place? * Commander Are there any CAN's to administer? * O Yes O No A notification is generated and sent to Were any CAN's delivered? the Operations ○ Yes ○ No Leadership Team



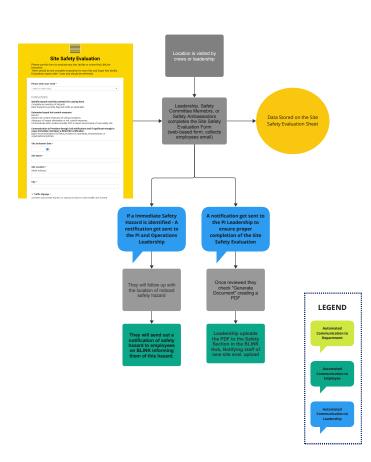


Corrective Action Notices



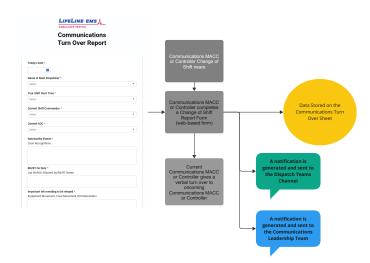


Site Safety Evaluation





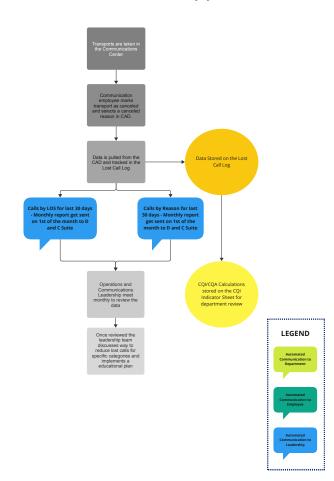
Communications Turnover Reports







Missed Opportunities





LIFELINE-EMS Primary Operations Event

