



10-Minute Supervisor Trainings

Kentucky Soil and Water Conservation Commission

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PERSONNEL

Every Conservation District office is manned by one or more office staff. From time to time it is necessary to do some “good housekeeping” and provide what is needed by both the District and employee themselves. Although Districts can set forth their own policies, you are obligated by the State and Federal Government to follow labor laws. In this 10 minute training we will go through everything from hiring to firing and all that is required in between.

Hiring: When it is time to hire an employee where do you begin?

Keep in mind that it may have been 20 years since you last hired someone and everything from expectations to job descriptions need to be reevaluated. Remember to use input from your District Conservationist and Field Representative as they may know more about the day to day requirements of the job. This is a good time to update job descriptions which we will talk more about later.

You can start by addressing these topics:

- Wages – Insurance – Retirement – Sick/Vacation Days/ Comp/Overtime pay
- Lay out the Duties: bookkeeping, education, errands, reporting, coordinating meetings etc.
- Hours
- Travel and reimbursement – paid day to day for errands? State or District pay stipulations? Allowed for training?
- Probation Period – Evaluation Period – Increment Period

Now you are ready to advertise, interview and hire. A simple ad with general description needs to be advertised for at least one week in the local paper, radio or on line. You can obtain a sample from your Field Representative. They can submit a resume or you can come up with your own application. It is good business to interview at least 3 and you can use your whole Board or just the personnel committee to do this. Don't forget to honor your probationary period – the position may not be right for individual or maybe it is just not working out. This gives you the legal opportunity to simply let them go.

Job Descriptions: Whether you are in the process of hiring someone new or you have an employee that has been there for 15 years, from time to time changes in both operations and employees require updates. Job descriptions for each employee are essential for all staff. This outlines the goals, duties and expectations for the job and lays out all pay and benefit information.

This is not only good business but is also necessary for any legal situations that may arise. If your Job descriptions are older than 3 years or if each of your staff does not have One, your Field Representative can assist you in updating these.

Evaluations: No matter how satisfied a District is with staff performance it is still essential from a business and legal standpoint to establish a time each year for employee evaluations. Most Districts do this right before they set the budget for the coming year to determine salary or benefit increases. This gives the employee and the employer a time to voice any needs or concerns that are or are not getting addressed.

At this point it also gives you the chance to update the job description for each employee. The District should never be afraid to check on their employees' performance from time to time and should handle everything in a professional "businesslike" manor. This is where a personnel committee can come in handy. A committee made up of 3 or 4 members can take care of issues outside of a Board Meeting and update and make recommendations to the Board.

Note:

Committees cannot vote or make any final decisions. Boards can also use an executive session at a meeting to discuss these issues but again cannot make any decisions until they come out.

When a problem arises: Any business will from time to time encounter an issue with an employee whether they are not showing up on time or they have an issue with another member of the staff and these issues need to be addressed immediately. Any problem left unattended on one side or the other is bound to escalate. Some things that should never be tolerated in a business are: Stealing or embezzlement, discrimination, harassment or violence. Other things such as tardiness, dress code, or job performance can be addressed by warnings or probation and should be readdressed in a certain time period.

Dismissal – What you should know:

When legally firing an individual, you must have documentation of where you have tried to resolve issues by speaking with the employee or giving them a warning. The things mentioned above that are inexcusable should be handled immediately by firing the employee on the spot and requesting that they leave the grounds with only their personal possessions. As long as it is justified and documented, it is the right of any business to excuse any employees with just reason. When there is a change of staff it is also a good idea to request keys, change passwords and notify IT of computer changes.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are some good questions you as board members should discuss when conducting an evaluation?
2. What is always needed when discussing a dismissal of the employee?
3. Discuss the steps that need to be taken when hiring a new employee.
4. What training do you as supervisors think that employees need? Do you encourage your employees to seek training opportunities? What would be the purpose in a training plan for your employees?