



Oklahoma Conservation Commission

District Directors' Responsibilities:

A 10-Minute Guide Series

This is one in a continuing series of informational/discussion topics designed to help conservation district directors become more informed and knowledgeable about their responsibilities. It is suggested that board members review these guides before a board meeting, and then have a 10 minute discussion on them at a meeting.

Guide No. 3 - Hiring, Supervising, and Managing District Employees

One of the most challenging duties of conservation district directors may be the hiring and supervision of employees. Districts need a structure or system in place that provides good communication with employees and a means to deal with any personnel issues that might arise. Some of the very basic things required to effectively supervise employees are: current and accurate position descriptions, performance standards, an established system for performance reviews, and district policies that provide guidance to employees.

Position Descriptions

Position descriptions should be current and contain a detail description of the major job duties of the employee. These should be updated on an annual basis to ensure that they stay current and reflect the duties being performed. Help is available from the District Services Division of the Oklahoma Conservation Commission in developing position descriptions.

Performance Standards

Position descriptions outline the major job duties of an employee, performance standards provides a standard that the board expects the employee to meet. Performance standards are developed for each major job duty and are used in evaluating job performance.

Example of a performance standard:

The job duty might be to serve as a receptionist for the office. The performance standard could be: Employee will greet customers immediately upon entering the office and will be courteous and professional at all times. The employee will provide assistance if possible, refer the customer to another staff member, or take their name and phone number and follow up to ensure service is provided within two working days.

Performance Evaluations

Employees should be provided with a performance evaluation at least annually based upon the performance standards. The review of an employee's performance and discussion with the employee is done in an executive session.

The employee should be given a copy of their evaluation (signed and dated by a board member and the employee to document the review), and the board should keep a copy in a secure place. Signature by employee does not indicate agreement with the review, only that the review has been discussed with the employee.

Performance reviews provide an opportunity to discuss performance problems and any need for improvement, and also an opportunity to tell employees what a good job they are doing.

District Policies

District policies may be needed to provide guidance and help to employees for things that may not be included in position descriptions. This is especially valuable to newer employees.

Examples: Policy on how much money a district manager can expend on equipment repair without prior approval from the board.

Policy on earning and using compensatory time.

Policy on how much time can be used assisting other agencies.

Recruiting and Hiring Employees

If your district has an employee that retires, resigns, or is terminated and you wish to fill that position, there are several steps you need to take:

1. If the employee is paid 100 percent from locally earned funds, prior approval from the Oklahoma Conservation is not required.

But if the position is an allocated position, then a written request must be made to OCC for approval to fill the position and for a personnel packet. This request should outline the position the district wishes to fill, indicating whether it is a full-time or part-time position, with or without benefits, and should include a time-frame for hiring and the reimbursed salary requested.

Once this letter of request is received, OCC will provide the district with the reimbursement salary and a personnel packet.

The personnel packet will include a position description, application form, summary of employee benefits, and sample interview questions.

2. The board should make a public announcement, generally a newspaper advertisement, of the position to be filled at least two weeks in advance, so that applications can be accepted. The district office must make a reasonable effort to locate the best qualified person for the position.

The announcement should state the qualifications, duties and salary of the position, any evening or weekend time work that might be required, other requirements like a valid Oklahoma driver license, and need for physical labor and operation of equipment. It should also include the location to pick up and return applications and get more information about the position.

3. References provided by the applicant should be checked by a board member.

4. The board should select the top applicants and set up times for interviews. Once interview candidates are selected, contact OCC's Human Resource Management Specialist and request a new employee benefit packet.

5. Hiring a new employee or reinstatement of a former employee requires official action of the board. When that action is taken, the vote and conditions of employment as agreed upon by the board and the employee is recorded in the board's minutes. Use of Terms of Employment, Form OCC-6A, will provide assistance in ensuring that all conditions are established.

6. District boards should establish personnel files for the employee and keep them in a secure place. Only district board members should have access to personnel performance reviews and other documents that relate to the performance or conduct of an individual employee.

7. The board should provide employees with a position description and performance standards within 30 days of hire date. These should be reviewed with the employee, with copies signed and dated for documentation.

8. The board should discuss their expectations with a new employee and basic office rules, dress code, standards of conduct and ethics, and other such matters to ensure the employee gets off to a good start.

9. It is suggested that the board, using the performance standards, review the employee's performance quarterly for the first year of employment and then annually thereafter.

Other Resources:

Chapter 6 of the Conservation District Handbook.

Personnel Management Reference Book for Conservation District Officials. NACD publication.