

Improving workflow and space organization in the Recreation & Parks electrical shop

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A partnership between the City Performance Lean Team and the Recreation & Parks Department

THE PROBLEM

The Structural Maintenance Yard's electrical shop is one of eleven trade shops responsible for maintaining and repairing San Francisco's parks and recreation centers. As they prepare to dispatch each morning, the electricians load materials such as ballasts, lamps, and wires into their vehicles. But every minute spent searching for a wire coil is a minute that delays dispatch and a park facility remains in disrepair. Furthermore, electricians found that because materials were not organized well, they could not easily see what they had in stock and re-ordered materials unnecessarily.

ROOT CAUSES

Using Lean tools such as the Five Whys and Fishbone Diagram, the project team determined that materials were placed haphazardly, without easily identifiable labeling. While attempts had been made in the past to standardize storage, they were not sustained and lacked visual management. In addition, a non-standard material re-ordering process created over- and under-stock issues.



Before conducting the project, Electricians had a hard time finding the materials they needed to do their work.



After conducting the project, Electricians could easily find the wires they needed to successfully complete an electrical job, as they were labeled and stored in an organized and visible manner.

SOLUTIONS

Over a series of several rapid improvement meetings, the project team:

- Analyzed workflow and space organization using the Lean 5S method (Sort, Set In Order, Shine, Standardize, Sustain)
- Disposed of and recycled materials that were more than five years old
- Labeled all wires and ballasts in the shop and assigned wires in a new, visible storage area
- Moved frequently used materials closer to van loading area, creating less safety issues in loading up vans
- Reorganized the main shop room to accommodate a computer space for Electricians to enter their time
- Created a missing/depleted materials list posted in shop, improving inventory accuracy
- Tracked progress using a visual management board

RESULTS

With the new layout and storage practices, electricians spend less time searching for materials and more time doing highly skilled electrical work, even as the shop increased inventory accuracy and improved safety practices. But 5S has been a catalyst for even greater change! Several other shops have followed the Electrical Shop's lead to undertake 5S work on their own, and several electricians have taken initiative to improve the shop's response to work orders.

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