Safety & Occupational Health Specialist (GS-0018) Competency Model (Suggested)

[Note: This competency model framework allows for the development of a customized GS-0018 competency model using technical competencies suggested by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and NOAA foundational competencies.]

This suggested competency model is designed to help you select the most applicable competencies to your position. Every position has unique requirements; most positions in a job series have similar technical competencies, but the general competencies will vary.

Each competency in this model includes a definition and key behaviors. The definition provides clarity about what is meant by the name of the competency. The key behaviors are examples of observable actions that one might demonstrate with this competency.

Step 1: Identify Technical Competencies Applicable to Your Position

The competencies listed below are the suggested competencies for individuals working in the Safety and Occupational Health Specialist job function:

1. Biomedical Research Facilities Knowledge

Proactively identifies and corrects potential biomedical hazards from an understanding of facility design and operation.

Key Behaviors

- Conducts risk assessments associated with research facility operations.
- Identifies potential hazards in the design and construction of research facilities.
- Identifies health and safety requirements needed for specific documents (for products and equipment), design drawings (for construction and renovations), and contracts (for statements of work for services).

2. Federal and Departmental Policies and Procedures Knowledge
Understand and applies knowledge of Federal and Departmental statutes, regulations, policies, and procedures.

**Key Behaviors:**

- Maintains comprehensive working knowledge of related statutes, regulations, policies, and procedures affecting assigned areas.
- Ensures work conforms to statutes, regulations, policies, and procedures and is completed within established timeframes.
- Provides advice and guidance concerning statutes, regulations, policies, and procedures.

3. Occupational Health and Safety Knowledge

Applies knowledge of occupational health and safety principles, techniques and practices to biomedical research activities, and to identifying and controlling physical, chemical, biological and animal hazards.

**Key Behaviors**

- Reviews accident reports to determine the likely causes of personal injuries.
- Recommends actions to minimize the risks associated with biomedical research.
- Conducts investigations of personal injuries, illnesses and property damage to determine potential causes.
- Conducts surveys of laboratories, patient care areas, animal care facilities and other work areas to identify potential hazards.
- Develops and recommends measures to eliminate and control hazards and risks associated with biomedical research.
- Identifies regulated hazards and refers to appropriate workgroup for surveillance.
- Collaborates with researchers to ensure that hazards have been controlled.

4. Influence and Negotiating

Uses persuasion to gain the support and cooperation from stakeholders, superiors, colleagues, subordinates and other parties to achieve a desired course of action consistent with the organization’s strategic goals and objectives.

**Key Behaviors**
• Demonstrates ability to influence others when appropriate.
• Maintains an awareness of goals and objectives and navigates solutions towards desired ends, while maintaining relationships and supporting consensus.
• Uses all available information appropriately to guide decisions and negotiations to meet objectives, while acting with integrity.

5. Communications

Delivers clear, effective communication and takes responsibility for understanding others.

Key Behaviors

• Clearly and effectively conveys information verbally.
• Asks appropriate questions.
• Organizes, expresses, and communicates ideas clearly in writing.
• Listens actively; asks clarifying questions and summarizes or paraphrases what others have said to verify understanding.
• Ensures that regular communication occurs based on the needs of the work, the individual, management or the situation.
• Uses analogies, visuals, and other techniques to tailor communications to specific audiences.
• Identifies and uses effective communication channels and methods (e.g., presentations, electronic dissemination, social media).
• Utilizes skill in presenting information, analysis, ideas and positions in a clear, succinct, accurate, convincing manner, as is appropriate with the audience.

6. Program Management

Designs, implements and manages multiple or ongoing programs/projects, and directs the related resources, personnel and activities.

Key Behaviors

• Provides leadership and creative solutions to program planning and problem solving.
• Directs the analysis/evaluation efforts that will ultimately translate into efficient and effective programs.
• Works with individuals within own organization and across other organizations to plan, schedule and ensure execution of program activities.
• Manages resources within budget.
• Hires, assigns, coordinates and supervises program personnel.
• Monitors program effectiveness, providing reporting as necessary.

Step 2: Identify Non-Technical Competencies Applicable to Your Position

NOAA Foundational Competencies

Foundational competencies are the knowledge and skills important across all occupations in an organization.

Knowledges:

1. Bureau-specific mission, vision, goals and values – Knowledge of the mission, vision, goals, and values that drive the organization and influence all organizational decision-making processes.

2. Bureau-specific policies and procedures – Knowledge of the policies and procedures for conducting business, and developing products and services, considering stewardship of public resources.


Skills:

4. Coordination – Facilitate effective work processes by ensuring that roles and responsibilities are understood, synchronizing activities with others, and recommending process improvements.

5. Information Gathering – Gather information from all applicable sources, such as subject matter experts, organizational representatives, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), manuals, other employee guidance, books, and the Internet and intranet.

6. Judgment and Decision-Making – Make sound, well-informed, and objective decisions; perceive the impact and implications of decisions; commit to action to accomplish organizational goals.

7. Leveraging Diversity – Respect, understand, and value individual differences to achieve the vision and mission of the organization; hold self and others accountable for achieving results.
that embody the principles of diversity; leverage the talents of all employees, customers, stakeholders, and other constituents to achieve business and maximum effectiveness.
8. **Oral Communication** – Express information to individuals or groups effectively, taking into account the audience and nature of the information; listen to others, attend to nonverbal cues, and respond appropriately.

9. **Partnering** – Develop networks and build alliances with customers, vendors, and other partners to meet mission requirements and provide services and products by collaborating across boundaries.

10. **Problem Solving** – Identify problems; determine the relevance and usefulness of information for addressing problems; use sound judgment to generate and evaluate alternatives to make recommendations and take necessary action.

11. **Quality Focus** – Conduct timely reviews of products, services, or processes to evaluate quality or performance.

12. **Teamwork** – Work with others to achieve goals; facilitate cooperation, trust, and group identity; foster commitment and team spirit; manage and resolve conflicts.

13. **Written Communication** – Compose written materials in a succinct and organized manner; use correct English grammar, punctuation, and spelling; produce written information, which may include