When Consumption Rises and Nothing Broke

GUIDING QUESTION *Find the last month in which your consumption was higher than expected and read what was written about it. Almost certainly you will find an explanation: the weather, the occupancy, a function in the ballroom. Now ask a different question: what figure would that month have had to reach before somebody was obliged to investigate rather than to explain? If no such figure exists, nothing in your property can ever become significant.*

Property: _____ Completed by: _____ Date: _____

How to use this sheet: work through the five parts with the people who own the process. The text in the left-hand columns comes from the book; the empty columns are for what is true in your property.

1. Verification Pact: what is commonly believed, what actually holds, and your property

What is commonly believed	What actually holds	In our property
«The variance was explained.»	An explanation closes a question. The requirement is to investigate and respond, and both are different verbs.	
«Nothing was significant enough to investigate.»	Significance is yours to define. Undefined, it is absent; and no figure can trigger an obligation that rests on a threshold nobody wrote.	
«Each month had a reason.»	Each reason was adequate to its month and none accounted for the pattern. Serial explanations cannot see a parallel condition.	
«It was warmer, so that is the cause.»	Unless somebody quantified how much the weather could carry, a partial cause functions exactly like a complete one.	
«We corrected it, so the matter is closed.»	Correction is the first of five steps. Determining whether it exists elsewhere, reviewing effectiveness and changing the system are the others.	
«We now investigate every variance.»	Corrective actions must be appropriate to the effects. A threshold protects against investigating everything as well as nothing.	

2. What the standard requires, and what demonstrates it

From Table 2.13.a. The third column of the book (what is method, not requirement) is left out here: write what your property actually holds as evidence.

What is required	What demonstrates it in a hotel	In our property
Energy performance and system effectiveness evaluated	Actual against expected, monthly, with a threshold beside it	
Significant deviations investigated	A record of an investigation that produced a cause	
Significant deviations responded to	What was done, by whom, and when	
Results of investigation and response retained	One page per investigation	
Causes determined	A cause somebody could act on, not a condition	
Similar nonconformities sought elsewhere	An afternoon spent looking, and what was found	
Effectiveness of corrective action reviewed	A check three months later that it held	
Actions appropriate to the effects	A small matter handled in a line; a large one properly	

3. The instrument: Table 2.13.b, Explaining and investigating

The instrument of this subchapter. The third column is what the requirement actually asks for.

Step	What an explanation does	What the requirement asks
Noticing	Reports the figure with a comment	Compares it against a threshold set in advance
Attributing	Names a plausible cause	Quantifies how much that cause can carry
Finding the cause	Stops once the month is accounted for	Continues until something somebody can act on is found
Responding	Nothing, because nothing is wrong	A stated action, by a named person, with a date
Extending	Not considered	Determines whether it exists or could occur elsewhere
Verifying	Not considered	Reviews the effectiveness of the action taken
Changing the system	Not considered	Alters the system so the condition cannot recur unseen
Recording	A line in a monthly commentary	Documented information on the investigation and the response

The rows above are the book's; the empty rows are for lines your property needs to add.

4. Common mistakes: self-check

Common mistake	Present here? (Yes / Partly / No)	Where we see it
Never defining what a significant deviation is, so that nothing can ever become one.		
Offering an explanation where the requirement asks for an investigation and a response.		
Accepting a partial cause without quantifying how much of the excess it can carry.		
Reading months serially and never reading the year.		
Closing the matter at correction, skipping extension, verification and system change.		
Investigating every variance, which buries the three that matter among forty that do not.		

5. Action plan

Step from the book / gap found	Action in our property	Owner	Deadline
Write the threshold in one sentence, before you need it, and put it beside the figure in the report.			
Add a persistence rule: three consecutive periods is significant regardless of magnitude.			
Quantify every explanation: how much can the weather actually carry?			
Read the last twelve figures together, once a quarter, in four minutes.			
Separate the two verbs in the report: what happened, and what is being done about it.			

Step from the book / gap found	Action in our property	Owner	Deadline
When a cause is found, ask whether it exists elsewhere, and spend the afternoon actually looking.			
Review effectiveness three months later, in one line; corrections do not always hold.			
Change the system, not only the condition: list what is put in manual, and clear the list.			

In brief

The standard requires significant deviations in energy performance to be investigated and responded to, and both are verbs that a monthly explanation does not satisfy. An explanation is plausible and closes a question in five minutes. An investigation produces a cause somebody can act on, a response with a name and a date, and a record of both; and a property that has produced eleven explanations has not produced a partial investigation but none at all.

Source: The Helm and the Lens, Volume 4a: The Helm, subchapter 2.13. This sheet does not reproduce the text of the standard; work with your own copy of ISO 50001:2018 from an authorised source.