

Title: Policy for Remote Computing Operations Shifts

Revision 3 / 2011-02-08

Owner: Pete Clarke

Status:

- **Final version to be put in place for 3 months starting 1-March 2011.**

Preamble

Following requests from external members, the NCB asked the computing operations group to deal with a request to permit remote operations shifts.

In addressing this, it essential to ensure that the perception (by both shifters and others) of the importance of operations shifts should not become diminished or diluted. At the same time we recognise that many of the functions of a shifter can technically be performed remotely.

It is also fair to state that the nervousness which some have concerns the non-technical aspect, i.e. that a shifter in the control room picks up what is going on from the frequent discussions taking place.

Nevertheless it is quire proper to pilot this mode of operation and see if it works.

The following policy has been formed and iterated twice and is now out for final comments prior to putting in place for a three month period.

It is being sent to the NCB for comment and eventually the OPG to note.

Pete

Definitions:

- CoC: Computing Operations Coordinator
- GEOC: Grid Expert On Shift
- Shifter: Computing Production Shifter
- PL: Project Leader

Policy for Trial Period

P1. As an experiment the possibility to take remote shifts will be introduced for a trial period of three months. The situation will be kept under review and may be suspended if the PL considers that it is risking data taking.

P2. Remote shifts should not become the norm, therefore Shifters should in

general still plan to be at CERN.

P3. However upon request from the Shifter to the CoC, leave to carry out shifts remotely will in normal circumstances be granted.
No reason need be given for the request (there is no point in having the CoC make a value judgement).

P4. In normal circumstances remote shifts should not be carried out for more than 25% of a shifters load over the next year.

P5: In normal circumstances the request for remote shifts must be made well in advance, and before the shift rota is drawn up. Special circumstances may also apply in the case of unforeseen emergencies, travel disruption..etc. In this case the current GEOC will make the decision as to whether the shifter can work remotely, or whether a replacement must be found.

P6. A person carrying out remote shifts must be suitably qualified as judged by the CoC .For example it is not expected that new shifters would carry out remote shifts.

P5. The person carrying out remote shifts must undertake to follow the normal shifter responsibilities as described in the shifter guide (<https://twiki.cern.ch/twiki/bin/view/LHCb/UpdatedProductionShifterGuide>) as well as the specific requirements listed below.

P6. It may be that during certain special periods it is felt to be inappropriate for the shifts to be carried out remotely. This would be decided by the CoC in consultation with the Computing Project Leader.

Requirements

R1. The shifter must effectively be equally "present" as if they were at CERN and carry out all duties which they would carry out at CERN.

R2. At the start and end of shift, the shifter should file an ELOG entry. At the start to announce "on shift" and as a minimum must declare a phone number at which they can be contacted as a baseline.

At the end of shift the normal shift report must be filed.

The shifter is encouraged to file status ELOG entries more often to maintain "presence".

R3. The shifter must be contactable, and in contact with the Control Room and the GEOC in the same way as if they were at CERN. The phone number declared above is necessary, but is not deemed to be sufficient. In addition it was felt that an "open channel" is needed. Using this channel indications of potential problems can be signaled to the shifter by anyone, in analogy to the

verbal communications which would normally take place in the operations room (but which would not warrant an ELOG entry at that stage). The shifter should then investigate and give some response either via this channel or via the ELOG.

R4: Similarly the shifter must be able to communicate with the DQ shifter in the control room. The phone number is given below.

R5: Naturally absences are permitted in the same way as if at CERN, however the remote shifter must log the beginning and end of absences for communications purposes (i.e. to avoid a person trying to reach the shifter but getting no response without knowing why)

R6. The shifter must participate in the 11.15 meeting if it takes place.

Finally, common sense should apply. The aim is to ensure that remote shifts are effective such that they benefit LHCb in terms of efficient use of both people's time and of data taking. Those trialing this are encouraged to feed back any suggestions for improvements to this policy.

** The well known communications channel is to be decided following experience but we will use an EVO channel in the first instance,

* The GEOC Phone number is 00 41 76 487 1914

*The control room phone number is 00 41 22 767 7714