

U.S. Department of Labor



MINE SAFETY AND HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

Competency Model for MINE SAFETY INSPECTOR/SPECIALIST

February 2003
FINAL (Rev. 05/04)



the occupation, both current and for the future. The subject matter experts used research results, in the form of a competency database, from the U. S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) as a foundation for identifying and validating appropriate competencies with supporting documentation. In some models, the subject matter experts also used data from other sources – i.e., survey questionnaire, focus groups, interviews and written documents - to assist them in the design of their competency profiles.

Each competency model is intended to serve as the basis for designing competency-based tools for use in assessment and selection, career development, and other human resources functions.

II. Components of the Model

A *competency* is a measurable pattern of knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviors and other characteristics that an individual needs to perform work roles or occupational functions successfully.

This model has two types of competencies: general competencies and technical competencies.

A *general competency* is a competency that may be applied across occupations and organizations. “Oral communication” is one of the more frequently used general competencies. The general competencies are based on OPM’s governmentwide, empirical research and were augmented with occupation- and agency-specific information and validated by others knowledgeable of the specific occupation.

A *technical competency* varies across occupations and frequently varies across organizations. Technical competencies are defined in terms of the specialized or technical requirements of a particular occupation or position. The technical competencies, including all components, were developed by the work group of subject matter experts and validated by others knowledgeable of the specific occupation.

In a printed version of the model, the general competencies are presented first (in alphabetical order rather than order of importance), followed by the technical competencies (also in alphabetical order). To clearly distinguish between the two types of competencies in the model, each competency is marked as a general competency or a technical competency.

Each competency has the following components:

- Definition
- Benchmarks
- Indicators

The *definition* is a statement or series of statements describing the competency in very broad terms. The definition applies across all career levels from entry through senior and/or expert level.



The definitions for the general competencies are derived from OPM's work, with a few modifications made by the work group of subject matter experts. The definitions for the technical competencies were developed by each work group of subject matter experts for its specific occupation or position.

A **benchmark** is a standard by which work is measured. Each competency has a separate benchmark for each career level, and the benchmarks vary across career levels on factors such as maturity of judgment, complexity, and autonomy. The benchmarks are progressively more difficult to reach across career levels and the benchmarks are cumulative. Someone at the highest career level (such as the senior level) is expected to meet the benchmark for his/her career level and the benchmarks for the lower career levels. For some competencies, the differences among a particular competency's benchmarks may be subtle.

The benchmarks for the general competencies were developed by OPM, with a few modifications made by the work group of subject matter experts. The benchmarks for the technical competencies were developed by each work group of subject matter experts for its specific occupation or position.

An **indicator** is an example of how the competency is demonstrated on the job. All of the indicators were developed by the each agency's work group of subject matter experts and validated by others knowledgeable of the particular occupation or position. This model has two types of indicators: selection indicators and developmental indicators.

A **selection indicator** is an example of work required for selection into the career level. In other words, an individual is expected to be able to demonstrate the specified indicator before entering the career level. As with the benchmarks, the selection indicators are cumulative and progressively more difficult across career levels. Except for those unique situations where extensive agency experience or technical training is required for successful performance at the journey/senior level within a reasonable time period, the selection indicators were developed so that they could be used for assessing both internal and external candidates without screening out external candidates on the basis of requirements that could be met only by working in the occupation in that agency.

A **developmental indicator** is an example of work to be performed while an individual is at that career level. Since development is a continuous process across career levels, an individual is not expected to perform this work when entering the respective level but is expected to be able to demonstrate the behavior specified in the indicator before leaving the career level and advancing to the next career level. Like the selection indicators, the developmental indicators are cumulative and progressively more difficult across career levels.

There are patterns of similarities and differences in the indicators across career levels and between the selection and developmental indicators. Some – but not all – developmental indicators are used as selection indicators for the next level. In a few instances, the work groups of subject matter experts determined that a selection indicator was important enough to be used at more than one career level or the potential for development in a developmental indicator was sufficient for it to be included at multiple levels.

In some models, there are no selection indicators for a competency's specific career level. This reflects the determination by the subject matter experts for a specific occupation or position that behavior and/or performance at that level may only be demonstrated during development in the position and inclusion as a selection indicator would exclude qualified candidates.



III. Using the Model

As mentioned previously, competencies may be used for assessment and selection, career development, and other human resources functions. By using competency based human resources tools, organizations improve productivity and the return-on-investment (ROI) of their human capital management practices. A few examples of the uses of competency-based human resources tools and associated benefits are listed below:

- **Selection:** Organizations develop and use benchmarked behavioral interview questions to help supervisors focus on the critical factors that differentiate superior performers from average performers, thus improving the match between the person selected and the job.
- **Training and Development:** Organizations identify training and development activities for enhancing specific competencies, thus providing a training and development “road map” and improving the ROI of scarce development resources by focusing the use of those resources on improving the competencies required for successful and superior performance.
- **Workforce Planning:** Organizations assess employees’ competencies and compare those assessments to the competency levels needed, thus enabling the organization to measure and close competency gaps at multiple levels from the individual to the total organization.

Effective implementation of this model requires a direct linkage between the developmental indicators and training plans prepared for both individuals and organizations. Agencies should review existing training strategies, plans and curricula to ensure that the specific developmental indicators are addressed in the appropriate training and development deliverables.



COMPETENCY:

Influencing/Negotiating

DEFINITION

Persuades others to accept recommendations, cooperate, or change their behavior; works with others towards an agreement; negotiates to find mutually acceptable solutions.

General

ENTRY	INTERMEDIATE	SENIOR
-------	--------------	--------

BENCHMARKS

Initiates exchanges of resources or information with others who are willing to negotiate. Persuades other employees or customers to accept recommendations.

Negotiates important issues with others who are resistant to negotiation. Persuades immediate supervisor, other employees, or customers to cooperate or accept recommendations.

Negotiates critical issues with others who are resistant to negotiation or do not stand to gain by negotiating. Persuades management, other employees, internal or external stakeholders, or customers to cooperate, accept recommendations, or change their behaviors.

SELECTION INDICATORS

DEVELOPMENTAL INDICATORS

Promotes or assists in promoting mine operators' compliance with the Mine Safety and Health Act by appropriately citing violations and explaining basis for citation and how unsafe condition(s) can be corrected.

Promotes or assists in promoting mine operators' compliance with the Mine Safety and Health Act by appropriately citing violations and explaining basis for citation and how unsafe condition(s) can be corrected.

Promotes mine operators' compliance with the Mine Safety and Health Act by appropriately citing violations and explaining basis for citation and how unsafe condition(s) can be corrected.

Promotes mine operators' voluntary compliance with the Mine Safety and Health Act by identifying and using information and reasons that are important to them.

Promotes mine operators' voluntary compliance with the Mine Safety and Health Act by identifying and using information and reasons that are important to them.

Promotes miners' use of safe procedures by identifying and using information and reasons that are important to them.

Promotes miners' use of safe procedures by identifying and using information and reasons that are important to them.



COMPETENCY:

Integrity/Honesty

DEFINITION

Contributes to maintaining the integrity of the organization; displays high standards of ethical conduct and understands the impact of violating these standards on an organization, self, and others; is trustworthy.

General

ENTRY	INTERMEDIATE	SENIOR
-------	--------------	--------

BENCHMARKS

Is trustworthy, ethical and honest. In all work activities, demonstrates a high level of personal integrity that reflects well on the organization.

Is trustworthy, ethical and honest. In all work activities, demonstrates a high level of personal integrity that reflects well on the organization. Follows the organization's ethical guidelines even in difficult situations.

Is trustworthy, ethical and honest. In all work activities, demonstrates a high level of personal integrity that reflects well on the organization. Acts as a role model in following the organization's ethical guidelines even in difficult or complex situations.

SELECTION INDICATORS

Is trustworthy, honest, and ethical in speech and actions.

Is trustworthy, honest, and ethical in speech and actions.

Is trustworthy, honest, and ethical in speech and actions.

Cites all violations appropriately without any type of favoritism.

Avoids situations involving disagreements between mine operators, miners, and/or labor organizations.

DEVELOPMENTAL INDICATORS

Cites or participates in citing violations appropriately without any type of favoritism.

Cites all violations appropriately without any type of favoritism.

Avoids situations involving disagreements between mine operators, miners, and/or labor organizations.

Avoids situations involving disagreements between mine operators, miners, and/or labor organizations.



COMPETENCY:

Interpersonal Skills

DEFINITION

Shows understanding, professionalism, courtesy, tact, empathy, concern, and politeness to others; develops and maintains effective relationships with others; may include effectively dealing with individuals who are difficult, hostile, or distressed; relates well to people from varied backgrounds and different situations; is sensitive to cultural diversity, race, gender, disabilities, and other individual differences.

General

ENTRY

INTERMEDIATE

SENIOR

BENCHMARKS

Cooperates and works well with management, other employees, or customers during brief interactions. Remains courteous when discussing information or eliciting nonsensitive or noncontroversial information from people who are willing to give it. Effectively handles situations involving little or no tension, discomfort, hostility, or distress.

Cooperates and works well with management, other employees, or customers, on short-term assignments. Remains courteous when discussing information or eliciting moderately sensitive or controversial information from people who are hesitant to give it. Effectively handles situations involving a moderate degree of tension or discomfort involving people who are demonstrating a moderate degree of hostility or distress.

Establishes and maintains ongoing working relationships with management, other employees, internal or external stakeholders, or customers. Remains courteous when discussing information or eliciting highly sensitive or controversial information from people who are reluctant to give it. Effectively handles situations involving a high degree of tension or discomfort involving people who are demonstrating a high degree of hostility or distress.

SELECTION INDICATORS

Clearly and consistently models tact, respect, trust, and professionalism with all people, without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliations, marital status, or sexual orientation.

Clearly and consistently models tact, respect, trust, and professionalism with all people, without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation, marital status, or sexual orientation.

Clearly and consistently models tact, respect, trust, and professionalism with all people, without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation, marital status, or sexual orientation.

Exercises caution and tact in the resolution of differences of opinion when confronted with disagreements, citing law/policy and providing information on administrative review procedures as appropriate.

Exercises caution and tact in the resolution of differences of opinion when confronted with disagreements, citing law/policy and providing information on administrative review procedures as appropriate.

Consistently and effectively engages in and promotes open, candid, constructive, and regular exchanges and sharing of information.

Consistently and effectively engages in and promotes open, candid, constructive, and regular exchanges and sharing of information.

Presents controversial findings tactfully to senior officials.

DEVELOPMENTAL INDICATORS

Exercises caution and tact in the resolution of differences of opinion when confronted with disagreements, citing law/policy and providing information on administrative review procedures as appropriate.

Is approachable and establishes rapport with mine operators, miners, labor organizations, and mining associations.

Is approachable and establishes rapport with mine operators, miners, labor organizations, and mining associations.

Engages in open, constructive and regular exchanges and sharing of information.

Acts in a professional manner even in stressful situations.

Acts in a professional manner even in stressful situations.

Presents controversial findings tactfully to senior officials.

Patiently explains the benefits of controversial policy changes to upset individuals in a public setting.



COMPETENCY:

Oral Communication

DEFINITION

Expresses information (for example, ideas or facts) to individuals or groups effectively, taking into account the audience and nature of the information (for example, technical, sensitive, controversial); makes clear and convincing oral presentations; listens to others, attends to nonverbal cues, and responds appropriately.

General

ENTRY	INTERMEDIATE	SENIOR
-------	--------------	--------

BENCHMARKS

Communicates basic ideas or information clearly. Thoughts are fairly well organized. Listens to others and responds appropriately.

Communicates or explains moderately complex ideas or information clearly. Thoughts are well organized. Listens to others, and recognizes potential miscommunications.

Communicates, explains, or defends complex ideas or information clearly and adapts to the audience's level of knowledge. Thoughts are extremely well organized. Actively listens to others and clarifies communications.

SELECTION INDICATORS

Actively listens and ensures that others' ideas and perspectives are heard.

Actively listens and ensures that others' ideas and perspectives are heard.

Actively listens and ensures that others' ideas and perspectives are heard.

Presents information in an understandable manner.

Makes presentations to internal and/or external audiences.

Presents complicated or controversial information to internal and external audiences.

DEVELOPMENTAL INDICATORS

Participates in making formal and informal presentations to internal and external audiences.

Presents complex/technical information in an understandable manner.

Adapts presentation to audience's receptiveness and level of expertise based upon knowledge of audience and on verbal and nonverbal cues.

Testifies in court cases as a witness under oath and is subject to examination conducted by attorneys representing both the government and the employer.

Testifies in court cases as a witness under oath and is subject to examination conducted by attorneys representing both the government and the employer.



COMPETENCY: **Planning and Evaluating**

DEFINITION *Organizes work, sets priorities, and determines resource requirements; determines short- or long-term goals and strategies to achieve them; coordinates with other organizations or parts of the organization to accomplish goals; monitors progress and evaluates outcomes.*

General

ENTRY	INTERMEDIATE	SENIOR
-------	--------------	--------

BENCHMARKS

Organizes work according to established project strategies. Assesses own work products and monitors progress against assigned goals. Coordinates work with other employees on the project team.

Establishes project requirements and priorities and develops strategies, including coordinating work requirements and project resources, to achieve short- or long-term goals. Monitors and evaluates project activities and outcomes. Coordinates work with employees involved in other projects in the work unit.

Establishes organization/work unit needs and priorities and develops strategies to achieve multiple short-and long-term goals, including directing and monitoring work, and determining and allocating resources. Monitors and evaluates organization/work unit performance. Coordinates work activities with other organizations or parts of the organization.

SELECTION INDICATORS

DEVELOPMENTAL INDICATORS

Based upon review of last inspection(s) or status of current inspection, plans inspections/parts of inspection for the upcoming week to make effective and efficient use of time, conduct a thorough inspection, and provide compliance assistance to mine operators.

Based upon review of last inspection(s) or status of current inspection, plans inspections/parts of inspection for the upcoming week to make effective and efficient use of time, conduct a thorough inspection, and provide compliance assistance to mine operators.



COMPETENCY: **Problem Solving**

DEFINITION *Identifies problems; determines accuracy and relevance of information; uses sound judgment to generate and evaluate alternatives, and to make recommendations.*

General

ENTRY	INTERMEDIATE	SENIOR
-------	--------------	--------

BENCHMARKS

Uses logic to identify alternatives to solve routine problems. Reacts to and solves problems by gathering and applying information from standard materials or sources that provide a limited number of alternatives.

Uses logic to identify alternatives to solve moderately difficult problems. Identifies and solves problems by gathering and applying information from a variety of materials or sources that provide several alternatives.

Uses logic to identify alternatives to solve complex or sensitive problems. Anticipates problems, and identifies and evaluates potential sources of information and generates alternatives to solve problems where precedents do not exist.

SELECTION INDICATORS

DEVELOPMENTAL INDICATORS

Interprets guidelines for application to specific cases and problems.

Helps mine operators correct hazardous situations by conducting root cause analysis to distinguish between symptoms and causes.

Helps mine operators correct hazardous situations by conducting root cause analysis to distinguish between symptoms and causes.

Interprets guidelines for application to specific cases and problems.

Interprets guidelines for application to specific cases and problems.

Works with mine operators to correct situations endangering health and safety of the miners, using additional MSHA resources (e.g., tech services) as appropriate.

Works with mine operators to correct situations endangering health and safety of the miners, using additional MSHA resources (e.g., tech services) as appropriate.



COMPETENCY: **Self Management**

DEFINITION *Sets well-defined and realistic personal goals; displays a high level of initiative, effort, and commitment towards completing assignments in a timely manner; works with minimal supervision; is motivated to achieve; demonstrates responsible behavior.*

General

ENTRY	INTERMEDIATE	SENIOR
-------	--------------	--------

BENCHMARKS

Adheres to goals and deadlines set by supervisor. Will take on new or additional responsibilities when asked. Applies limited effort, persistence, and autonomy toward achievement of goals.

Sets goals and priorities for own work to ensure deadlines are met. Willingly accepts new or additional responsibilities and challenges. Applies moderate effort, persistence, and autonomy toward achievement of goals.

Sets goals and priorities for own work and coordinates activities and time lines with others to ensure project goals and deadlines are met. Takes initiative and seeks new or additional responsibilities and challenges. Continually applies great levels of effort, persistence, and autonomy toward achievement of goals.

SELECTION INDICATORS

Allocates time appropriately to complete assigned work by given deadline.

Allocates time appropriately to complete inspections of assigned mines within given deadlines.

Allocates time appropriately to complete inspections of assigned mines within given deadlines.

Models good time utilization without compromising quality.

Sets realistic personal goals, making adjustments as needed to achieve agency or organizational goals.

DEVELOPMENTAL INDICATORS

Pursues professional development by such activities as joining professional societies/organizations or obtaining certification.

Pursues professional development by such activities as joining professional societies/organizations or obtaining certification.

Models good time utilization without compromising quality.

Sets realistic personal goals, making adjustments as needed to achieve agency goals.



COMPETENCY: **Teaching Others**

DEFINITION *Helps others learn through formal or informal methods; identifies training needs; provides constructive feedback; coaches others on how to perform tasks; acts as a mentor.*

General

ENTRY	INTERMEDIATE	SENIOR
-------	--------------	--------

BENCHMARKS

Teaches or coaches others on simple concepts, material, or tasks in an informal setting. Teaches using routine methods or a standard style.

Teaches or coaches others on moderately complex material and provides feedback on performance. Adjusts teaching style to audience's needs when asked.

Teaches others complex or technical material in a formal setting, and evaluates progress of students and conducts course evaluation. Anticipates or recognizes audience's or individual's needs and adjusts teaching style appropriately.

SELECTION INDICATORS

Teaches safety during walk-around talks in mines, using appropriate techniques to evaluate miners' use of safe work practices and to teach safe work practices.

Presents short safety talks, targeted at the audience and using information that will catch their attention and make an impression.

DEVELOPMENTAL INDICATORS

Teaches safety during walk-around talks in mines.

Presents short safety talks, targeted at the audience and using information that will catch their attention and make an impression.

Adjusting style to fit audience's level of expertise, coaches mine operators on ways to present effective safety training.

Adjusting style to fit audience's level of expertise, coaches mine operators on ways to improve safety.



COMPETENCY:

Writing

DEFINITION

Recognizes or uses correct English grammar, punctuation, and spelling; communicates information (for example, facts, ideas, or messages) in a succinct and organized manner; produces written information, which may include technical material, that is appropriate for the intended audience.

General

ENTRY	INTERMEDIATE	SENIOR
-------	--------------	--------

BENCHMARKS

Composes documents or correspondence involving simple or routine information. Proofreads own work.

Composes documents or correspondence involving non-technical information. Proofreads or edits brief, non-technical writing of others.

Composes documents or correspondence involving complex or technical information, and adapts writing to the audience's level of knowledge. Proofreads or edits complex or technical writing of others.

SELECTION INDICATORS

Prepares original written material using proper grammar, punctuation and spelling.

Prepares written materials that are accurate, clear, logical, well organized, and understandable and contain proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

Prepares technical/complex written materials that are accurate, clear, logical, well organized, and understandable and contain proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

Prepares written reports of inspections and investigations of complaints, including notices of violations and orders of withdrawal.

DEVELOPMENTAL INDICATORS

Prepares or assists with preparing written reports of inspections and investigations of complaints, including notices of violations and orders of withdrawal.

Prepares written reports of inspections and investigations of complaints, including notices of violations and orders of withdrawal.

Prepares written reports of accident/fatality investigations.



COMPETENCY:

Inspection

DEFINITION

Principles, practices, and techniques for conducting and documenting mine safety and health inspections and documenting findings and conclusions in a legally defensible manner.

Technical

ENTRY

INTERMEDIATE

SENIOR

BENCHMARKS

Assists with conducting inspections of a routine nature dealing with mine safety and health violations and control methods. Has limited knowledge of the principles, practices and techniques for conducting inspections.

Conducts inspections of a somewhat complex nature dealing with mine safety and health violations and control methods. Has general knowledge of the principles, practices and techniques for conducting inspections and of health sampling techniques.

Conducts inspections of a highly complex nature dealing with mine safety and health violations and control methods. Has detailed knowledge of the principles, practices and techniques for conducting inspections and of health sampling techniques.

SELECTION INDICATORS

Uses common hardware and software applications.

Reviews file for previous inspection and plans, conducts and documents inspection.

Uses current computer hardware and software applications to retrieve information to plan and document inspection.

Selects, calibrates, and uses a wide variety of technical equipment.

Classifies violations and completes case file, documenting case file to assure its accuracy, completeness, and legal sufficiency.

DEVELOPMENTAL INDICATORS

Reviews file for previous inspection and participates in planning, conducting and documenting inspections.

Reviews file for previous inspection and plans and conducts inspection.

Selects, calibrates, and uses technical equipment.

Uses current computer hardware and software applications to retrieve information to plan and document inspection.

Selects, calibrates, and uses a wide variety of technical equipment.

Classifies violations and completes case file, documenting case file to assure its accuracy, completeness, and legal sufficiency.



COMPETENCY:

Legal, Government and Jurisprudence

DEFINITION

Knowledge of laws, legal codes, court procedures, precedents, legal practices and documents, government regulations, executive orders, agency rules, government organization and functions, and the democratic political process.

Technical

ENTRY

INTERMEDIATE

SENIOR

BENCHMARKS

Has limited knowledge of the laws, regulations, procedures, etc. that mine safety and health programs.

Has general knowledge of the laws, regulations, procedures, etc. that govern mine safety and health programs.

Has detailed knowledge of the laws, regulations, procedures, etc. that govern mine safety and health programs.

SELECTION INDICATORS

DEVELOPMENTAL INDICATORS

Not applicable.

Identifies and cites appropriate standard or other regulatory reference to assure legal sufficiency in the citation.

Identifies and cites appropriate standard or other regulatory reference to assure legal sufficiency in the citation.



COMPETENCY:

Mine Safety and Health

DEFINITION

Mine safety and health principles and practices, techniques and procedures, regulations, and standards as they apply to conducting inspections/investigations, identifying and evaluating unsafe conditions, giving citations, and recommending methods to correct unsafe conditions.

Technical

ENTRY

INTERMEDIATE

SENIOR

BENCHMARKS

Has limited knowledge of the precedent techniques and accepted procedures in identifying unsafe mine conditions, potential hazards, imminent danger, and other situations impacting miner safety and health.

Has general knowledge of the precedent techniques and accepted procedures in identifying unsafe mine conditions, potential hazards, imminent danger, and other situations impacting miner safety and health.

Has detailed knowledge of the precedent techniques and accepted procedures in identifying unsafe mine conditions, potential hazards, imminent danger, and other situations impacting miner safety and health. Is able to offer reasonable solutions to situations that do not fit into the standard situations.

SELECTION INDICATORS

Identifies serious hazards and other violations of mandatory standards.

Identifies a wide range of serious hazards and other violations of mandatory standards.

Identifies appropriate techniques/methods for eliminating a wide range of hazards and other violations of mandatory standards.

DEVELOPMENTAL INDICATORS

Identifies and cites or participates in identifying and citing serious hazards and other violations of mandatory standards.

Identifies and cites serious hazards and other violations of mandatory standards.

Identifies and cites serious hazards and other violations of mandatory standards.

Participates in identifying appropriate techniques/methods for eliminating hazards and other violations of mandatory standards.

Identifies appropriate techniques/methods for eliminating hazards and other violations of mandatory standards.

