

Worksheet: A Signal is Detected!

You've found a non-random signal (a shift or trend) in your data. This is special cause variation, and it's your first major clue. Use this worksheet to drill down, isolate the source of the change, and create a focused plan for your Quality Improvement (QI) team.

1. Describe the Initial Signal

First, clearly define the signal you found in your main run chart.

- + Project Name: _____
- + Date of Analysis: _____
- + What signal was detected? (Circle one): Shift | Trend | Other (Astronomical Point, Runs)
- + When did the signal begin? (Approximate month/year): _____
- + Describe the signal in one sentence: (e.g., "An upward shift of 7 points in our fall rate began around July 2025.")

Attach or sketch your main run chart here, circling the signal:

2. Drill-Down Analysis (Stratify Your Data)

Now, re-run your analysis for smaller subgroups of data. For each category below, generate a new run chart and note if the original signal is present, absent, or stronger.

Stratification Category	Analysis Question	Findings (Does the signal appear in this subgroup? If so, where?)
Hospital Unit	Is the signal isolated to a specific unit?	
Time of Day	Is the signal happening more on a specific shift?	
Day of the Week	Is the signal concentrated on weekdays or weekends?	
Type of Fall	Is the signal specific to one type of fall? (e.g., ambulatory, bed, chair)	
Other: _____	(e.g., Patient diagnosis, new staff, specific procedure)	

3. Generate Your Actionable Insight

Synthesize your findings from the drill-down analysis into a single, powerful statement. This is the conclusion you will bring to your QI team.

Fill in the blanks to create your insight summary:

"A [negative/positive] [shift/trend] in our [metric you're measuring, e.g., fall rate] began around [date from section 1] and is primarily isolated to [the specific subgroup(s) you identified in section 2, e.g., the 3 East unit during night shifts for ambulatory falls]."

4. Inform Your Team: Create a Focused Charter

Use your actionable insight to create a clear, data-backed mission for your QI team. This moves them from a vague goal to a focused, measurable project.

DON'T DO THIS (Vague Goal):

+ "Our goal is to reduce falls."

DO THIS (Focused, Data-Backed Charter):

+ Based on your insight from Section 3, write your new team charter:
"Our team will investigate and address the factors contributing to the [insert your actionable insight here]."

This focused charter is the starting point for your team's investigation, making their efforts targeted and much more likely to succeed.

