



# OPERATOR ROUNDS

## TOOLBOX TALK: Operator Rounds

RATTLIR Safety Series – "Strike Before It Bites"

### Purpose

Operator rounds are one of the most important proactive defenses against equipment failures, safety hazards, and reliability issues. Consistent, disciplined rounds help identify abnormal conditions before they escalate, improve operational awareness, and ensure compliance with plant procedures and environmental requirements.

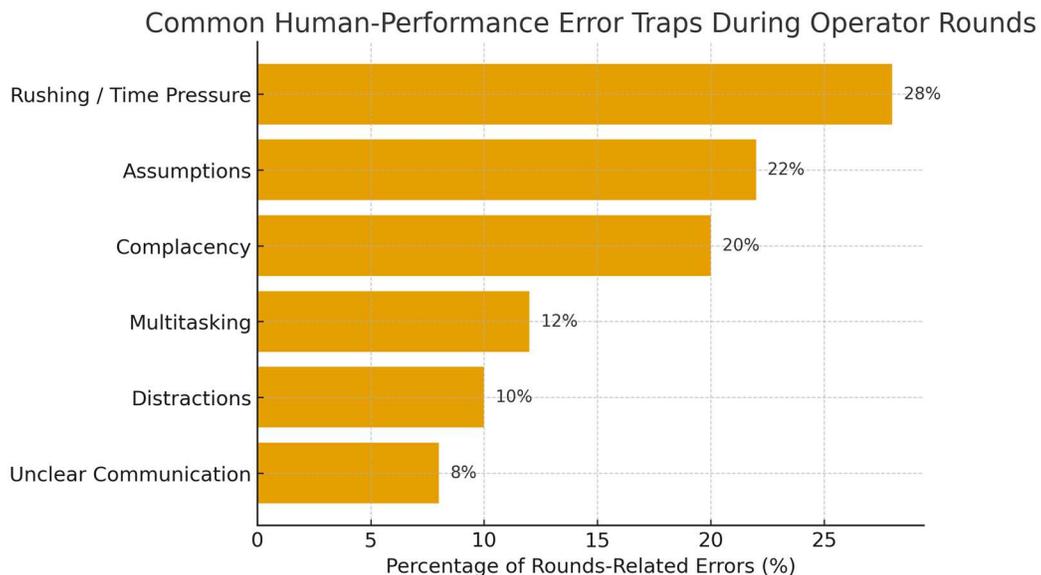


Figure 1 – Common Human-Performance Error Traps During Operator Rounds

### The Importance of Operator Rounds

Operator rounds provide early detection of abnormal conditions and help maintain safe and efficient plant operations:

- Identifying leaks, unusual noises, abnormal smells, or visible equipment damage.
- Monitoring temperatures, pressures, vibration, and other vital parameters.
- Ensuring lubrication systems, cooling systems, and support equipment are functioning properly.
- Recognizing housekeeping or access issues that could escalate into safety hazards.



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## Power-Plant-Specific Equipment Checks

Rounds in power-generation environments must include deliberate observation of high-energy and critical systems:

- Steam and condensate systems for leaks, insulation condition, and unusual venting.
- HRSG and boiler structures for hot spots, abnormal noises, or drain/vent issues.
- Turbine decks for vibration, lube oil conditions, and unusual thermal expansion.
- Electrical rooms and switchgear for hot smells, breaker alignment, and indicator status.
- Environmental systems including sumps, drains, emissions equipment, and chemical systems.

## Human-Performance Considerations During Rounds

Operator rounds require strong human-performance behaviors to prevent oversight and ensure accurate reporting:

- Use STAR (Stop-Think-Act-Review) before interacting with equipment.
- Avoid assumptions – verify indications, readings, and equipment status.
- Reduce multitasking; complete one observation before moving on.
- Document findings immediately to avoid forgetting critical details.
- Perform peer checks or verification when reporting abnormal conditions.

## Rounds Discipline and Documentation Accuracy

Reliable operator rounds rely on consistent execution, attention to detail, and accurate logs:

- Follow the designated route without skipping equipment or taking shortcuts.
- Take the time to pause, observe, and listen at each piece of equipment.
- Capture exact gauge readings, not estimates or assumptions.
- Report abnormal conditions immediately – do not wait until the end of the shift.
- Ensure handhelds, radios, and flashlights are functional before starting rounds.

## Escalation and Reporting Requirements

Clear and timely communication ensures abnormalities are addressed before they escalate:

- Notify the control room or supervisor when abnormal or unsafe conditions are found.
- Use three-way communication to ensure your message is understood correctly.
- Escalate immediately when conditions involve safety systems, steam leaks, electrical hazards, or equipment overheating.



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## Discussion Questions

- Do you understand what abnormal conditions to look for during operator rounds?
- Are you aware of how human-performance traps can affect the quality of your rounds?
- Do you have the correct tools, route information, and communication equipment for today's rounds?

## RATTLIR Takeaway

Operator rounds are the frontline defense against equipment failures, safety hazards, and operational disruptions. By applying human-performance principles, maintaining disciplined observation habits, and escalating concerns early, workers prevent small abnormalities from becoming major events. RATTLIR strikes before it bites by promoting proactive detection, deliberate observation, and accurate communication during every round.