

The Benefits of Planning



Why Supervisors Plan and the Benefits of Planning

- **To clarify what must be done:** Supervisors need to walk through the job mentally or on paper to ensure they understand the scope of the work before anything else can be done around planning, organizing or directing.
- **To help everyone understand their role:** Employees generally work in crews. Each employee needs to know with which crew he/she will work, what his/her responsibility will be, and any preparation before the job that should be completed.
- **To help himself/herself and employees focus:** A work setting becomes very busy and it is easy to be distracted on a job or with other “fires” that arise to be put out. A good plan helps people to understand the priorities of the work and then better adjust when a “fire” occurs.
- **To be able to delegate and assign work:** Supervisors need to understand all aspects of the work before they can delegate and assign work. For example, if a job calls for someone with a CDL, and only two people in the crew have their CDL, the supervisor must take that into account when assigning work.
- **To ensure he/she has the needed resources:** Supervisors need to plan for all types of resources – both short and long term. Resources may include: chainsaw blades, oil, fuel, weed eaters, chemical sprays, asphalt testing materials, street sweepers, trucks, backhoes, tractors, general tools, bucket trucks...; as well as people and their skills, time to do the job, information from others...

- **To identify overlapping jobs/tasks and the stages of the job/task (scheduling equipment and personnel):** Some jobs occur within a district and a supervisor can save time by moving one crew from a one job to another within a district verses moving the crew across the parish and then back again. Also, if a job calls for renting equipment and that equipment can be used at multiple job sites, the supervisor may be able to cut costs by renting the equipment at a time when it can be used at both sites back-to-back.
- **To better handle issues that arise unexpectedly:** Generally, a supervisor will have a work priority order such as: all safety jobs are first priority, all school and other major route jobs are second priority, all drainage jobs are third priority... Having priorities and setting priorities helps a supervisor be able to better respond.

Other Benefits of a Good Plan

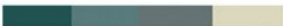
- Provides a method to show progress on projects
- Allows for pre-work such as:
 - Contacting other public entities when needed
 - Planning for closure of work sites (for example, if a road will be closed, alerting the public, putting up signage...)
- Allows for a review to ensure no one has any big misses in resources or schedule
- Guides learning and awareness to patterns in the work
- Allows for better time management
- Develops a work crew where there is less of a need for non-supervisory employees to make judgment calls
- Helps keep projects within budget

Types of Plans

We have many different types of plans:

- Strategic plans
- Financial plans
- Departmental plans
- Overall work plans
- Daily/weekly plans...
 - Short-term plans
 - Long-term plans
 - Unexpected event plans

<u>Event</u>	<u>Planned / Unplanned</u>	<u>Short-term / Long-term / Unexpected</u>



PLANNING PROCESS

Planning is a process – it takes time and effort. Planning usually includes four steps:

- Determine the current situation: Assess current condition of equipment, attitudes of the employees, and resources available to the crew.
- Determine the goals/objectives: The goals/objectives for the work crew are usually established by the administration. Typically, supervisors give administrators suggestions for developing plans for their work units. Supervisors should look at the overall plan to ensure their work units are operating in a way that helps the administration reach its goals/objectives.
- Determine the most effective way of achieving the goals/ objectives: Based on the current situation, what does the supervisor need to do to reach the goals/objectives?
- Communicate the plan: Once a plan is constructed it has to be communicated to others in the work crew.

Developing an Action Plan

The first step is setting objectives and putting these in priority order. Next, the supervisor must decide how each will be achieved. This part of the planning process is called **action planning**. When developing an action plan, a supervisor must answer the following seven questions:

What must be done?	What steps must be taken to reach the objectives? Are there any other ways to reach the objectives?
Why must it be done?	This question serves as a check on question 1. Are the actions taken necessary? Is the use of resources justified?
When should it be done?	The supervisor must decide how to schedule the new tasks while still getting the rest of the work done. Dates and times should be selected and coordinated with existing work.
What resources are needed (people, equipment and supplies, time)?	The supervisor must decide what skills and abilities are required. Once this has been decided, the supervisor should choose the right employees to do the work.
Where should it be done?	Where will the necessary task, people and equipment be located?
How should it be done?	What methods and procedures will be used? Can we use procedures we already have, or do we need to create new ones?
To whom should it be communicated?	What is the best communication method and who should be informed?

PLANNING WORKSHEET

By addressing each of these questions, the supervisor can work out the details and decided how to proceed. This process can also help the supervisor forecast problems that may arise.

What must be done?	
Why must it be done?	
When should it be done?	
What resources are needed (people, equipment and supplies, time)?	
Where should it be done?	
How should it be done?	
To whom should it be communicated?	