EML Team Building

Turbine Trouble

The 15-Minute Investigation

- **Who it's for:**
  Graduate & apprentice cohorts, project teams, leadership groups, induction and H&S sessions. Works solo or in groups of 2–6.

- **When to run it:**
  As a short, self-contained taster of evidence-reading, root-cause thinking and safety culture.

- **Purpose:**
  Reveals how teams read evidence, separate blame from cause, and spot the gap between reporting a problem and acting on it.

- **Running Time:**
  15 minutes (including the reveal).

CREATED BY:

EML Team Building
(www.emlteambuilding.co.uk)

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Executive Summary

Overview

Use this Turbine Trouble taster when you want to:

- Run a short team-building session
- Sharpen group decision-making and evidence-reading
- Introduce root-cause and safety-culture thinking
- Energise a training day with an interactive task
- Spark a conversation about how reports get actioned — or don't

Purpose

The activity builds collaborative investigation skills: reading real-format documents under pressure, separating individual blame from systemic cause, and managing differing opinions to reach a shared view. It also opens an honest conversation about how a working *reporting* culture can sit alongside a broken *acting* culture.

Materials

- Printed statement & evidence pages — one set per group, and a pen.
- A visible timer (a phone is fine).
- The answer pages (*What Really Happened* onwards) kept aside until the reveal.

How to run it

Keep a calm, neutral, curious tone — guide the process rather than leading the group. Keep everyone contributing, hold the timings, and save the answers until the end.

15-MINUTE PLAY SHEET

Time	Stage	Purpose	Facilitator notes
0–4 mins	**Set up & read**	Hand out the brief and three statements	Keep it light — everyone's a detective, and there are no wrong answers yet.
4–11 mins	**Investigate**	Work through the two documents and list what went wrong	Aim to agree the *one* finding the team would put at the top of the report.
11–15 mins	**Reveal & talk**	Compare with the answers and draw out the lesson	Land the point: the difference between a report being made and a report being acted on.

Turbine Trouble: The Investigation

The Scenario

Wednesday morning. Glen Arran wind farm, in the Scottish Highlands. **Roy Burns** — an agency worker on his third day on site — is found unconscious at the base of Turbine 7. An ambulance is called. He survives, but he is seriously injured.

Three people who were on site that week have given their account. None of them admits fault. Most of them describe colleagues. All of them, in their own words, reveal more than they realise.

The Task

You are the investigation team. Read the three statements and the two site documents, then:

- Identify everything that went wrong, or should have been done differently.
- Back each finding with who was responsible and the evidence for it.
- Agree the **one** finding you would put at the very top of the report.

The Rules

- Agree as a team — talk it through rather than voting.
- Everyone contributes; no looking anything up.
- Read carefully — the documents confirm some accounts and quietly contradict others.
- Look for how the decisions *added up*, not for a single villain.

The Witness Statements

Read each account against the others — they corroborate, and they quietly contradict.

Bonnie Sinclair

Operations Coordinator, Glen Arran Renewables

I coordinate operations here — scheduling, contractors, the daily ops board. Tuesday was busy. Heather, our H&S officer, was away on her IOSH refresher, so a chunk of her diary had landed back on me. We all muck in.

Roy, the agency lad, started Monday. Angus had walked him round and given him the basics. Wednesday morning was meant to be a quiet one for him: perimeter checks and a visual round of the T7 base. Honestly, it's a job I'd give to a school-leaver. He had a radio, the checklist on a clipboard and my mobile, so I didn't think twice about sending him out on his own. It's a checklist round, not a climb.

Did I check the lone-working risk assessment before I sent him? Look — I know what's on it. We reviewed it a couple of years back. The site hasn't materially changed.

Duncan I trust completely. His RAMS were on Angus's desk Tuesday morning and Angus signed them off, so as far as I'm concerned that box is ticked. I did notice Tuesday afternoon that Duncan was up on the T7 platform without his hard hat — he'd taken it off in the heat. I shouted up and reminded him; he waved and put it back on. That's the sort of thing you handle on the day. You don't need to write it up.

Wednesday at twenty past seven I walked out the back to take the bins and that's when I saw him. Roy. At the base of T7, on his side, hard hat about three metres away on the gravel. I called the ambulance, then Angus, and knelt with him until the paramedics came up the track.

Duncan Brodie

Subcontract Rope Access Technician, Brodie Rope Access Ltd

I run a small rope-access team — three of us, all IRATA Level 3. I've worked with Glen Arran on and off for six years now. Good site.

We came in Tuesday for a planned job on T7. I'd sent the method statement and RAMS over to Angus the week before. Tuesday morning we went through it over a cup of tea and he countersigned it there at the table. Was that the proper process? **Probably not** — the H&S officer should be in that conversation. But Heather wasn't in, and Angus and I have done this dance maybe twenty times. The job doesn't change.

There's something that's been bothering me. Tuesday afternoon, late — maybe four o'clock — I was finishing up on the platform and I felt a vibration in the tower. Not the normal hum. A flutter, a rhythmic thing in the steel I could feel through my harness more than hear. Lasted maybe forty seconds, then settled. I called it down to Fraser in the control room. He said he could see a small spike on the SCADA but it had cleared. I asked him to log it. He said he would. I came down and didn't think more about it.

Earlier I'd seen Bruce with his clipboard for the monthly T7 inspection. He said, "I'll do the walk-round, the rest of it's fine, you've been all over it today." At the time I didn't think anything of it. Looking back — the monthly inspection is a specific list of checks. A walk-round at the base isn't the same thing.

Wednesday morning we were back at quarter past seven. I saw Roy heading off toward T7 on his own, clipboard in hand. I assumed someone was going to join him. It didn't occur to me he was going alone — or I'd have walked out with him until my crew was ready.

Angus Munro

Site Manager, Glen Arran Renewables

I've been site manager at Glen Arran for going on fourteen years and I've never had so much as a sprained ankle on my watch until this.

Roy turned up Monday. Agency lad, decent handshake. I drove him round in the works pickup, showed him the layout and which turbines were live and which weren't. The full induction's a twenty-minute job — paperwork, signatures, the lot — but Heather was away, so I gave him the gist and said she'd do the formal sign-off when she was back Wednesday. He seemed sharp enough. I wouldn't put a fool out near a turbine.

Duncan was on site Tuesday for the rope-access work. He's a known quantity. He brought in his method statement and RAMS, and I gave it the once-over with him over a cup of tea and countersigned. Quicker that way. He knows what he's doing better than half the suits who write the paperwork in the first place.

The control room had flagged something on T7 — a couple of vibration alarms — but Fraser cleared them, said it was a known transient, a wind-shear thing we get when the gusts are up. The lads in the control room know that turbine inside out.

Wednesday at twenty past seven Bonnie phoned me at home. I drove in. The ambulance was already there.

> *"I'll tell you straight: there's a lot of folk now who think Health and Safety means filling in a form. I'm not one of them. If you're asking whether I've cut a corner here or there in fourteen years — I'd be a liar to say no. We all do. That's the job."*
>
> **— Angus Munro**

The Evidence

Two documents have been pulled from the site office. Read them against what the witnesses told you.

DOCUMENT 1

SCADA Event Log — Turbine T7

System: GlenSys-WS v6.2 (installed 6 years ago; baseline calibration unchanged since installation). Automatic escalation threshold: 1.5 above baseline sustained over 2 minutes, **or** any reading above 2.0 instantaneous.

Time	Level	Reading	Operator note
Mon 22:18	**WARN**	Lateral 1.2 above baseline, 47s, returned	"Wind-shear related, no escalation required per threshold table." — F. Drummond
Mon 23:41	**WARN**	Lateral 1.4 above baseline, 1m 11s, returned	"Same as previous, gusts continuing." — F. Drummond
Tue 16:04	**WARN**	Lateral 0.3 above baseline, 35s, returned	"Transient observation. D. Brodie reported via radio from platform, requested log entry. Below escalation threshold. No further action." — F. Drummond
Tue 23:54	**WARN**	Lateral 0.8 above baseline, 22s, returned	(no annotation)
Wed 03:12	**WARN**	Lateral 1.1 above baseline, 41s, returned	(no annotation)
Wed 05:47	**WARN**	Lateral 1.6 above baseline, 1m 18s, returned	"Threshold marginal — 0.1 above sustained limit, 18s short of trigger. Borderline. Logged for day-shift review." — D. Scott
Wed 07:23	**ALARM**	**Lateral 2.4 instantaneous — emergency stop, automatic shutdown, brake engaged**	**Tower inspection required before restart. Site supervisor auto-paged.**

Note: six T7 vibration events in roughly 33 hours, growing in size, none individually tripping the alarm — until 07:23. Day shift arrived after the trip.

DOCUMENT 2

Site Induction Record — Roy Burns

Engaged via Highland Industrial Recruitment Ltd (agency). Engaged as General Site Operative — perimeter, visual inspection, welfare support. Start date: Monday of the accident week. Each item must be initialled by both inductee and inductor.

#	Induction item	Completed
1	Site walk-round and orientation	**Signed (Mon)**
2	Welfare facilities and emergency assembly point	**Signed (Mon)**
3	Site rules — written copy issued and read	**— not done —**
4	Permit-to-work system	**— not done —**
5	Lone working procedure	**— not done —**
6	Working at height policy	**— not done —**
7	Safe isolation (LOTO) procedure	**— not done —**
8	PPE issue and recording	**— not done —**
9	Toolbox talk attendance	**— not done —**
10	Safety video — viewed in cabin	**— not done —**
11	First aid arrangements and first aider identified	**— not done —**
12	Site rules — signed acknowledgement	**— not done —**
13	Inductor sign-off and inductee declaration	**— not done —**

Pencil note in the margin (handwriting matches H. Reid): "Booked in for Wed AM — H.R"

Investigation Sheet

As a team, list what you found. Note who was responsible and the evidence for it — then star the one finding you'd put at the very top of the report.

What went wrong	Who	Evidence

★ **The one thing we'd put at the top of the report:**

What Really Happened

Roy Burns was sent alone to the base of Turbine 7 for a routine check — against a lone-working risk assessment years out of date, with an induction that was barely started, beside a turbine that had been quietly signalling a developing fault for over a day. **He survived because he was lucky, not because anything worked as it should.**

Finding	Who / where	Why it matters
Roy was sent out alone	Bonnie	A perimeter round at a turbine base, with nobody checking a lone-working risk assessment that hadn't been reviewed in years.
His induction was barely started	Document 2	Only 2 of 13 items signed. He'd never been taken through lone working, working at height or safe isolation. "The basics" meant a drive-round.
The turbine was failing — and nobody escalated it	Duncan + Doc 1	Duncan felt a real vibration and asked for it to be logged; it was logged as a "transient" and left there. Six events built over 33 hours; the 05:47 warning was marked "for day-shift review" — but day shift arrived after the trip.
Work above that area was signed off through a broken process	Angus + Duncan	The contractor's RAMS were countersigned by the site manager alone, over a cup of tea, with no H&S review. Both knew it wasn't right and did it anyway, "twenty times."
A safety breach was "handled on the day"	Bonnie + Duncan	Working at height without a hard hat was dealt with verbally and never recorded — so it never became a pattern anyone could see.
Genuine warnings get normalised	Document 1	The SCADA baseline is six years old and never recalibrated, so real deviations get waved off as "the system catching up."

The three things most responsible

1. **The turbine was failing and the warning signals were never escalated.**
2. **Roy was sent out alone, untrained, into a hazardous location.**
3. **Work above that area was authorised through a sign-off process everyone knew was broken.**

The Point & Debrief

> **A report is made** — the vibration, the missing induction, the dodgy sign-off, the hard hat. **A report is received** — it's logged, noted, "booked in for Wednesday." **A report is not actioned.**
>
> *This site had a working reporting culture and a broken acting culture. The thing that hurt Roy wasn't one person's decision — it was many small ones, in a place where the habit of acting on reports had quietly worn away.*

Run the debrief

- **Set the tone:** This is about learning, not judging. Nobody in the story is reckless — every decision had a defensible reason.
- **First reactions:** What stood out? Which account did you trust most — and were you right to?
- **Blame vs cause:** Did the team name a person first, or a pattern? What changed once you read the documents?
- **The mirror:** In your team, this week — name one thing somebody reported that nothing happened to. Don't say it out loud. Just hold it in mind.

Enjoyed this? Make it the full hour.

This is a 15-minute taste of the full **Turbine Trouble** investigation: ten witnesses, twelve site documents, four primary causes and a facilitated debrief built to land in your own workplace. It runs as a one-hour session for any group size, and slots into a wider Team Unity workshop on communication and behaviours under pressure.

Contact EML Team Building:

+44 (0)1905 330660

info@emlteam.com

www.emlteambuilding.co.uk