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People Capability Maturity Model[®] (P-CMM[®])

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Work Environment

A process area at Maturity Level 2: Managed

Purpose	The purpose of Work Environment is to establish and maintain physical working conditions and to provide resources that allow individuals and workgroups to perform their tasks efficiently and without unnecessary distractions.
Description	<p>The work environment must be managed to ensure it supports the committed work of those in the organization. This process area focuses on both the resources provided for performing work, and the physical conditions under which the work is performed. Management must balance expenditures on resources and environment with justifications based on the work being performed. This process area reinforces management's responsibility to monitor resource needs and environmental conditions that affect the workforce's ability to perform work efficiently. Management should have plans for mitigating those problems judged to present serious risks to health, safety, of efficiency. Continual interruptions are one of the greatest impediments to efficiency in knowledge-intense environments. While distractions cannot be eliminated, attempts should be made to minimize them.</p> <p>Establishing an effective work environment begins with identifying the physical environment and resources needed to perform committed work. An appropriate physical environment and personal workspace are provided for individuals and workgroups to perform their assigned responsibilities. Resources needed to perform committed work are made available in a timely manner. Improvements to the effectiveness of the work environment are identified and prioritized. Within reasonable boundaries, high priority improvements are implemented. Environmental conditions that would degrade or endanger the health or safety of the workforce are eliminated. Physical factors that would degrade work efficiency are addressed. Distractions in the work environment are identified and minimized.</p>

Goals

- Goal 1** **The physical environment and resources needed by the workforce to perform their assignments are made available.**
- Goal 2** **Distractions in the work environment are minimized.**
- Goal 3** **Work Environment practices are institutionalized to ensure they are performed as managed processes.**

Commitment to Perform

- Commitment 1** **The organization establishes and maintains a documented policy for conducting its Work Environment activities.**

Issues typically addressed in the policy include:

1. The organization's work environment is developed to support the business objectives and stated values of the organization.
2. Laws, regulations, and organizational policies governing the work environment are communicated to the workforce, administered, and enforced.

Guidance should be sought from human resources, legal, or other appropriate professionals in interpreting and administering these laws and regulations since they can have serious legal implications.

Examples of laws and regulations include the following:

- Safety-related laws and regulations, including those of safety-related regulatory agencies such as the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)
- Local building and fire codes
- Laws and regulations providing access for the physically challenged, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Other applicable national, state, or local laws and regulations

3. Adequate space is provided for performing assigned work.
4. Within prudent limits, the resources needed to perform assigned work are identified, prioritized, and made available.
5. Conditions that degrade the work environment are eliminated.
6. Distractions in the work environment are minimized.
7. Work Environment practices and activities comply with relevant laws, regulations, and organizational policies.

Commitment 2

An organizational role(s) is assigned responsibility for assisting and advising units on work environment-related activities, and for assuming appropriate organizational responsibilities for the physical work environment and work resources.

Examples of individuals or groups who may assist and advise on work environment-related activities, and assume appropriate organizational responsibilities, include the following:

- Committees on work environment conditions
- Management or staff committees
- Physical plant or facilities staff
- Telecommunications staff
- Computing facilities staff
- Financial staff
- Members of the human resources function or other appropriate professionals

Ability to Perform

Ability 1 **Within each unit, an individual (s) is assigned responsibility and authority for ensuring that Work Environment activities are performed.**

Ability 2 **Within prudent limits, adequate resources are provided for performing Work Environment activities, implementing the physical environment and resources necessary to perform assigned work, and making improvements to the work environment.**

Prudent limits are those that are determined by management and are based on considerations that might include the following:

- Responsible fiscal policies
- Sound management of the organization's resources
- Investment priorities
- Resources that would be expected to be available in a professional environment
- Resources that are available in competitors' environments
- Benchmarks of similar work environments

1. Documented business plans, budgets, or similar guidance are available that indicate the work to be assigned to each unit and the budget available for providing a physical work environment and other work-related resources.

2. Experienced individuals who have expertise in various aspects of the work environment are available for implementing an effective work environment.

Examples of contributions that could be made by those with special skills include the following:

- Designing and implementing effective work environments
- Analyzing needed resources for performing assigned work
- Analyzing impediments in the work environment
- Analyzing the potential benefits from automation
- Identifying resources that would improve performance
- Training in laws, regulations, and organizational policies governing the work environment

3. Adequate budget and resources are made available for implementing the physical environment and work resources that are needed for performing assigned work.
4. Funding to accomplish Work Environment activities is made available.
5. Adequate funding is made available for resources that would improve the work environment.
6. Support for implementing work environment improvements is made available.

Ability 3

The workforce receives the preparation needed to maintain an effective work environment.

Examples of work environment issues to be covered with the workforce include the following:

- Laws, regulations, and organizational policies governing the work environment
- Procedures for handling violations of laws, regulations, and organizational policies; and the responsible individual(s) to which such issues should be reported
- Procedures for reporting problems, acquiring or disposing of equipment, altering a workspace, or similar work environment issues
- Health and safety procedures
- How to use new equipment or workstations

Ability 4

Those responsible for improving the work environment receive the preparation in relevant methods and procedures needed to perform their responsibilities.

Examples of training in methods to improve the work environment include the following:

- Detailed information regarding laws, regulations, and organizational policies governing the work environment and how they are to be interpreted
- Remedies and procedures for handling violations of laws, regulations, organizational policies, and procedures related to the work environment
- Methods for assessing the work environment
- Methods for minimizing or eliminating impediments or distractions in the work environment
- Methods for aiding task performance with technology

Practices Performed

Practice 1

The physical environment and resources required to perform committed work are identified in each unit.

Analysis of the physical environment and work resources can be conducted at the organizational level in conjunction with analysis at the unit level. While many of the resources covered in these practices may be provided at the organizational level, the unit must be involved in comparing space and resources to committed and planned work to ensure that space and resources are adequate for performing the assigned work.

1. Work is analyzed to determine the type of physical environment and resources required to perform it.

Examples of the resources to be considered include the following:

- Individual workspace
- Group workspace
- Meeting space
- Support or production areas
- Telecommuting support
- Support for remote locations
- Storage
- Special characteristics of physical workspaces
- Furniture
- Production equipment
- Communication equipment
- Work materials
- Computers
- Supplies

2. The physical environment and resources needed to perform assigned work are compared to those currently available within the unit to determine unit needs.
3. A responsible individual(s) takes appropriate action to acquire workspace or resources needed to perform assigned work.

Examples of appropriate actions may include the following:

- Preparing budget requests for the needed physical environment or other resources
- Developing cost-benefit justifications for acquiring needed physical environment or other resources
- Coordinating actions needed to implement improvements, including documenting needed improvements, consulting with appropriate subject matter experts, and submitting purchase orders or requests for bids on improvements
- Negotiating with those responsible for managing building or computing facilities, distributing equipment or supplies, or other work environment-related resources

4. If the physical environment or other resources needed cannot be obtained, a responsible individual(s) develops a contingency plan that articulates performance risks and coordinates its implementation with all affected parties.

Practice 2

The physical environment required to perform assigned work is provided.

1. Adequate space is provided for performing assigned work.

Examples of space that could be important for performing assigned work include the following:

- Individual workspaces
- Spaces for group work
- Public spaces, such as conference rooms and meeting spaces
- Specialized workspaces, such as laboratories and training areas
- Support areas for production or storage

2. To the extent possible, the physical environment is designed and organized to support efficient performance of assigned work.
3. To the extent possible, culturally important issues are considered when organizing the physical environment.
4. Characteristics of the physical environment that are important for work performance are adjusted and, if necessary, monitored.

Examples of characteristics of the physical environment that could be important for work performance include the following:

- Security
- Visibility
- Noise
- Voice communication
- Airborne particulates

5. When aspects of an adequate physical environment cannot be provided, a contingency action is implemented.

Practice 3

Individual workspaces provide an adequate personal environment for performing assigned work responsibilities.

Individual workspaces provide:

1. Protected private space where personal effects, work tools, and products can be secured and stored as necessary.
2. Adequate desktop space for using tools and other resources in performing tasks and storing the work products produced.
3. Adequate illumination for performing work.
4. Sufficient isolation and noise protection to support the level of concentration needed to perform individual work.
5. Sufficient space to perform work activities alone or with a limited number of colleagues, as appropriate.

Practice 4**The resources needed to accomplish committed work are made available in a timely manner.**

1. Adequate physical and technical resources are provided for performing committed work.

Examples of physical and technical resources include the following:

- Office furniture and equipment
- Lighting
- Computers, workstations, or other computing equipment
- Application software (e.g., editors, word processing and document production tools, spreadsheets, and project management tools)
- Communications technologies, such as telephones, fax machines, modems, and electronic mail facilities
- Communications and office equipment for remote locations or telecommuting
- Printing and reproduction equipment
- Documentation
- Lab equipment
- Maintenance on resources
- Training equipment

2. Specialized resources that would normally be available for performing a specific type of work in most organizations are made available.

For example, in a software development organization, basic computational technology resources could include the following:

- Computers, workstations, or other computing equipment
- Networks
- Software development tools and environments
- Project management tools
- Electronic communications

3. Adequate staff support is provided.

Examples of staff support resources include the following:

- Business and administrative support
- Computer support personnel
- Technical writing and documentation support
- Lab technicians
- Clerical support

4. Resource and staff support needs are planned and provided on a periodic (e.g., annual) and event-driven (e.g., project initiation) basis.
5. When resources cannot be provided on a timely basis or at all, contingency actions are implemented.

Practice 5

Improvements are made to the work environment that improve work performance.

1. The work environment is periodically analyzed to identify changes or resources that could improve work performance.

This analysis could be a component of the analyses performed in Practice 1.

2. Potential improvements to the work environment are prioritized.

Complying with laws and regulations regarding access for the disabled or physically challenged, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act, may cause a higher priority to be placed on some improvements. Guidance should be sought from the human resources, facilities, legal, or other appropriate professionals in complying with such laws and regulations.

3. Within prudent limits, such as available budget, resources for high priority improvements are made available.
4. When implementing large, pervasive improvements across the workplace, improvements are planned and deployed.

5. When needed, support for or training in the use of newly deployed resources is made available.

Practice 6**Environmental factors that degrade or endanger the health or safety of the workforce are identified and corrected.**

1. Responsible individuals maintain awareness of conditions in the work environment that might affect the health or safety of individuals who might be exposed to them.

Examples of individuals who might exercise responsibility for maintaining awareness of work environment conditions include:

- Individuals responsible for buildings, facilities, and other physical resources
- Security staff
- Managers, supervisors, team leaders, and others with supervisory or leadership responsibility
- Individuals designated to monitor specific environmental conditions
- Individuals who conduct periodic inspections of the work environment

2. Responsible individuals report work environment conditions that would degrade or endanger health or safety to individuals who can address them.

Examples of environmental factors that degrade or endanger the health or safety of the workforce include the following:

- Unsafe working conditions
- Inadequate security
- Improper ergonomics
- Exposure to unhealthy substances
- Poor air or water quality
- Excessive stress

3. Responsible individuals identify and implement reasonable accommodations to protect the health or safety of the workforce while corrections are being made.

4. Responsible individuals monitor progress in correcting health or safety-related conditions to ensure they are corrected in a timely manner.

Practice 7

Physical factors that degrade the effectiveness of the work environment are identified and addressed.

1. Responsible individuals maintain awareness of the physical factors in the work environment that could degrade the performance of those exposed to these factors.

Examples of physical factors that could degrade the effectiveness of the work environment include the following:

- Inadequate office or meeting space
- Poor lighting
- Inadequate heating, ventilation, or cooling
- Unpleasant odors
- Vibration
- Excessive noise
- Crowding

2. Responsible individuals identify and take action to mitigate the effects of physical factors that could degrade the performance of individuals exposed to them.

Examples of actions that could be taken to mitigate the effects of physical factors in the work environment include the following:

- Correct the problem
- Provide resources that reduce the impact of the problem (e.g., fans or heaters for addressing inadequate temperature control)
- Communicate future intentions that would alleviate the problem (e.g., such as acquiring additional office space to reduce crowding)
- Make accommodations on an individual basis that allow individuals to make reasonable adjustments that reduce the impact of problems on their personal work

3. Responsible individuals monitor the performance of affected individuals to determine if additional actions need to be taken to mitigate the impact of physical factors.

4. If it is determined that it is not possible to effectively eliminate the impact of a physical factor, alternative mitigation strategies and solutions are pursued.

Practice 8

Sources of frequent interruption or distraction that degrade the effectiveness of the work environment are identified and minimized.

Examples of interruptions or distractions include the following:

- Telephone calls
- Excessive meetings
- Poorly organized work processes
- Unnecessary or excessive administrative tasks
- Work that could be performed by other, more appropriate, individuals
- Excessive socializing

Measurement and Analysis

Measurement 1

Measurements are made and used to determine the status and performance of Work Environment activities.

Examples of measurements include the following:

- Average area of individual workspaces in the work environment
- Average area of desktop surfaces in individual or group workspaces
- Utilization of shared public spaces, such as conference rooms
- Number of complaints or concerns raised about the work environment
- Number of violations of work environment laws or regulations
- Effectiveness of improvements on performance
- Percent of work affected by time distractions
- Percent of time spent in meetings
- Rate at which physical distractions are corrected
- Investment in work environment improvements

Measurement 2 Unit measures of Work Environment activities are collected and maintained.

1. Units collect data as Work Environment activities occur.
2. Measurements made to determine the status and performance of Work Environment activities are maintained.

Examples of reasons for maintaining measurements of Work Environment activities include the following:

- Periodic analysis to determine unit-level trends
- Aggregating data at the organizational level to develop organizational measures
- Analysis to determine organizational trends
- Evaluation of organizational trends

Verifying Implementation

Verification 1

A responsible individual(s) verifies that Work Environment activities are conducted according to the organization’s documented policies, practices, procedures, and, where appropriate, plans; and addresses noncompliance.

These reviews verify that:

1. Work Environment activities comply with the organization’s policies and stated values.
2. Work Environment activities comply with relevant laws and regulations.
3. Conditions in the work environment satisfy all applicable laws, regulations, and organizational policies
4. Improvements in the work environment are deployed in a timely and effective fashion.
5. Severe, especially physical, distractions are handled in a timely manner.
6. Noncompliance issues are handled appropriately.
7. Violations of laws and regulations are handled in a manner consistent with legal requirements.

Verification 2

Executive management periodically reviews the Work Environment activities, status, and results, including improvements to the work environment; and resolves issues.

These reviews verify:

1. Results from reviews of work environment.
2. Status of any violations of applicable laws and regulations.
3. The amount and effectiveness of improvements made in the work environment.
4. Progress in performing Work Environment activities, including installing improvements in the work environment.

5. Results from reviews of Work Environment practices and activities.

Refer to Verification 1 for information regarding reviews of Work Environment activities to ensure adherence to the following:

- Relevant laws and regulations
- Organizational policies, practices, and procedures

6. Status of resolution of noncompliance issues.
7. Trends related to work environment-related issues.
8. Effectiveness of Work Environment activities in achieving work environment results.

