

# Trainer as a role model

Setting the standard during shutdown maintenance training



## Focus

Trainer as a role model on site: *Setting the standard for safety, quality, and culture.*

## Background

Ijaz is a trainer and assessor supporting crews during a planned shutdown at a processing plant. The shutdown involved multiple work groups, tight timelines and a high volume of maintenance activity. Her role was to support task briefings, coach workers on critical controls and verify that work was being carried out to site standard.

Shutdown periods were high-pressure. Teams were working long shifts, contractors were moving between tasks and supervisors were focused on meeting the schedule. Ijaz knew that learners and less experienced workers watched closely how leaders behaved on the floor during this type of work. What the trainer did in practice would carry more weight than what she said in a briefing room.

### The challenge

Early in the shutdown, Ijaz noticed small signs of standards slipping.

Pre-task discussions were becoming rushed, some workers were treating permit checks as routine paperwork, and a few people were stepping around housekeeping issues rather than fixing them. None of these issues had resulted in an incident, but they were early warnings of a culture under pressure.

The challenge was not just to correct individual behaviours. Ijaz needed to model the standard visibly so crews could see that safety, quality and respect for process were still applied, even when the job was busy.

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## Solutions

Ijaz led from the front practically and consistently. She began each field interaction with the same disciplined routine. Before discussing the technical task, they checked the work area, confirmed the permit status, reviewed isolations, and ensured the team could explain the critical risks and controls. Ijaz did this every time, not only when auditors or supervisors were present. This made her approach predictable and credible.

When she found issues, they were addressed straight away and in the right tone. On one occasion, Ijaz stopped a rushed task briefing and had the team restart it properly. She explained the significance of the reset, linked it to the work being done and kept the message focused on standards rather than blame. This showed that cutting corners in the process was unacceptable, even under schedule pressure.

Ijaz also modelled quality in their coaching, avoiding vague instructions or broad reminders. Instead, she used clear language, pointed to the exact standard required, and checked that workers could apply it. If a worker gave a partial answer, Ijaz followed up until the response showed real understanding.

Ijaz's behaviour on site reinforced the expected culture. She wore the correct PPE without exception, kept her work area clean, and treated everyone with respect, even under pressure. Ijaz listened carefully, asked questions properly and did not raise her voice when making points. This was important because it showed that professionalism and respect were valued as site standards.

Ijaz also made positive behaviour visible. When teams completed strong pre-start discussions, maintained clean work areas, or appropriately challenged a risk, she recognised it in the moment. This reinforced the idea that good safety and quality behaviours were valued.

By the end of the shutdown, supervisors commented that crews were more consistent in task briefings, more disciplined with controls and more willing to speak up when something did not look right. Ijaz achieved this by setting and holding the standard in every interaction.

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## Next steps

Other trainers can apply this learning by:

- following the same safety and quality routine every time they go into the field
- treating permits, isolations, housekeeping and pre-task checks as visible priorities, not background tasks
- correcting standards early before poor habits become accepted practice
- using clear, specific coaching that shows exactly what good practice looks like
- modelling calm, respectful behaviour, especially when work is under pressure
- making their own PPE, work habits and site conduct consistent with the standard they expect from others
- recognising strong safety and quality behaviours when they see them
- remembering that workers watch what trainers do on site as closely as they listen to what trainers say.

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