

IPPS Assessment Module

OBJECTIVES

After completing this module, you will be able to:

1. Define IPPS.
2. Identify what IPPS is and what IPPS is not.
3. Identify the positions covered under IPPS.
4. Identify the relationship between IPPS and OFO's management control system.
5. Identify the number of IPPS assessments that must be performed per rating cycle.
6. Identify the relationship between IPPS assessments, progress reviews, and performance appraisals.
7. List the 4 tools used to prepare for an IPPS assessment.
8. List the steps for preparing for an IPPS assessment.
9. Identify the methods of assessing performance.
10. Recognize the importance of feedback.
11. Identify how the IPPS Assessment Worksheet is shared with the inspection program personnel.
12. Identify how information from IPPS assessments can be used.
13. Complete an IPPS assessment example.

RESOURCES

FSIS Directive 4430.3, revision 1
IPPS Supervisory Guides
IPPS Assessment Sheets

INTRODUCTION

IPPS (In-plant performance system) is a tool supervisors use to assess the performance of non-supervisory in-plant inspection program personnel. It focuses on ensuring that supervisors assess the work of inspection program personnel consistently and uniformly. IPPS covers all non-supervisory in-plant inspection program personnel such as Food Inspectors, Egg Products Inspectors, Consumer Safety Inspectors,, HIMP Consumer Safety Inspectors, Public Health Veterinarians, and Export Inspectors. It applies to Office of Field Operations (OFO) supervisors in positions that include Frontline Supervisors, Multi-IPPS Supervisors, Supervisory Public Health Veterinarians, Supervisory Consumer Safety Officers, and Supervisory Consumer Safety Inspectors who rate the performance of non-supervisory in-plant program personnel. It provides a first-hand, onsite observation of how well an employee conducts FSIS inspection and verification procedures in federally inspected establishments. IPPS does not assess plant compliance with the regulatory requirements.

FSIS' mission of protecting the health and welfare of consumers is set forth in the FMIA, PPIA, and EPIA (the Acts). In-plant supervisors have a responsibility to ensure that the employees under their supervision know how to adequately perform their jobs and to make them aware of the impact that off-target performance may have on the health and welfare of consumers.

IPPS was first implemented on October 1, 2002. Prior to implementation, training was provided to all supervisors. The IPPS materials were revised on November 23, 2005. FSIS Directive 4430.3, revision 1 contains and explains the changes that have been made to the IPPS system. We will discuss these revisions later in this module.

In 2006, the Agency launched AssuranceNet. This system is used to capture IPPS assessment findings. Some of these findings feed into organizational performance measures in AssuranceNet for management control purposes.

IPPS and the Management Control System

Performance Management is mandated and is a statutory requirement for Federal agencies. Every Federal agency is required to have a performance management system for all employees that identifies and sets performance expectations, monitors performance by way of progress reviews and rates performance by assigning a summary level rating. Summary level ratings are expressed as outstanding, superior, fully successful, marginal or unacceptable.

OFO uses IPPS as a tool to assist OFO supervisors in assessing the employee's knowledge of their job requirements. It is designed to provide supervisors with a structured process to look at elements of the job to identify, address, and correct areas where there is a need for improvement in performance, and provide feedback to employees. Information from the IPPS assessment sheets will also be extracted for use as part of OFO's management control system. Though IPPS measures individual performance and management control is focused on organizational performance, there is a link between the two. If individuals are not properly executing mission critical functions, we are less likely to be successfully accomplishing our mission as an organization.

Where are IPPS Assessments Conducted?

At least 2 IPPS assessments should be conducted for each covered employee during the rating cycle (July 1 – June 30). The first IPPS assessment should be conducted approximately 45 – 60 days after setting the performance standards, and again between the midpoint progress review and the final rating. IPPS assessments are used in addition to progress reviews and the annual performance rating. IPPS does not replace them.

These timeframes provide general guidance. Supervisors may conduct more than 2 IPPS assessments during the rating cycle and should do so if they cannot thoroughly assess all the performance elements over 2 assessments, or if they need to follow-up on issues identified in previous IPPS assessments. Remember, a performance rating is not assigned or discussed during IPPS assessments.

*See Scheduling of IPPS Assessments and Performance Progress Review Chart

What Tools are Needed to Prepare for an IPPS Assessment?

Four tools are needed to prepare for an IPPS assessment. First, there is the Code of Federal Regulations. This is the foundation for all our inspection and verification activities and our regulatory decisions.

Next, there is FSIS Directive 4430.3, revision 1. This will provide instructions on how to carry out and document these activities. It also explains the updated IPPS assessment policies and procedures for Field Operations Supervisors to follow when conducting IPPS assessments.

In addition, there are the IPPS Supervisory Guides. The Guides are written especially for OFO supervisors and provide specific instructions on carrying out assessments. Each non-supervisory in-plant occupation has its own guide. The IPPS supervisory guides are reference for use to verify that inspection personnel know their jobs, and are carrying out their public health regulatory responsibilities. These responsibilities include applying appropriate inspection methods; using effective regulatory decision-making; documenting findings appropriately; and implementing regulatory enforcement actions properly.

Finally, there is the IPPS Assessment Sheet. The IPPS Assessment Sheet is an electronic read-only form. There is a separate IPPS assessment sheet for each type of in-plant occupation to the performance element for that position (Forms 4430-8A-8H). It is used to record which elements are assessed on a given IPPS visit, how they are assessed, and to record findings and follow-up action when deficiencies are noted.

How to Prepare for an IPPS Assessment

Make sure that you are familiar with the processes and FSIS verification activities conducted at the establishment. Begin by selecting the IPPS assessment sheet for the appropriate in-plant occupation. You may want to print a copy for you and the employee to take notes during the assessment. Then select a number of applicable elements (and their sub-elements) to cover during the visit. Remember you must cover all applicable elements for the position before the end of the annual rating period. Make sure you have covered the

mandatory critical Mission Support and other critical elements first. You do not have to cover all of the elements on each visit.

Decide how much time you want to spend at the assignment and arrange for staffing, if necessary. Unannounced visits usually give the best picture of an employee's performance. However, it's not a requirement that visits be unannounced and is sometimes difficult to manage. Review the appropriate Supervisory Guide and identify questions for discussion, the activities to conduct, and other items for assessment. Research and review relevant data that applies to the elements you want to assess (ex. PBIS, LEARN, eADRS). Review previous IPPS assessments (if available), and determine if there are follow-up issues to cover during the visit. Develop a draft plan and outline for the visit and include the method of assessment.

Evaluating Data

Performance Based Inspection System (PBIS)

Prior to performing an IPPS assessment, you may want to review the following reports:

Plant Profile – list of establishment's products, processes, or operational characteristics

Results not entered – summary of missing results

NR Summary – summary of noncompliance records

You may also review listing reports such as:

Establishment HACCP Summary – summary of procedures performed during a specified time period. For each establishment / shift, the report identifies the number of procedures performed, not performed, unscheduled procedures, and noncompliance.

PH and OCP Comparison – report that identifies the ratio of public health and other consumer protection procedures. Public health should be first priority.

PH and OCP Summary – report which summarizes the number of public health and other consumer protection procedures

Trend Indicator Summary – a report which summarizes the number of noncompliance and identifies trends and spikes in noncompliance for a given establishment or shift.

The 4 listing reports are correlation tools which identify inspection trends and overall level of performance for a given establishment / shift.

Laboratory Electronic Applications for Results Notification (LEARN)

LEARN – a computer application that transmits laboratory results for various test performed at FSIS labs. While reviewing this database, you may observe discards, non-responders, and sample status and results.

Electronic Animal Disposition Reporting System (eADRS) Reader

eADRS – system used to track the number of animals slaughtered annually in the U.S. and to provide information concerning animal dispositions. In addition, the Inspector-In-Charge reports information regarding humane handling activities to provide information on the amount of time veterinarians and non-veterinary personnel spend performing daily activities related to verification of humane handling conditions at an establishment. This report will indicate missing or questionable data. It also will indicate whether humane handling activities are being performed and the frequency of performance.

Whenever you observe findings which are outside of the normal parameters, you should question the employee and gather more information. There may be a valid reason for these findings. If during the IPPS Assessment you find the employee has deficiencies in a particular area, it is your responsibility to coach and mentor the employee to get performance back on track.

Assessing Performance

There are 3 methods of assessing inspection program personnel's performance – observation, records review, and discussion. You may use one or a combination of methods. Observe inspection program personnel and ask questions as they conduct verification procedures or perform the procedure after the inspector and see if you get the same result. Review documentation, reports, and correspondence in the government files. Discuss inspection methods, decision-making, documentation, or enforcement protocol with inspection program personnel. Observe plant conditions and compare them to noncompliance reports written by the employee being assessed. How you choose to gather information during the assessment is up to you. However, you should be consistent in applying standards during your visits and come away with a true assessment of what the employee knows and how they apply that knowledge.

Feedback

After completing the assessment, give the employee verbal feedback (on-target and off-target) based on what you observed during the assessment. This should be a constructive feedback session. Prepare the IPPS Assessment sheets via AssuranceNet and follow-up the meeting with an e-mail or hard copy of the completed IPPS Assessment Sheet.

Documentation

On the IPPS Assessment Sheet you will indicate the performance elements and sub-elements assessed, method of assessment used, follow-up (when deficiencies are noted), and comments and feedback. Your comments should include what you observed, reviewed, discussed, concluded, and the indications that demonstrate why the performance is on-target, off-target, or noteworthy. When applicable, your comments should also include any action that you take to improve performance and follow-up training or additional visits needed to ensure the completion of activities.

If an employee's performance is unacceptable in one or more critical elements at any time during the performance appraisal cycle, follow the directions outlined in FSIS Directive 4430.1. Any misconduct issues identified during the IPPS visit should be addressed with your District Office. Once the IPPS Assessment Sheet had been completed, an electronic,

read-only version or hardcopy is given to the employee within 2 workweeks following the assessment.

Keep the completed IPPS assessment sheets for one year following completion of the previous rating cycle. Retain electronic copies in an electronic folder in your work files. At the appropriate time, discard or delete any electronic files of the assessment sheets on your computer. IPPS Assessment Sheets are not filed in HRFO's Official Personnel Folder or the Employee's Performance File.

IPPS Usage

You'll find your IPPS assessment files provide useful information at the end of the appraisal year. It will refresh your memory, help make rating decisions, and serve as a history of consistently executed assessments of employee performance. Use judgment when combining data from IPPS Assessment Sheets that are conducted during the annual rating cycle and other information regarding the employee's performance. The IPPS Assessment Sheet does not replace any existing performance appraisal process and FSIS form.

As stated previously, information from IPPS assessments will be extracted as part of OFO's management control system. Both the IPPS and the Performance Management Systems are designed to encourage communication between supervisors and employees on job performance, provide critical and constructive feedback to employees on achieving job requirements, and help supervisors and employees identify, address and correct performance problems.

Resources

The IPPS Supervisory Guides and IPPS Assessment Sheets are available in Outlook by clicking on Outlook/Public Folders/All Public Folders/OFO/IPPS via FSIS Intranet and the FSIS FAIM Application. FSIS Directive 4430.3, rev. 1 is available on Outlook/Public Folders/Agency Issuances/Directives/4000 series

Workshop I

1. IPPS is a tool _____ use to assess the performance of _____ in-plant inspection program personnel.
2. IPPS does not assess plant compliance with regulatory compliance
 - a. True
 - b. False
3. Information from IPPS assessment sheets will not be extracted for use as part of OFO's management control system.
 - a. True
 - b. False
4. A minimum of how many IPPS assessments must be performed per rating cycle?
 - a. 1
 - b. 2
 - c. 3
 - d. 4
5. List the 4 tools used to prepare for an IPPS assessment
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
6. List the 7 steps to prepare for an IPPS assessment.
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

7. What are the 3 methods of assessing performance?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

8. Following an IPPS assessment, do not give the employee any verbal feedback?

- a. True
- b. False

9. Information from IPPS assessments may be used to:

- a. help make rating decisions
- b. serve as history of consistently executed assessments of employee performance
- c. performance
- d. provide information as part of OFO's management control system
- e. all of the above

10. IPPS assessments will replace progress reviews and performance appraisals

- f. True
- g. False

11. Which of these positions is not covered under IPPS

- h. Food Inspectors, Slaughter
- i. Food Inspectors, Egg Products
- j. Consumer Safety Inspectors, HACCP Models
- k. Supervisory Public Health Veterinarians

12. Following an IPPS assessment, a completed IPPS Assessment Sheet should be mailed to the employee within 2 months

- a. True
- b. False

Use the information below to complete the IPPS Assessment Sheet for Inspector Lynda Smith

Date: October 1, 2006
District Name: Boulder
District Code: 0011
Circuit Name: Anywhere
Circuit Code: 01
Name of Supervisor: Dr. Thomas Williams

You are a new SPHV performing your first IPPS assessment of Food Inspector Lynda Smith. You have already set performance standards by discussing the pre-selected performance elements in early July. You review the IPPS Assessment Sheet for Food Inspectors and select the performance elements and sub-elements to cover during the assessment. Now you have selected the sub-elements under Mission Support and Communications, and decide to spend 4 hours at Lynda's assignment.

After reviewing the IPPS tools, you identify questions to discuss and activities to conduct from the Food Inspector Supervisory Guide. You develop a draft plan and outline for the visit which will include observation and discussion. You arrange staffing for the IPPS Assessment.

You observe while Lynda performs postmortem inspection procedures at her inspection station. She uses appropriate inspection procedures for the Streamlined Inspection System (SIS). She instructs the inspector helper (trimmer) to remove carcasses with improper presentation from the line and retain them, but fails to notify plant or inspection program personnel when this occurs with unacceptable regularity. She retains a carcass and viscera with a large mass in the abdominal cavity on the designated shackle for veterinary disposition. When you ask why she retained the carcass, she states that she retained it because the carcass also appeared to be emaciated.

You ask Lynda the 3 disposition options during postmortem inspection. She responds appropriately. You also ask Lynda questions regarding pathology and postmortem dispositions to evaluate her thought process and decision making. While you are observing Lynda, you notice that she is not identifying and condemning cadavers. She is allowing her helper to identify cadavers and make the disposition. You ask why she is allowing her helper to identify and condemn cadavers. She explains since she has difficulty identifying cadavers, she allows her helper to make that call. You discuss disposition criteria for cadavers. You also discuss her role versus the inspector helper's role during postmortem inspection. Next, you decide to perform a correlation with her on carcasses in her condemn can. As you examine condemned carcasses and parts, you ask questions to evaluate her thought process and decision making. Out of twenty

carcasses in her can, there are six without cause for condemnation. When you question her about the reason for condemnation, she states she condemned these carcasses for septicemia/toxemia because they appeared to be very thin. You review the condemnation criteria for septicemia/toxemia with her.

It is now time for company break. Since off-line inspection personnel are not in the evisceration department, Lynda ensures that denaturant is placed on the carcasses in her condemn can before leaving her station.

Following company break, Lynda returns to her inspection station. As part of on-line postmortem inspection duties, she verifies removal of contaminated carcasses and parts with visible fecal contamination. Although she handles the contaminated carcasses and parts correctly, she fails to notify off-line inspection personnel when this occurs with unacceptable regularity.

You and Lynda go to the USDA office to discuss the assessment. You tell her that you are pleased with her knowledge of inspection procedures for the SIS inspection system. Although you are overall pleased with her postmortem dispositions, you are concerned about her ability to identify cadavers and carcasses with septicemia/toxemia. You tell her that she should retain carcasses for you when she is uncertain about the disposition, and she should never allow her helper to make dispositions for her. You also discuss her role versus the helper's role. You discuss the importance of notifying off-line inspection personnel when trends are detected such as carcasses and parts with fecal contamination or presentation issues. You commit to performing weekly pathology correlations with her for the next month. During your discussion, you discover that she has not attended the Poultry Slaughter Inspection Training course. You contact the District Office and make arrangements to enroll her in the next Poultry Slaughter Training course. You tell Lynda she will receive her completed IPPS Assessment within 2 workweeks.