Using DOD On-line checklist

During a presurvey meeting with one of our new carriers, we were talking about using our on- line checklist. This could be seen as the answers to the test, and some use it just that way. Others use it as a guideline to delve deeper into their respective programs. To create optimal solutions, we discussed taking the questions on the checklist and digging a little deeper.

Much like the root cause analysis above, we encourage companies to go a step or two further than just answering the questions on the checklist. The analysis of the questions is often more important than the answers themselves. In some cases, there are questions that are black and white, i.e., a question requiring a numerical answer that needs no further explanation. Most of the questions that are answered with yes/no, can, and should be taken a step further to explain the antecedents to that answer. The next question should be how can we prove it, do we have documentation to support our answer, or how do we quantify our answer? Without such an analytical process, carriers can have deficient processes even though they have followed the checklist.

A good example of this is in the technical publications department and the revision status of manuals. The question: <u>Maintenance Manuals; B. Does the carrier have an adequate technical manual program that ensures: 1. Manuals available for use are the most current? Currency is verified periodically? **</u>
(Just a side note: double asterisk ** after checklist items denote a common area we find discrepancies.)

Commonly managers in this area will state that they are under a revision service and that all manuals are as current as they can be. However, revision services should not be relied upon to keep manuals up to date. It is not uncommon for us to find outdated manuals that were supposed to have been maintained current by revision services. Carriers are dropped from mailing lists for one reason or another, revisions get lost in the mail, or any multitude of reasons could exist to explain where a revision went. Without a proactive process to ensure a redundant cross- verification, manuals often become outdated without technical publications managers knowing it. Without reaching back to the actual publisher periodically, manuals are <u>not verified current</u>.

Many carriers have in excess of 100 and sometimes thousands of manuals. When they find they must verify currency of all these manuals at once it becomes an overwhelming task for usually one or two tech-pub employees. To prevent tech-pub employees from being overwhelmed at the end of the year, it is often advantageous to verify a portion of the manual library on a weekly or monthly basis instead of trying to verify the entire library at once.

Finding, following, and adhering to the items in the DOD checklist is an admirable first step to a successful DOD survey. Simple reliance on the DOD checklist, however, without delving deeper into the derivations of your responses could leave your company lacking adequate systems. The DOD checklist is best utilized as a springboard to systemic analysis instead of a final solution.

Please keep the aforementioned items in mind not only when preparing for a DOD audit, but on a daily basis. Like all of you, we would like to continue to keep air carriers flying in the safest manner possible.