

## Multiple General Comments

Have you and your safety steering committee ever needed more places to enter free-form text comments than SOPA could give you? And more to the point, have we ever suggested that only solution we had was for you to put several kinds of unrelated information into the (single) General Comments field? There's good news! We have expanded the number of General Comments fields from one to four, and each of them can have its own name! Now, if it's what your committee wants, we can modify your checklist forms to include items like Hazardous Conditions, Task Observed, or any other bit of unstructured text you think would be helpful to your BBS process.



## Pros and Cons of Storing Text

Up to now, SOPA could store text in a limited number of places: next to each behavior item on the checklist (to explain concerns for that behavior) and in the General Comments field. The marks for Safe, Concern and Feedback Given are binary, and that's what computers are best at. Reports and charts like the pareto charts for Safe are only possible for simple data. "Defined Factors," which have several possible values in a list, or the Context data in the header of the observation, can also be used to filter reports *via* Optional Selectors. But, there's only one report that can show free unstructured text, and that's the Comments and Concerns report. That kind of data is incompatible with most of the charts built into SOPA, so we tended to discourage it in the past.

But there is value for the committee in unstructured text data! Ideally, a valuable comment will lead to an action item for the committee and management. And that value is enhanced when comments can be segregated into as many as four types of general comment. As you will see below, we have made it easy to turn an observer's comment into an action item, so that it can be assigned and acted upon. (Just keep in mind that adding more requirements for the observer unnecessarily increases their effort and may negatively impact participation rates, so consider making the new fields optional instead of mandatory.)

*With as many as four general comment areas, observers can now enter several types of targeted comment that your safety steering committee would really like to see.*

## How To See the Comments

The new "General Comments" data for up to four types of comment is available in the same way as the one General Comments field we have had up to now.

1. When you call up a particular observation, it will be displayed just as it was entered at the time of the observation.
2. It will be compiled along with other comments in the Comments and Concerns (C&C) report, where the committee can see *all* observer comments.

The point we alluded to earlier is that the ultimate value of an observer's

comments is to improve the safety of the organization, and to do that, it must turn into an action item. SOPA makes that conversion easy, in the C&C report!

May 01, 2017	Charlotte Budget	The vendor scrap cart handle sticks to far in aisle way. Could cause safety hazard, by someone bumping into it or cutting something on it	<a href="#">Make Action Item</a>
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Notice the “Make Action Item” button on the right. If you click that, a new Action Item will become available in the Action Items report. The comment text as written isn’t actionable, so in the process of making it an Action Item, the committee representative will want to reword it.

In Action Items, we have changed the “Action Items to Show” to New so that we can see this item and edit it.

### Safety Action Items from Observations

#### ACTION ITEM COLOR CODE

- GREEN Assigned and Active
- RED New and Unassigned
- BLUE Completed
- BLACK Dismissed or Blocked

#### ACTION ITEMS TO SHOW

- New
- Assigned
- Completed
- Blocked
- All Action Items

[Change Item View](#)

### ACTION ITEMS

Item Number	Action Item	Assigned To:	Due Date:
1	<u>The vendor scrap cart handle sticks to far in aisle way. Could cause safety hazard, by someone bumping into it or cutting something on it</u>		

The comment is printed in red to show that it is “new and unassigned.” Now, we can click on the Action Item to bring up its detail, and then make text changes to make it more general and actionable.

**Safety Action Item** (rephrase as necessary to make it actionable):

Survey all walkways on 2nd floor. Talk to department managers about any clutter that impedes walking and causes a "slip and trip" hazard

**Status:**

new

**Assigned To:**

Joe Kerr

**Due Date:**

08/15/2017

[Click for Calendar](#)

**Notes**

The original comment was about vendor carts stick out into the walkway, but we know of several other situations that should be corrected.



Now, the comment has been turned into an Action Item, assigned to Joe, and given a due date of September 30. When we look at Action Items again with "Action Items to Show" set to "assigned", we see this:

**ACTION ITEMS**

Item Number	Action Item	Assigned To:	Due Date:	Notes
1	<u>Survey all walkways on 2nd floor. Talk to department managers about any clutter that impedes walking and causes a "slip and trip" hazard</u>	Joe Kerr	09/30/17	The original comment was about vendor carts stick out into the walkway, but we know of several other situations that should be corrected.

The text of the Action Item is shown in green to indicate that this Action Item is still active and assigned (to Joe). The Due Date is shown in blue to show that it is not yet overdue.

Our hope is that by taking the actions assigned to Joe, that he can make the plant a little bit safer by removing a hazard to walking! Surely, that's what the original observer hoped would happen when she called attention to this issue with her General Comment.

**Next Steps**

Talk to Ken or Sandra about adding additional Comments fields to your checklist!