

## Blog on Issues List and Safety Reports

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There are several communications tools used in project management. The Issues list and Safety report are the two topics for this blog. Each of these communications tools is used to communicate problems. One identifies difficulties in accomplishing the project from the workers perspective; the other impacts the project from a managers liability and resource protections perspective. These communications tools inform stakeholders of the realization of risks.

### **Issues List**

The issues list is an ongoing list of problems that arise before, during and potentially after a project that require resolution to successfully complete the project. “The purpose of the issues list is to track project issues, to be able to stay on top of those issues [and] preventing them from negatively affecting the project” (Dow & Taylor, 2008, p. 393). They allow Project Managers (PM)s to be aware of, prioritize, track, manage and archive problems that have been identified in the project life cycle.

Many get confused by the similarity between Issues and Risks. The main difference is that an Issue is something that has occurred a risk is something that may occur (Dow & Taylor, 2008, p. 395). When placed in context of time the issue can be something that has happened or is happening, past or present. Whereas risks are things that may happen in the future.

All projects have issues; not communicating them to all stakeholders limits the resource pool of ideas for resolution and could prevent the PM from resolving the issue; potentially placing the project at risk. Issues list need to be available for all to see and report on.

The Issues list is not difficult put together. As with all communications tools the PM talks with the stakeholders to find out the best way to present the list and allow it to added to or updated. Then develop a list containing: the issue, date it was noticed, a description of the

problem and the impact it will have on the project, a status area i.e. (open, closed, being addressed by), and what resolutions was agreed on. This is just a basic idea of items that can be on the list. Each organization is different and the list may vary somewhat.

Table 1

### Sample of Issues list

Issue	Date	Description	Impact	Status	Resolution
Damaged materials	10 Dec 2016	Several boards delivered to work site unusable	Material shortage may delay project completion	Being worked by Procurement office	
Concrete not Curing fast enough	8 Dec 2016	Due to lower temp concrete curing time was extended two days.	2 day Project delay framing start date	closed	Additional framer used to make up the time difference.
Paint Contractor backed out	8 Dec 2016	Paint contractor lost labor force	Project cannot be completed	Open	

Although Issues Lists deal with the present and past problems documentation can help the PM prevent or prepare for the possibility on future projects. Some issues may be arbitrary and not expected to recur but problems some like reliability or performance such as poor contractors, suppliers, or materials may be avoided by finding different sources or utilizing different procedures. Issues and their resolution may be included in the lessons learned.

### Safety Report

“There are two [general] types of safety reports for projects” (Dow & Taylor, 2008, p. 699). One is an accident incident and issue report the other is a summary of the first and how it impacts the project. Given there are two different reports the customers receiving the reports will be different. When developing a format for the reports the PM considers who will be receiving the information and who will be reporting it.

The first report can be a template format and should be much more complex than Issues Report. The information should include things like an in-depth narrative of the issue or incident,

who was injured, the type of injury sustained, who is submitting the report and immediate actions to mitigate the issue, was first responder services needed. etc. Templates can be found online from Occupational Safety and Health Administration

[https://www.osha.gov/dte/grant\\_materials/fy11/sh-22224-11/3\\_Accident\\_Investigation\\_Form.pdf](https://www.osha.gov/dte/grant_materials/fy11/sh-22224-11/3_Accident_Investigation_Form.pdf), or the *Project Management Communications Bible*, on page 448 Figure 12.11 (Dow & Taylor, 2008).

There are some critical reason for this report first and foremost to resolve safety issues, secondly to “provide a record of those safety occurrences, infractions, and issues on a project” (Dow & Taylor, 2008, p442), lastly to inform stakeholders of the incidents, resolution and potential liability. The PM is responsible for compiling and distributing the information related to safety reports. The PM may work with the Safety Manager to for compilation of the data but It is ultimately their responsibility to ensure the information is complete.

Although “[the] safety report is not normally project related, because it focusses on the specific detail of the accident only” (Dow & Taylor, 2008, p. 699), they are track as if they were, because stakeholders, team members, inspectors, media and government officials will all be actively reviewing and assessing these safety issues to conclusion. (Dow & Taylor, 2008, p. 699)

Both of these reports provide communication in multiple direction within the communications chain. The information needs to be accurate, resolutions prioritized, and documentation archived. All stakeholder have an important role in the outcome and potential consequences of safety problems.

References

Dow, W., & Taylor, B. (2008). Project Management Communications Bible. Indianapolis, IN:  
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