

CONCERN FOR ORDER (CO)

Concern for Order reflects an underlying drive to reduce uncertainty in the surrounding environment. It is expressed in such forms as monitoring and checking work or information, insisting on clarity of roles and functions, etc.

<i>This Means...</i>	<i>This Doesn't Mean...</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• learning all the rules and procedures required in your work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• having a general idea about how the work is to be done without being clear about the specifics
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• systematically checking through each element of work you have done to ensure it is correct	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• getting the job done quickly and hoping that most of the work is correct
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• checking with others when you are unsure how something should be handled	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• going ahead and taking a guess about what to do
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• keeping your records and documentation well organized and up-to-date	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• maintaining messy or incomplete records
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• monitoring your progress against goals and deadlines	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• assuming projects will progress according to plan and that others will inform you of any problems
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• taking the time to get a detailed understanding of the systems and programs relevant to your projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• understanding the "big picture" and letting someone else figure out the details

Level 1-2 Activities

Set your own quality goals.

- Develop your own personal philosophy on what quality is and what it means to your area/department.
- At the start of the day and after your breaks, set a quality goal based on your philosophy.

Reflection Tip:

* How do these quality goals impact the things you do? What additional things do you need to put in place to ensure that you achieve your quality goals?

Ask your Supervisor to identify someone who shows strong Concern for Order.

- Observe how he or she organizes and checks work.
- Ask them what they do to get good results.
- Use this individual as a role model.

Each morning, plan in detail what work you expect to complete for the day.

- Lists the tasks according to priority and determine the amount of time you expect to spend on each. Be realistic knowing that you will need to spend some time answering any phone calls or fielding questions from colleagues.
- Check off items as you complete them. Make sure that you do all the top priority items first and then move down the list.
- At the end of the day, review your list and determine how much you accomplish and how long it took to accomplish. Look for reasons which explain any large discrepancies between what you planned and what you actually accomplished. Either problem-solve around dealing with these reasons or change your future time plans accordingly.

Reflection Tip:

* After using this system for a week or two, reflect on any patterns that may be occurring in what you're not able to accomplish, and the associated reasons.

Show a general concern for order and quality.

- Clarify the following issues and review them with your leader to assess their completeness and quality:
 - ⇒ Goals
 - ⇒ Deadlines
 - ⇒ Tasks and subtasks
 - ⇒ Organization of subtasks
 - ⇒ Organization of subtasks into order of importance
 - ⇒ Required resources

- Fill in areas where there are gaps and monitor your progress accordingly.

Double check your work.

- Pick two days a week that you focus on this competency, for example, Tuesdays and Thursdays.
- Make a little sign, "I will double check my work today" and put it on your desk on those days.
- After a few weeks of this, you should be naturally double checking your work even on days when you don't put up the sign.

Reflection Tip:

- * Reflect on the impact that this activity has had on the quality of your work.

Set up a system to help control and check your work.

- Simple systems (paper and software based) can make a big difference in keeping your work under control and can lead to high quality. For example:
 - ⇒ project management software
 - ⇒ file management software
 - ⇒ checklists
- Discipline yourself to use these systems.

Reflection Tip:

- * Check with some of your colleagues to see what systems work for them.

Set time aside to organize your work and work area.

- The first step towards higher Concern for Order is to invest time in organizing your immediate work area.
- Set aside a little time each week to update your documentation, put your files in order, fill in administrative forms, etc.
- Beware of the very strong (and natural) temptation to postpone this activity indefinitely. People low in Concern for Order competency always find something more important than being orderly.
- Apply a variety of organizational tools such as: making a daily To Do list and prioritizing it, using an appointment calendar to manage time, creating a filing system for your personal documents, etc.

Identify a difficult part of your job where errors can easily occur or rework is often necessary.

- Set a goal for reducing the number of errors or the amount of rework required.
- Monitor your performance of the task regularly to achieve the goal.
- Keep a record of your progress.
- Motivate yourself to double check information.
- Ask for input from colleagues or stakeholders about inefficiencies and waste. Ask for suggestions for improvement.

Reflection Tip:

- * Are there any additional processes that you might be able to put in place that would assist you in improving quality?

Level 3-4 Activities

Clarify expectations of the work that is delegated to you.

- When accepting a new project or activity, clarify the expectations your immediate supervisor or stakeholder has of you. Identify all key deliverables and their expected delivery date.
- Write down what has been agreed upon, including some of the following, if applicable:
 - ⇒ instructions or guidelines needed in order to execute the work;
 - ⇒ the level of authority assigned;
 - ⇒ any interim progress reports and final reports required;
 - ⇒ the priorities of each activity;
 - ⇒ who will perform each activity or provide assistance;
 - ⇒ completion dates.
- When delegating tasks or projects to members of your work group, clarify your expectations of them in writing and monitor their progress regularly, keeping notes to assist you in reviewing their performance.

Reflection Tip:

- * Were there any key expectations that you missed this time, but would add to the list for next time?

Ask for regular feedback regarding you Concern for Order.

- Ask your Supervisor and/or colleagues if you are showing a high level of Concern for Order.
- For example, you could ask:
 - ⇒ "Can you think of any time I have made errors which could have been avoided?"
 - ⇒ "Am I crystal clear when I communicate about the work we are doing?"
 - ⇒ "Am I well organized in my work?"
 - ⇒ "Can you think of any time when others have made errors which I should have noticed?"
- If the feedback is good, take a moment to enjoy your success. If the feedback is poor, you know you must focus on improving.

Reflection Tip:

- * Are there any other critical areas in which you should ask for feedback?

Monitor your group's performance against milestones, quality standards or other goals you have set.

- Set milestones or goal deadlines and regularly assess your group against those deadlines. Beware of the tendency to be overly optimistic about how long each step will take.
- Regularly update the relevant people on the status of your work. If you think a problem outside your work area of responsibility may arise and that the problem will cause you to miss your deadlines, be sure to alert your manager.
- Seek feedback on your performance from whoever assigned the work.

Create your own systems to keep track of work.

- Set up simple systems to keep track of your work so that you can do a better job. For example, you may organize the flow of work on your best so it is easier to keep track of. Another example would be to create a form to track problems.

Proactively seek out ways to improve processes.

- Identify a specific project or routine in your daily activities and develop a more systematic way of achieving the required results.
- Investigate opportunities to mechanize or computerize routine, time consuming activities where feasible.

- Talk to others who have some knowledge in this area or have done similar kinds of things.

Reflection Tip:

- * Would others within your branch also benefit from the solution you have identified?

Identify the best practices that others use to manage time and monitor quality, and work with your manager to establish these within your working environment.

- Seek out best practices information from trade magazines, your (and your manager's) personal network of contacts, and from other departments or organizations.
- Find out how work processes can be set up, what works well, what does not work well, and why.
- Implement any processes identified as working well that you and your supervisor feel should be incorporated into your own work structure.

Reflection Tip:

- * Why might some of the practices work better than others within Government?