SUMMARY FOR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES

Before you fund another pair of eyes, find out who can act on what they see

Most requests that reach an executive after a serious event ask for more visibility: another supervisor, another observer, another camera. In the four investigations we reread, the warning had already arrived. What was missing was a person with the authority, the competence and the time to act on it.

The decision

RECOMMENDATION Require every request for an additional supervisor, observer or camera to name three things: the protective duty that is uncovered, its deadline, and the person with authority to act. Apply the same test to any proposal to reduce cover.

Why this test

FACT At Texas City in 2005, one board operator ran three units during a start-up, and the supervisor left the site at 10:47 with no replacement. An earlier assessment had recommended a second board operator for start-ups.[1]

FACT In Florida in 2018, cracks in a bridge were documented for 19 days. Five parties could have stopped work or closed the road beneath it. None did.[2]

INFERENCE More observation would have changed neither event. Both needed a named person who was free to act and knew the decision was theirs.

Five findings

1. Research gives no staffing ratio. FACT The UK regulator's staffing method for process plants states that it is not designed to calculate a minimum or optimum number of staff.[5] The one construction study we found describes practice and does not establish a causal minimum.[7]

2. Coverage fails by the interval. INFERENCE A roster that is adequate on average can leave one qualified person owing two exclusive duties for fifteen minutes.

3. Diagnosis and restriction are different jobs. FACT At Chevron Richmond in 2012, people worked at a leak for about 2 hours 40 minutes. Some suggested shutting the unit down. Nobody formally used stop-work authority.[3]

4. A visit that changes nothing does harm. FACT In a randomised study across 19 hospitals, a senior-manager walk-round programme lowered staff ratings of improvement on average.[8]

5. Repair time is the wrong clock. INFERENCE What matters to the person at risk is how long work continued with the control failed or unknown. Few organisations report it.

© 2026 Riskopilot · riskopilot.com · contact@riskopilot.com · CC BY-ND 4.0

SUMMARY FOR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES

Three instruments, and what each one tells you

EXHIBIT A

What to ask for, who does it and what comes back

INSTRUMENT	QUESTION IT ANSWERS	WHO DOES THE WORK	WHAT COMES BACK TO YOU
1. Duty-coverage review Part 3	On the busiest shift, is every protective duty covered by a qualified person who is free and close enough?	Planner and technical authority, with the trades and a worker representative.	The intervals where a duty is uncovered, and the cheapest way to cover or remove each one.
2. The two clocks Part 4	Were people protected in time, and how long did work continue with the control failed or unknown?	Shift leads keep the record. An independent verifier samples it.	Hours exposed, hours under restriction, and the releases that came before the evidence.
3. Reserved decisions Part 5	Which of your own decisions removed a protective duty, and who owns the consequence?	The executive who signs the budget, schedule or contract.	A signed record of the duty affected, the alternative priced and the shift on which it was checked.

RECOMMENDATION Riskopilot proposal. The instruments are management methods. None has been validated against injury outcomes.

What to sign

RECOMMENDATION A 90-day review at one bounded operation, on its most demanding shift, for one recurring impairment of a critical control. Name the site director as sponsor and the technical authority as verifier. Pay workers and contractors for the time they take part.

A rule that any change to budget, schedule or roster names the protective duty it touches before it takes effect.

A weekly report that separates hours exposed from hours safely stopped.

What to refuse

RECOMMENDATION A staffing request justified by a ratio or a benchmark. Ask which duty, on which shift, at what time.

A deputy who has never been tested with the principal absent.

An impairment extended for a third time without a funded repair date.

A closed action whose only evidence is the signature that closed it.

A contract under which the contractor who stops a job pays for the delay.

By Bruno Hounkpati, CEO and former VP HSE. Gold numbers and page numbers refer to the full report, “Who can act in time”, Riskopilot Research, November 2026.

© 2026 Riskopilot · riskopilot.com · contact@riskopilot.com · CC BY-ND 4.0

SUMMARY FOR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES

Ninety days, one operation, one written decision

DAYS	OWNER	WORK	GATE
1 to 15	Site director and a worker representative	Choose one critical activity and one recurring impairment. Map who decides what. Sample nights as well as days.	A signed baseline and a list of decisions nobody owns.
16 to 30	Planner and technical authority	Map duties by interval on the busiest shift, with deputies, travel and simultaneous work. Compare added cover, resequencing and redesign.	An approved change with a fallback and stated hold conditions.
31 to 60	Shift leads and an independent reviewer	Rehearse one absence, one contractor substitution, one system outage and one production dispute. Keep the two clocks.	Any missed duty or unauthorised release restricts the work it concerns.
61 to 90	Executive sponsor	Review cost, verified improvement, what workers report and whether exposure moved to another shift or contractor.	Adopt within limits, redesign, extend or withdraw. Name the owner and the review date.

The first question for the executive committee

RECOMMENDATION Ask for one recent event in which a worker raised a concern and the business changed the schedule, the design or the allocation of resources. Then ask for the field evidence that protection improved.

If none can be traced, commission a joint review of the last three impairments of a critical control.

What this will cost

INFERENCE Planning time, paid participation and one independent reviewer. We give no figure, because we have none that we could defend.

What it cannot tell you

INFERENCE Whether injuries will fall. One operation over 90 days does not have enough events. It can tell you whether a duty was uncovered, whether a deputy could act, and how many hours work continued exposed.

What would change our advice

A controlled study linking a staffing level, or a named authority structure, to serious-injury outcomes in construction, mining or heavy industry. We found none. If one appears, the duty-coverage review should start from its numbers.

© 2026 Riskopilot · riskopilot.com · contact@riskopilot.com · CC BY-ND 4.0