



Detailed Lean Improvement Project Report

For the June 1, 2014, through December 31, 2014, reporting period

Agency name:

Department of Ecology

Improvement project title:

Increase Dangerous Waste Inspections to Help Business Compliance

Date improvement project initiated:

05/21/12

Summary:

The Department of Ecology improved the dangerous waste inspection process, resulting in 16 percent more inspections since 2012.

Details:

Description of the problem: Decreased inspection frequency has been shown to increase occurrences of significant environmental violations – those most likely to threaten human health and the environment. The direct effect of fewer inspections (especially in a down economy) is that more businesses are out of compliance with the dangerous waste regulations.

Description of the improvement:

In an effort to increase the number of inspections by 15 percent while maintaining inspection quality, we:

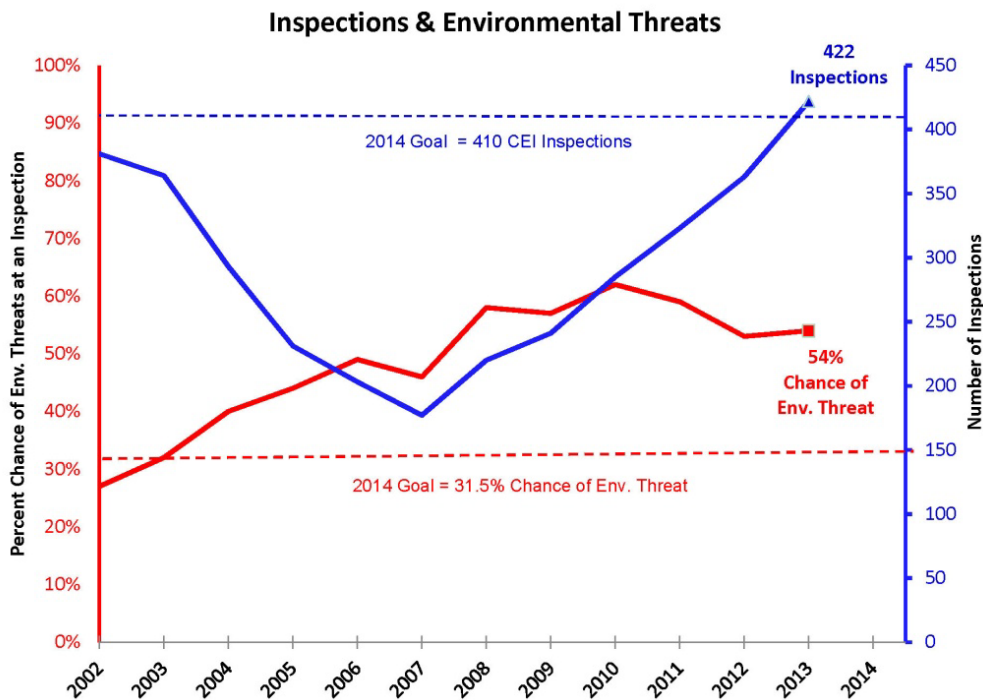
- Piloted sending advance notice letters to the businesses that were scheduled to be inspected soon. The advance notice letters included a self audit checklist and a copy of the prior inspection report to help the facility prepare for the inspection. Based on the initial success of this approach, a second pilot is underway with the intent to formalize the approach as standard practice if round two results are equally successful.
- Created a standard inspection approach to reflect a risk based approach to violations. This means documenting minor violations while focusing on resolving violations most likely to harm human health and the environment.
- Created one standard location for an on-line Inspector Toolbox and Regulatory Interpretation Library to consolidate inspection prep materials and provide one stop shopping for inspectors to prepare for inspections.
- We also hired four new inspectors which also helped increase the number of inspections.

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Specific results achieved:

- The graph below shows – through calendar year 2013 – the number of inspections conducted alongside the percent chance of finding a significant environmental threat during an inspection.
- 364 inspections in calendar year 2012 was the highest total since 2004.
- The total number of inspections has increased by 16 percent from 2012 to 2013.
- We are on pace for 436 inspections in 2014, an all-time high.
- The chance of finding a significant violation dropped from 62 percent in calendar year 2010 to 53 percent in calendar year 2012 to 47 percent in the last reported quarter of 2014.
- Hazardous waste inspectors have reduced average inspection time from 32 days to 25 days, since 2012.



How we involved customers or stakeholders in this effort:

Industries and facilities subject to dangerous waste inspections were included as part of our Compliance Lean Team and participated in value stream mapping and final recommendations.

Contact person:

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