

# Leadership III for Fire and EMS: Strategies for Supervisory Success

LS III-Student Manual

*2nd Edition, 2nd Printing-July 2010*



**FEMA**

FEMA/USFA/NFA  
LS III-SM  
July 2010  
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***Leadership III for Fire and EMS:  
Strategies for Supervisory Success***



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**FEMA**



**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY**

**UNITED STATES FIRE ADMINISTRATION**

**NATIONAL FIRE ACADEMY**

**FOREWORD**

The U.S. Fire Administration (USFA), an important component of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), serves the leadership of this Nation as the DHS's fire protection and emergency response expert. The USFA is located at the National Emergency Training Center (NETC) in Emmitsburg, Maryland, and includes the National Fire Academy (NFA), National Fire Data Center (NFDC), National Fire Programs (NFP), and the National Preparedness Network (PREPnet). The USFA also provides oversight and management of the Noble Training Center in Anniston, Alabama. The mission of the USFA is to save lives and reduce economic losses due to fire and related emergencies through training, research, data collection and analysis, public education, and coordination with other Federal agencies and fire protection and emergency service personnel.

The USFA's National Fire Academy offers a diverse course delivery system, combining resident courses, off-campus deliveries in cooperation with State training organizations, weekend instruction, and online courses. The USFA maintains a blended learning approach to its course selections and course development. Resident courses are delivered at both the Emmitsburg campus and the Noble facility. Off-campus courses are delivered in cooperation with State and local fire training organizations to ensure this Nation's firefighters are prepared for the hazards they face.

Designed to meet the needs of the company officer, this course provides the participant with basic skills and tools needed to perform effectively as a leader in the fire service environment. This Leadership course addresses when and how to delegate to subordinates, assessing personal leadership styles through situational leadership, when and how to discipline subordinates, and coaching/motivating techniques for the company officer.



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**COURSE SCHEDULE**

**MODULES**

Situational Leadership

Delegating

Coaching

Discipline at the Company Level



# ***SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP***

## **OBJECTIVES**

*The students will:*

- 1. Identify two basic leader behaviors.*
  - 2. Identify four leadership styles.*
  - 3. Identify four development levels of followers.*
  - 4. Describe the relationship between development level and leadership style.*
  - 5. Demonstrate diagnostic skills for choosing an appropriate leadership style for a given development level of a follower.*
  - 6. Identify how to provide direction and support to followers and deal with difficulties encountered by followers.*
-



## I. INTRODUCTION

- A. The importance of leadership.
  - 1. Leadership is the process of influencing others toward the achievement of organizational goals.
  - 2. Successful organizations have a dynamic and effective leadership.
    - a. Dynamic--responsive to the changing needs of their followers.
    - b. Effective--accomplishing organizational goals through competent and committed followers.
  
- B. Leadership style (the way you supervise).
  - 1. Types of leadership styles you're familiar with:
  
  - 2. Most leadership styles you know represent an either/or approach.
    - a. Either the task is most important.
  
    - b. Or the people are most important.
  
  - 3. Either/Or approaches don't work.

4. Dynamic and effective leaders vary their leadership style according to the situation and the needs of the follower.

C. Situational leadership skills.

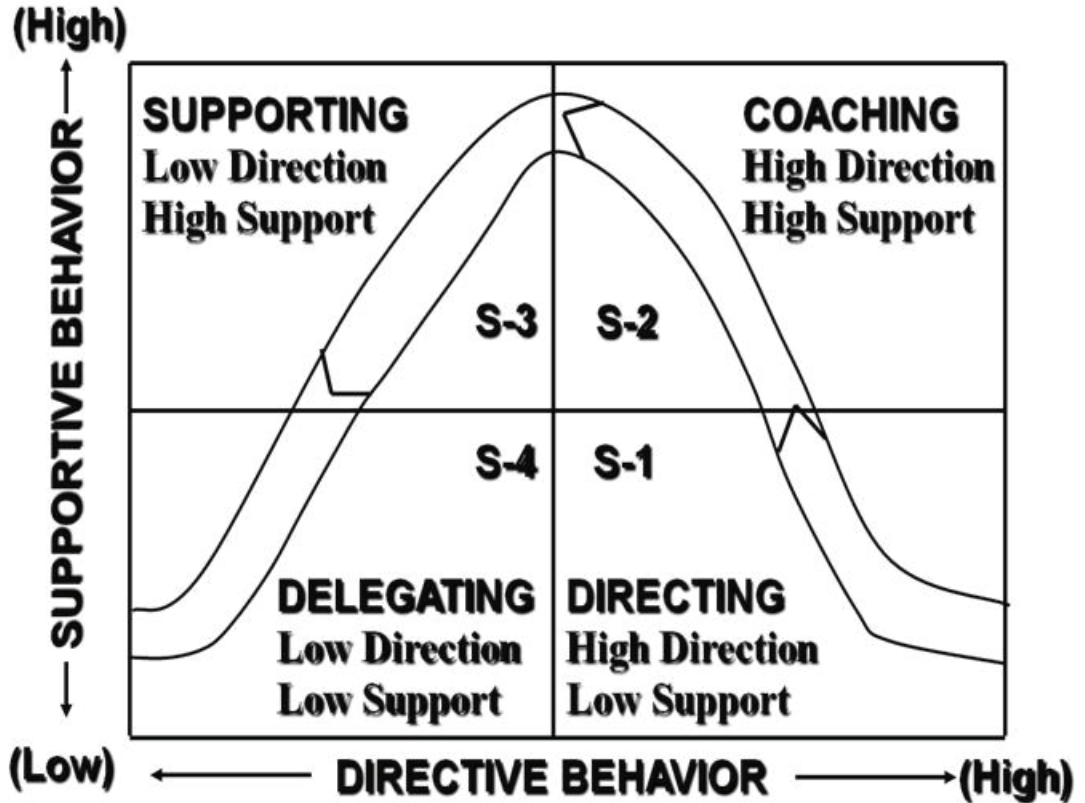
1. **Flexibility**--the ability to change your leadership style to fit the needs of the follower.
2. **Diagnosis**--the ability to accurately assess the needs of the follower.
3. **Communication**--the ability to reach a mutual understanding with each follower regarding the leadership style which most effectively meets the present needs of each follower.

## II. FLEXIBILITY

A. Four basic styles:

1. Directing (S-1).
2. Coaching (S-2).
3. Supporting (S-3).
4. Delegating (S-4).

- B. Two types of leader behavior:
  - 1. Directive behavior.
  - 2. Supportive behavior.
  
- C. The four leadership styles combine directive and supportive behaviors in varying degrees.



- D. Summary.
1. The four styles differ in terms of:
    - a. Amount of directive behavior.
    - b. Amount of supportive behavior.
  2. In all four styles, the leader:
    - a. Sets goals.
    - b. Observes performance.
    - c. Provides feedback.
    - d. Remains accountable.
  3. The difference lies in the **degree** to which the leader engages in these behaviors.
  4. Cautions:
    - a. S-1 is directing not dictating.
    - b. S-2 is coaching not smothering.
    - c. S-3 is supporting not rescuing.
    - d. S-4 is delegating not abdicating.
  5. There is no single best style.
  6. The dynamic and effective leader is able to use each style, as needed.

### III. DIAGNOSIS

- A. When assigning any task the leader must attempt to predict the follower's performance.



- B. The leader must diagnose the development level of the follower in relation to the assigned task.
  
- C. The follower's development level will determine the most appropriate leadership style.
  
- D. Development level is defined as a measure of an individual's degree of competence and level of commitment to complete a specific task.
  - 1. **Competence** is a function of an individual's **knowledge and skills**. (How proficient is the individual at doing the assigned task?)
  
  - 2. **Commitment** is a function of an individual's **confidence and motivation**.
    - a. Confidence is self-assurance--a feeling of being able to do the job well without close supervision.
    - b. Motivation is interest and enthusiasm for doing the job well.
  
- E. Four basic development levels represent various combinations of **competence and commitment**.
  
- F. D-1--The enthusiastic beginner.
  - 1. Low competence.
  
  - 2. High commitment.

G. D-2--The disillusioned learner.

1. Some competence.

2. Low commitment.

H. D-3--The reluctant contributor.

1. High competence.

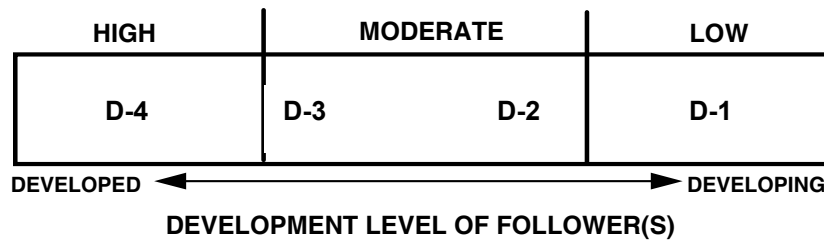
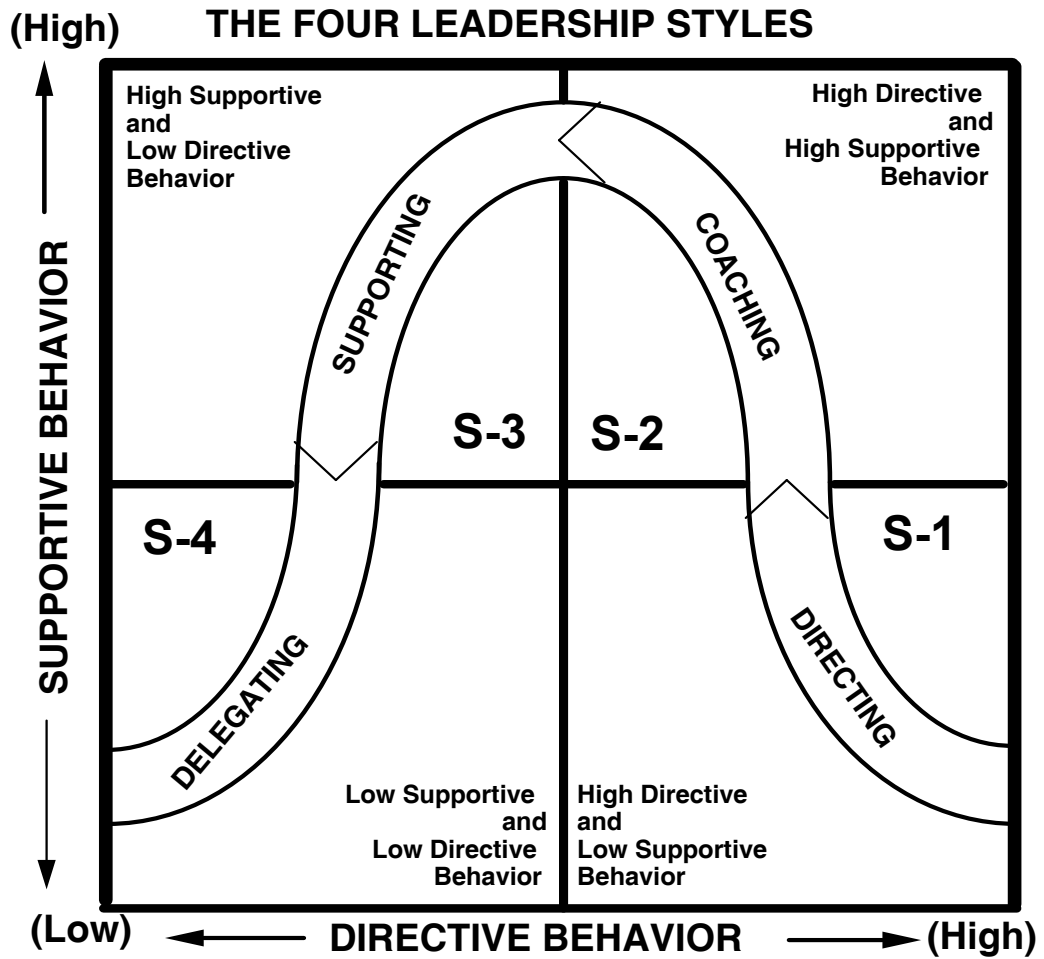
2. Variable commitment.

I. D-4--The peak performer.

1. High competence.

2. High commitment.

IV. MATCHING YOUR LEADERSHIP STYLE TO THE FOLLOWER'S DEVELOPMENT LEVEL





## Activity SL.1

### Analyzing Leadership Styles

#### Purpose

To identify the leadership styles and development levels of followers for each scenario.

#### Directions

The instructor will show four video scenarios. After each scenario is shown, complete the questions below.

#### Video Scenario 1

1. What is the development level of the follower? \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What leadership style did the Company Officer (CO) use? \_\_\_\_\_

What did he do that was typical of this style? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

#### Video Scenario 2

1. What is the development level of the follower? \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What leadership style did the CO use? \_\_\_\_\_

What did he do that was typical of this style? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Video Scenario 3

1. What is the development level of the follower? \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What leadership style did the CO use? \_\_\_\_\_

What did he do that was typical of this style? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Video Scenario 4

1. What is the development level of the follower? \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What leadership style did the CO use? \_\_\_\_\_

What did he do that was typical of this style? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_





## Activity SL.2

### Developing Diagnostic Skills

#### Purpose

To demonstrate diagnostic skills for choosing the appropriate leadership style for the given development level of a follower.

#### Directions

1. In your small group, read through each case study one at a time.
2. For each case, reach group consensus on:
  - a. The development level of the follower.
  - b. Key indicators of this development level.
  - c. The most appropriate leadership style for the follower.
3. Record your responses on easel pad paper.
4. Select a spokesperson to report your decisions to the class.

#### Case 1

Firefighter Jones has just transferred to your company after being on the department's Hazmat Team for 3 years. Jones is claiming "burn-out" due to 3 years of intense schooling, drills, and incidents. It is stated "I just want to be a regular firefighter from now on."

Due to heavy industrial development in your company's territory you would like some help from Jones to better train you and your company members in hazmat procedures.

**Development level of the follower:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Key indicators of this development style:** \_\_\_\_\_

**The most appropriate leadership style for the follower:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### Case 2

Firefighter Smith, who is a building contractor during off-duty time, has always assisted you in drawing building diagrams for company pre-fire inspections each month. Last month a small fire

occurred in one of these buildings and at the critique the Battalion Chief criticized you for an obvious mistake on the building diagram. Smith was present during the critique and after the meeting informed you of not wanting the responsibility of drawing building prefire plans any more.

**Development level of the follower:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Key indicators of this development style:** \_\_\_\_\_

**The most appropriate leadership style for the follower:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Case 3

Your company just received an acetylene cutting torch kit that is to be carried as standard equipment. Firefighter Brown has asked if practice was available with the new equipment on some metal plates behind the station.

**Development level of the follower:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Key indicators of this development style:** \_\_\_\_\_

**The most appropriate leadership style for the follower:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Case 4

Firefighter White has just joined your engine company after graduating from recruit school. Recruit school taught four-person hose evolution as basic training. However, it is not uncommon for you to ride with a three-person crew. White needs to be trained in three-person hose evolution. White is eager to learn but is trying to convince you that no additional training is required because of knowledge of the four-person process.

**Development level of the follower:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Key indicators of this development style:** \_\_\_\_\_

**The most appropriate leadership style for the follower:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Case 5

COs in your department have the latitude to choose whatever type of physical fitness activities they feel are appropriate for maintaining fitness levels in their company. Lately, your crew seems to be bored with playing volleyball, and fitness levels seem to be declining. One member of your crew (Gomez) is an avid runner and weightlifter. Gomez assists at a local health club

and is always pushing other crew members to become more active. You would like Gomez to develop a program that would increase the fitness levels of the crew.

**Development level of the follower:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Key indicators of this development style:** \_\_\_\_\_

**The most appropriate leadership style for the follower:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Case 6**

Firefighter Lincoln has been your backup driver on the engine for 6 months. Lincoln's driving skills are adequate, but could be better. Lincoln is very unsure of driving abilities and is very nervous and uncomfortable when called on to drive.

**Development level of the follower:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Key indicators of this development style:** \_\_\_\_\_

**The most appropriate leadership style for the follower:** \_\_\_\_\_



**V. COMMUNICATION**

- A. "Situational leadership is not something you do **to** people, it's something you do **with** people." (Blanchard)
  
- B. Share your knowledge of situational leadership with each follower.
  
- C. For each task assigned, reach agreement with follower on what's expected. Make SMART assignments (**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**elevant, **T**rackable).
  
- D. For each task assigned, reach agreement on follower's development level and appropriate leadership style.
  
- E. If difficulties arise, identify the problem area(s) and provide appropriate behaviors.
  
- F. For competence problems, provide:
  - 1. Training.
  
  - 2. Orientation.

3. Observation.

4. Feedback.

G. For motivation problems, provide

1. Positive reinforcement.

2. Supportive listening.

3. Different rewards.

4. Different punishments.

H. For confidence problems, provide

1. Reassurance.

2. Encouragement.

3. Positive feedback.

## **VI. SUMMARY**

A. Define the task.

B. Diagnose development level.

C. Match leadership style to development level.

D. Balance direction and support.

E. Evaluate and adjust.

## INTRODUCTION

Leadership is the process of influencing others toward the achievement of organizational goals. A successful organization has one major attribute that sets it apart from unsuccessful organizations: dynamic and effective leaders.

Dynamic leaders are responsive to the changing needs of their followers. Effective leaders work at accomplishing organizational goals through competent and committed employees. The most successful leaders favor leadership styles that allow them to be dynamic and effective.

Traditional approaches to leadership styles have emphasized an "either/or" approach (**either the task** was more important **or the people** were more important). In situational leadership, both the task and the follower are important; both receive attention from the leader.

Situational leadership requires three basic skills:

1. **Flexibility**--the ability to change your leadership style to fit the needs of the follower.
2. **Diagnosis**--the ability to accurately assess the needs of the follower.
3. **Communication**--the ability to reach a mutual understanding with each follower regarding the leadership style which most effectively meets the present needs.

## FLEXIBILITY

### Basic Types of Leader Behaviors

- Directive behavior involves one-way communication.
- The leader tells a person what, when, where, and how to do something.
- Leader then closely supervises performance.
- This behavior would be appropriate when decision has to be made quickly and/or stakes are high.
- It may be necessary for inexperienced people who you think have potential to be self-directive or for a person who has skills but is new to the job.
- The follower has no involvement in decisionmaking or problem-solving.
- Key words to describe this behavior are: structure, control, supervise.
- Supportive behavior involves two-way communication.

- The leader provides support and encouragement for efforts of the follower, facilitating involvement in decisionmaking and problem-solving.
- Key words associated with this behavior are: listen, praise, and facilitate.

## Leadership Styles

Leaders have a choice of four leadership styles (S) which use varying amounts of directive and supportive behavior: Directing (S-1), Coaching (S-2), Supporting (S-3), and Delegating (S-4).

### Directing (S-1)

For this style the leader tells the follower what, how, where, and when about the task that needs to be done. The leader closely supervises the work. The follower has no involvement with decisionmaking or problem-solving. The behaviors exhibited by the leader are **highly directive and minimally supportive**.

### Coaching (S-2)

The leader continues to give specific directions. The leader becomes supportive by offering reassurance and encouragement. The leader explains decisions and solicits suggestions and input. The leader exhibits **highly directive and highly supportive behavior**.

### Supporting (S-3)

The leader no longer needs to give a great amount of direction. The leader needs to build the follower's self-confidence and motivation by encouragement and praise. The leader helps subordinate reach own solutions by asking questions that expand thinking. There is shared responsibility for decisionmaking. Behaviors exhibited in this style are **highly supportive and minimally directive**.

### Delegating (S-4)

The leader no longer needs to give much direction or support. The leader needs to pass the ball to follower and allow follower to run with it. The leader turns over responsibility for decisionmaking and problem-solving to follower.

In all four styles, the leader: sets goals, observes performance, and provides feedback.

The four styles differ in terms of: amount of direction, and amount of support.



There is no single best style. The following cautions should always be considered:

- Style 1 is directing, not dictating.
- Style 2 is coaching, not smothering.
- Style 3 is supporting, not rescuing.
- Style 4 is delegating, not abdicating.

## DIAGNOSIS

The situational leader must be able to predict future performance or achievement of the follower.

**Development level** is defined as an individual's degree of competence and level of commitment to complete a specific task. The level can change from task to task.

**Competence** is a function of **knowledge and skills** gained from education, training, and/or experience.

**Commitment** is a function of an individual's:

- Confidence--a person's self-assurance (a feeling of **being able to** do task well without much supervision).
- Motivation--a person's **interest in and enthusiasm for** doing a task well.

A person is at one of four development (D) levels (combinations of competence and commitment).

Development level D-1 exhibits **low competence/high commitment**. The person is known as an **enthusiastic beginner**--motivated, learning new things, and can be overconfident. Examples include: new recruit, veteran with new task, and applying new technology.

Development level D-2 has **some competence/low commitment**. The person is known as a **disillusioned learner**. As skills develop, this person realizes how much more they need to know or there may be unforeseen difficulties with completing a task successfully. Examples include: having to perform CPR on a real person rather than a training manikin; veteran being required to learn new computer system and finding it more difficult than expected; and driving a pumper compared to a car.

Development level D-3 has **high competence/variable commitment**. The person is known as a **reluctant contributor**. This person lacks confidence or has lost interest. Examples include: the last time similar job was done, there was no support from above; concern for family problems; doesn't understand future value of task in meeting organizational goals.

Development level D-4 has **high competence/high commitment**. This is the **peak performer**. Examples include the self-starter; a person possessing skills and knowledge to do job and willing to take the ball and run with it.

## **MATCHING YOUR LEADERSHIP STYLE TO THE FOLLOWER'S DEVELOPMENT STYLE**

Directing (S-1) is for people who lack competence but are enthusiastic and committed (D-1). They need direction and supervision to get them started. Coaching (S-2) is for people who have some competence, but lack commitment (D-2). They need direction because they are relatively inexperienced and require support and praise to build self-assurance. Supporting (S-3) is for people who have competence but lack confidence or motivation (D-3). They do not need direction because they have skills, but need support to build confidence and/or motivation. Delegating (S-4) is for those who have competence and commitment (D-4). They are able and willing to work by themselves with little supervision or support.

The development level of an individual must be assessed with a specific goal or task in mind. People are more developed in some areas than in others. If there is decline in performance, it may be necessary to move backward through styles, but it should be done one level at a time.

## **COMMUNICATION**

The key to successfully applying a particular leadership style to the accomplishment of a given goal or task is to communicate to the follower the degree of direction and support that can be expected in the given situation. Through this interactive communication process the leader must remain flexible and consistent and be willing to change style as the development level of the follower changes. When difficulties arise, the problem area must be identified in terms of competence, motivation, or confidence.

For competence problems, provide: training; proper orientation to the task; more observation of performance; and specific feedback on outcomes and/or expectations.

For motivation problems, provide: positive reinforcement of desired behavior; supportive listening; changing rewards for acceptable performance; and changing consequences for negative performance.

For confidence problems, provide: reassurance and support for successes; encouraging risk-taking; positive feedback for improvement in task accomplishment.

## **SUMMARY**

Start with a clear definition of the task. Diagnose the development level of the follower. Match the development level with the appropriate leadership style. Deliver the selected leadership style with its proper balance of direction and support. Evaluate the effectiveness of the style in accomplishing the objective that is sought and make necessary changes in style.

## GLOSSARY

### Follower

1. **Development level**--A measure of an individual's degree of competence and level of commitment to complete a specific task.
2. **Competence**--A function of an individual's knowledge and skills.
3. **Commitment**--A function of an individual's confidence and motivation.
4. **Confidence**--Self-assurance (a feeling of being able to do a task well without much supervision).
5. **Motivation**--Interest and enthusiasm for doing task well.

### Leader

1. **Directive behavior of leader**--Telling person what to do, how, when, where, and then closely supervising performance.
2. **Supportive behavior of leader**--Listening to, supporting, and encouraging person for their effort, and facilitating their involvement in problem-solving and decisionmaking.



# ***DELEGATING***

## **OBJECTIVES**

*The students will:*

- 1. Define delegation.*
  - 2. Identify the benefits derived from effective delegation.*
  - 3. Identify the barriers that prevent effective delegation.*
  - 4. Identify the nine principles of effective delegation.*
  - 5. Identify the consequences of reverse delegation.*
-



## I. WHAT IS DELEGATION?

Delegation is a term that we use, often times incorrectly. Some supervisors confuse the task of assigning work with the concept of delegation. They are very different and this module will go into the differences and why each of them are important.

- A. Delegation is the sharing of authority, responsibility, and accountability between two or more people.
  - 1. Authority is the right to make decisions and take action.
  - 2. Responsibility is an obligation to make decisions and take action.
  - 3. Accountability is having to answer for results.
  
- B. Relationship to leadership.
  - 1. Leadership is the process of influencing others toward the achievement of organizational goals.
  - 2. Leadership requires development of subordinates in order to help them **maximize** their potential.
  - 3. This is an important skill for leaders to develop as they set out to develop their people
  - 4. Some organizations refer to this as career development, some call it mentoring, some refer to it as succession planning. Whatever your organization calls it, it is important in the long-term health of your organization. Without it you will have no choice but to go outside your organization to find people with the skills your own employees lack.





**Activity DG.1**

**Benefits and Barriers**

**Purpose**

To identify the benefits and barriers of delegation.

**Directions**

This activity is designed to enhance your awareness of 1) why delegation is worthwhile; and 2) why we are unwilling to delegate. Depending on the assignment made by the instructor, complete either question 1 or 2 below in your small group.

1. BENEFITS

Brainstorm and list the potential benefits of effective delegation--reasons why leaders should delegate.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

2. BARRIERS

Brainstorm and list potential barriers--reasons leaders are unwilling to delegate.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**DELEGATING**

---

## II. BARRIERS TO DELEGATION

### A. Three Critical Facts.

1. Effective leaders know they're responsible for **getting the job done**.
2. Effective leaders are committed to maximizing the potential of each subordinate.
3. Effective leaders understand the **process** of delegation.

### B. Effective leaders understand the "What's In It For Me?" (WIIFM) perspective that we all use when analyzing offers, challenges and opportunities presented to us.

## III. PRINCIPLES OF DELEGATION

### A. Delegate the right task.

1. **Don't** delegate:
  - a. Supervision responsibilities.
  - b. Confidential tasks.
  - c. High-risk tasks.

Example: Having a rookie do a public speaking request--especially if it's a hostile audience.

Example: In the fire/emergency medical technician (EMT) prevention bureau, do not have your new inspector meet with an irate contractor over the new sprinkler requirements and fee schedule.

- d. A task that has already been delegated down to you from your supervisor.
- 2. **Do** delegate:
  - a. Any routine task.
  - b. A task you've been putting off.
  - c. A task you've been wrestling with without success.
  - d. An unexpected, unplanned requirement.
  - e. A task that would be "fun" for someone else.
  - f. A job that would be a career development boost.
- 3. Use the following process to select the "right" tasks.
  - a. List **all** tasks you perform.
  - b. Evaluate each task for potential delegation, using criteria above.
  - c. Select one or two to try the delegating process.
- B. Delegate to the right person.
  - 1. Subordinate must be competent.
  - 2. Subordinate must be ready.
  - 3. Self-confidence is critical.
  - 4. Credibility is needed.
- C. Define responsibility.
  - 1. Define the task and the parameters.
    - a. What?
    - b. How much?
    - c. How well?
    - d. By when?

- e. With whom?
- 2. Provide necessary information.
- 3. Provide necessary training.
- D. Delegate authority.
  - 1. The right to make decisions and take action.
  - 2. Define the **limits** of authority (how much?).
  - 3. Amount of authority must match amount of responsibility.
  - 4. Notify others if appropriate.
- E. Get agreement.
  - 1. Provide opportunity for acceptance or rejection.

This is really the key in determining if you are truly delegating and not assigning work. If you assign work, the subordinate does not have the option to decline--with delegation, the subordinate does.
  - 2. Cannot **force** acceptance.
  - 3. Subordinate should **want** the assignment.
- F. Demand accountability.
  - 1. Delegatee should have to answer for results.
  - 2. It should be clear that you will evaluate final results against established criteria.
- G. Establish feedback mechanisms.
  - 1. Milestone dates to assess progress.
  - 2. Face-to-face or written.
  - 3. Feedback frequency depends on:
    - a. Complexity.
    - b. Importance.

- c. Subordinate.
  - 4. Strike a balance--don't over-supervise; don't under-supervise.
- H. Provide for emergencies.
  - 1. Back off--leave subordinate alone.
  - 2. Allow opportunity for self-correction.
  - 3. Be willing to tolerate different approaches.
  - 4. Let go but don't drop out--keep an open door.
- I. Reward accomplishments.
  - 1. Positive reinforcement while task is in progress.
  - 2. Reward final product if it meets criteria.
  - 3. Provide constructive feedback on deficiencies.
  - 4. Solicit feedback from delegatee also.

**Activity DG.2**

**Evaluating the Delegation Process**

**Purpose**

To evaluate the delegation process.

**Directions**

1. The instructor will ask for volunteers and assign roles for the following five role-play scenarios that involve a potential or actual delegation attempt.
2. After each role play is done, complete the questions that correspond to each role-play scenario.
3. The Role-Play Scenario Scripts follow the role-play scenario questions.

**Role-Play Scenario 1**

1. Was there a potential for effective delegation? List below those factors that indicated delegation would have been appropriate.

---

---

---

---

---

2. What leadership weaknesses did you observe?

---

---

---

---

---

**Role-Play Scenarios 2 to 5**

Answer each question listed below for each role-play scenario. Place a checkmark in the appropriate box if your response to the question is "yes."

	<b>Questions</b>	<b>Role-Play Scenario</b>			
		2	3	4	5
1.	Did the supervisor delegate an appropriate task?				
2.	Did the supervisor delegate to the right person?				
3.	Was the task clearly defined?				
4.	Were expected results clearly defined?				
5.	Did the subordinate receive enough information to be able to complete the task?				
6.	Was a due date specified?				
7.	Was authority level clearly specified?				
8.	Was authority level enough for the assignment?				
9.	Was the subordinate offered an opportunity to accept or reject the assignment?				
10.	Was it clear that the subordinate would be held accountable for final results?				
11.	Did the supervisor provide for feedback?				
12.	Did the supervisor provide for emergencies?				



## Activity DG.2 (cont'd)

### Role-Play Scenario Scripts

#### Role-Play Scenario 1

**Role-Play:** *The scenario is inside a firehouse office, where an **officer** is working intently at a paper-covered desk. A **firefighter/EMT** will enter. There should be a chair by the desk.*

*Notes or instructions for the reader are **not indented**, and should not be read out loud. Dialogue, or text to be read in the role-play exercise, is indented under each character role.*

A knock on the door.

#### **OFFICER**

(irritated at interruption)

Come on in.

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT** enters, stands before the desk.

#### **OFFICER**

Yeah, what is it?

#### **FIREFIGHTER/EMT**

Gee, you look kind of tired. Busy, huh?

#### **OFFICER**

Yes, I'm tired and I've got a terrible headache and still have all these reports to do. The project report is due next tour and I haven't even started the first draft yet. What do you need?

#### **FIREFIGHTER/EMT**

(moves chair in preparation to sit down)

I just came in to shoot the breeze with you, but if you're busy...

#### **OFFICER**

Well, I am. I'd appreciate it if we could talk later.

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT**

You know, I could probably help you with that report. I could type up the first draft and Charlie could do the other reports for you. He does that all the time when you're not here.

**OFFICER**

This is my job. Besides, by the time I keep tabs on you folks, I might as well do it myself. Anyway, the administration holds me responsible for the job.

**END**

## Role-Play Scenario 2

**Role-Play:** *The scenario is inside a firehouse office, where a **captain** is at the desk, talking on the telephone. A **firefighter/EMT** will enter. There should be a chair by the desk.*

*Notes or instructions for the reader are **not indented**, and should not be read out loud. Dialogue, or text to be read in the role-play exercise, is indented under each character role.*

**CAPTAIN** is on the telephone.

**CAPTAIN**

Is Smith out there? Okay. Send him in. Thanks.

**CAPTAIN** hangs up the telephone.

A knock on the door.

**CAPTAIN**

Come in.

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT** enters.

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT**

Good morning. You sent for me, Captain?

**CAPTAIN**

Yes, Smith, sit down. I'm glad you're here. I need your help.

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT** sits down.

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT**

Sure. What can I help you with?

**CAPTAIN**

Well, as you know, the public education program has been expanded in our department over the past year or so.

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT**

Yes, I know. That's great.

**CAPTAIN**

Yeah, it's okay, but now we're getting stuck with developing the first graders' program. With your background in psychology and as an elementary school teacher, I thought you'd be the person to do the job. Do you think you could come up with something?

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT**

(enthusiastic)

Yeah, sure! I'd love to! Ever since I've been in the fire service, I really miss working with kids.

**CAPTAIN**

Well, that takes a load off my mind.

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT**

Okay. What's the program about? What's its focus? Is there a budget I can work with? Can I buy teaching aids?

**CAPTAIN**

I don't care how you do it, just do it.

**CAPTAIN** hands Smith several papers.

**CAPTAIN**

Here. This should answer your questions. If not, then improvise.

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT**

(takes papers, stunned)

But Captain, I need to know!

**END**

### Role-Play Scenario 3

**Role-Play:** *The scenario is inside a firehouse break room, where an **officer** and **two firefighters/EMTs** are seated at a conference table.*

*Notes or instructions for the reader are **not indented**, and should not be read out loud. Dialogue, or text to be read in the role-play exercise, is indented under each character role.*

#### **OFFICER**

I asked you here because I had a meeting with the battalion chief last shift. The Battalion Chief comes up with these quarterly projects and, well, I volunteered for one. We all know there's a problem with recruit orientation and training.

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT #1** nods.

#### **OFFICER**

Orienting these recruits to our department hasn't been consistent from station to station, or even shift to shift. You folks all have a background in training, and you've been involved with the recruits at various times, including orienting them to our department.

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT #1**

Yes, we've all been involved in that.

#### **OFFICER**

Right.

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT #2**

We've needed the program for a while.

#### **OFFICER**

I want you to help me develop this program. What we need is for you to come up with what you believe is a good outline for a program that can be tracked from each recruit's first day right through the entire probation period...

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT #1**

(interrupting)

You want to wipe out everything we've scheduled up to this point with the recruits? Or you're looking for the...

**OFFICER**

No, whatever you think is most important for them to see throughout the department...

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT #2**

(interrupting)

You want a checklist? Or...

**OFFICER**

It's important for us to document and be able to track these people all the way through the entire probationary period: like the first quarter milestones, goals, their daily housework responsibilities, and check off the engine company, second quarter, the truck company, that sort of thing...

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT #1**

We're going to do this all ourselves or should we get someone to...

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT #2**

(interrupting)

What about overtime?

**OFFICER**

Okay. The chief says, of course, don't leave out the opinions of the other shifts, so you may have to consult with the shifts, and it may involve overtime...

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT #2** nods.

**OFFICER**

...we don't want the other shifts to think we're doing it just for ourselves and they're going to have to suffer the consequences, so that may be a neat thing to earn a few extra bucks.

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT #1**

Have we got any idea how many recruits are coming in...?

**OFFICER**

(interrupting)

Well, we're not sure; the training academy has about 40, I think, for the entire department, so we're not sure how many we'll be getting right here in our company. We'll find that out soon. But I want you all to let me know once you come up with a good outline, one that you think is workable. Then I'll take it, draw up a final draft, and get back to the battalion chief. All right?

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT #1**

You want us to check in with you, maybe let you know...

**OFFICER**

(interrupting)

Whenever you think you're through, just let me know where you're at.

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT #2**

You just want the final package delivered to you?

**OFFICER**

That's right.

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT #2**

Okay, we can handle that.

**OFFICER**

(stands up)

Bye.

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT #2**

Take it easy.

**OFFICER** leaves. **FIREFIGHTER/EMTS** talk among themselves.

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT #1**

About time we got involved in this kind of stuff, you know.

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT #2**

Well, we've been complaining long enough. We can have some input now.

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT #1**

Absolutely.

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT #2**

Sure.

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT #1**

We can do this.

**END**



### Role-Play Scenario 4

**Role-Play:** *The scenario is inside a firehouse break room, where **three firefighters/EMTs** are seated at a conference table, looking over newspapers and relaxing. An **officer** holding papers will walk in and join them.*

*Notes or instructions for the reader are **not indented**, and should not be read out loud. Dialogue, or text to be read in the role-play exercise, is indented under each character role.*

#### **FIREFIGHTER/EMT #1**

(holding newspaper and references it)  
You guys see this film?

#### **FIREFIGHTER/EMT #2**

Where's it playing?

**OFFICER** walks in with stack of papers.

#### **FIREFIGHTER/EMT #1**

Playing down at the Century Theatre Complex.

#### **FIREFIGHTER/EMT #2**

Oh-oh. Boss has got some work for us.

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT #1** looks disgusted.

#### **OFFICER**

I'm glad you three are here. The training division has come down with our training plan for the next 6 months.  
(begins to pass out paper to the three firefighters)

#### **FIREFIGHTER/EMT #1**

Oh, my word.

**THREE FIREFIGHTERS/EMTs** look reluctant.

**OFFICER**

As usual, this master plan states the number of hours...  
(sits at table)

...for each area of training that's supposed to be given at the company level. Would you all like to set up a tentative training schedule showing exact times, dates, and topics?

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT #1**

I guess I can fit in some time there. Yeah, I can do that.

**OFFICER**

Good.

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT #1**

Actually, you're asking for a lot...

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT #2** mumbles something, which the **OFFICER** shrugs off.

**OFFICER**

I'd like the three of you to suggest specific issues within these topic areas. I've only been at this station a few months now and you guys know better than I do what you need to work on.

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT #3**

You mean we can do what we want, when we want?

**OFFICER**

I didn't say that. We have to stay within the parameters specified in the master plan.

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT #1**

Do we use the schedule we've already got? Some of the data we've already put together?

**OFFICER**

Whatever...I want you to think about this a little bit and just try to stay within the parameters that are there. I want you to consider call in distribution and the weather conditions, especially since we're heading into winter now...

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT #2**

That means we can just sit back and fight some more fire then.  
(grins)

**OFFICER**

(acknowledges his sarcasm, then moves on)  
Right. Are there any questions?  
(no response)

Well...good. I want you to know that assuming your schedules meet the parameters outlined in this master plan, I'll go with what you decide. Final plans are due four weeks from today. Now, I'd like to meet with you in about two weeks to see how you're doing and make sure you're on track, but besides that, everything should work out okay. Any other questions?  
(no response)  
Good.

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT #2**

Sounds good. We can handle this.

**OFFICER**

This is our chance to start honing up on some of the skills that we really need. All right?  
(no response)  
Okay.

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT #1**

Okay.

**OFFICER** gets up and leaves the room.

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT #3**

(to **FIREFIGHTER/EMT #1**)  
Where'd you say that movie was playing?

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT #1**

Over at the Century complex.

**END**

## Role-Play Scenario 5

**Role-Play:** *The scenario is inside a firehouse office, where a **lieutenant** is sitting at a desk, working amid papers. A **firefighter/EMT** will enter. There should be a chair by the desk.*

*Notes or instructions for the reader are **not indented**, and should not be read out loud. Dialogue, or text to be read in the role-play exercise, is indented under each character role.*

A knock on the door.

The **LIEUTENANT** looks up from paperwork and stands up as **FIREFIGHTER/EMT** comes in.

### **LIEUTENANT**

Thanks for coming in.

### **FIREFIGHTER/EMT**

(shaking his hand)

No problem.

### **LIEUTENANT**

Sit down, sit down.

Both the **LIEUTENANT** and the **FIREFIGHTER/EMT** sit.

### **LIEUTENANT**

I really need to talk to you.

### **FIREFIGHTER/EMT**

What's up, Lieutenant? Another attitude problem? My detail's done, my truck's clean, my uniform looks great...

### **LIEUTENANT**

No, that's not why I asked you in. I really need your help. I have a problem.

### **FIREFIGHTER/EMT**

(laughing)

College graduate needs a little help, eh? Well, at least you realize it. That's better than some of the lieutenants who've been through here. What do you need?

**LIEUTENANT**

I need your knowledge and experience. Let me explain the situation. This afternoon at the supervisors' meeting we discussed the problems that we've been having with lack of standardized equipment placement on all the apparatus throughout the department. As you well know, those problems have become significant. You go from shift to shift, and station to station, and the equipment is in different places. Well, to deal with that problem, the department wants to adopt some standard operating procedures (SOPs) regarding equipment placement on all the apparatus.

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT**

Well, I tell you, it's about time. I've been saying that, and you know it, for years, that people go from station to station and the equipment is carried in different places in every fire station. Is somebody finally going to do something about it?

**LIEUTENANT**

This is exactly where you fit in. You know my background is heavy in EMS; I have very limited suppression experience. I've spent the last 4 years at the academy. You have 15 years of suppression experience...

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT**

(correcting him)  
16!

**LIEUTENANT**

(acknowledging correction)  
...16 years of suppression experience here in this department. You've operated every type of apparatus we have, and you've got the knowledge, experience, and common sense to develop some sound recommendations.

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT**

(anticipating)  
So?

**LIEUTENANT**

I'd like you to develop a set of recommendations for equipment placement on the various apparatus. We would need the recommendations along with the justifications and rationales supporting them.

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT**

And then what happens?

**LIEUTENANT**

Then I take your recommendations back to the supervisors. We'll hold a department meeting in 4 weeks and discuss any recommendations from the other shifts as well. Out of the various proposals, we'll come up with a common set of SOPs for the whole department.

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT**

(shaking his head, hesitating)  
I don't know.

**LIEUTENANT**

It won't be easy. It'll require some thought, considering all the different types of people and apparatus we have in the department. I have the national standards here that you can use...

(gestures to papers on his desk)  
...and the different styles of apparatus that we have in the department all laid out here.

(pleading)  
Would you be willing to work on the project for me?

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT**

(shaking his head, sighing)  
I don't know. You know, I've been ignored for years when I wanted to get involved with projects like this. I guess because some of the projects have been my ideas...

(shrugs his shoulders)  
...you know, the supervisors didn't want to listen to them. I don't know.

(shakes his head)

**LIEUTENANT**

This is a real important project.

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT**

(hesitating, then beginning to nod his head)

Well, I know it's something that's really needed.

(still nodding)

Yeah, I'll give it a try. It'll give me something worthwhile to do around here for a change.

**LIEUTENANT**

Good. I knew I could count on you. Let me give you a copy of the materials that...

(hands papers to **FIREFIGHTER/EMT**)

...I received and they stipulate the guidelines for the recommendations. As long as your proposal meets those guidelines, I'll back you 100 percent.

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT**

(glancing over papers)

You're going to back my recommendations?

**LIEUTENANT**

Absolutely.

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT**

100 percent? In the supervisors' meeting?

**LIEUTENANT**

Absolutely. Yes.

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT**

You'd go that far?

**LIEUTENANT**

Absolutely. I certainly value your 15...

(reemphasizing number)

...16 years of experience.

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT**

When would you need my recommendations?

**LIEUTENANT**

I need your final proposal in 3 weeks. That would give me enough time to review the proposal, and if I have any questions, get back to you. So, how does 3 weeks sound?

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT**

Yes, I can handle 3 weeks.

**LIEUTENANT**

Good. I'd like to meet with you, say, same time next week...on the 17th...to see what you've done to that point. Now, do you understand the assignment?

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT**

Yes.

**LIEUTENANT**

You're sure you know what needs to be done here?

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT**

Well, I'm going to work on...I'm going to give you a set of recommendations about where I think all the equipment should be carried on the apparatus, and that all has to be done in 3 weeks.

**LIEUTENANT**

(nodding)

Uh-huh.

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT**

...and you and I are going to have another meeting in a week...

**LIEUTENANT**

...the 17th...

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT**

(repeating)

...the 17th, to see whether we're on the right track or not.



**LIEUTENANT**

To discuss your rough draft.

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT** nods.

**LIEUTENANT**

That's right. And if you need any assistance--any help--you know my door is open and any resources that I have are available to you.

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT**

Well, I appreciate it.

**LIEUTENANT**

I appreciate it very much...

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT**

Sounds like a good project.

**LIEUTENANT**

...a great deal.

**END**



#### IV. REVERSE DELEGATION

- A. When a supervisor accepts responsibility for a task that rightfully belongs to a subordinate.

**Do not** let subordinates delegate upwards. This reinforcement of bad behavior simply means that the unwanted behavior will be repeated over and over. Hold your subordinates accountable and do not let them delegate to you.

- B. Consequences.

- C. How to avoid.

1. Return incorrect tasks.
2. Provide help and support but don't do it yourself.
3. Don't accept ownership of subordinate tasks.

#### V. SUMMARY

- A. Remember the principles.

- B. Take the first step.

1. Anyone can delegate effectively.
2. Know yourself and your subordinates.
3. Follow the rules.
4. Take your time.
5. Believe in yourself.

- C. Reap the benefits of effective delegation.



## WHAT IS DELEGATION?

Delegation is the sharing of authority, responsibility, and accountability between two or more people. It is a process which allows for a division of labor within an organization; it distributes the work that must be accomplished among a greater number of employees.

Delegation is a primary leadership tool that allows supervisors to share some of their assigned responsibilities with subordinates. To better understand the concept of delegation, it is useful to examine the leadership role. Leadership is generally defined as the process of influencing others toward the achievement of organizational goals. Thus, any effective leader understands that a critical leadership responsibility is the development of subordinates in order to maximize their potential for goal achievement. **Delegation is the highest form of subordinate development--** it is a special reward for those subordinates who meet or exceed minimum standards at their assigned level and are ready to assume additional responsibility. In essence, when a supervisor delegates work to a subordinate, the implicit message is: "I can see that you are ready to accept responsibility for tasks that are generally performed by someone at a higher level. Therefore, I've decided to share some of my work with you in order to give you an opportunity to grow."

Fire service leaders practice delegation routinely in emergency incidents. Any Incident Command System (ICS) relies extensively on delegating in order to work. The first officer at the scene assumes the authority and responsibility of the Incident Commander (IC), a task generally assigned to an upper-level official. Fire service supervisors are confident and comfortable in delegating at an incident. Fire/EMT officers are also confident and comfortable giving assignments--make sure you are clear of the difference. Typically, delegation occurs in the General and Command Staff positions within the ICS. Work assignments are generally given at the company level.

Delegation is equally important in non-emergency supervisory situations. This module is designed to help COs delegate as effectively at the station as they do at an incident.

## BENEFITS OF DELEGATION

Effective delegation "pays off" in many ways. Each successful delegation provides implicit benefits for the supervisor, the subordinate, and the entire organization.

### Benefits for the Supervisor (Delegator)

Delegation allows the supervisor to get more tasks accomplished in less time. Thus, the productivity of the unit is increased. By delegating some of the duties, the supervisor can concentrate on critical projects/tasks. The supervisor is providing more effective leadership; thus, enhancing professional image.

### **Benefits for the Subordinate (Delegatee)**

The subordinate has an opportunity to increase job knowledge and to develop leadership/decisionmaking skills for the future. The subordinate has a new challenge, a change of pace, and a new experience--all of which add up to a higher level of motivation. If the delegated task is done well, the subordinate receives recognition from others which, in turn, increases the subordinate's self-confidence and self-esteem.

### **Benefits for the Organization**

Delegation makes a significant contribution to overall organizational effectiveness. It assures maximum use of available knowledge/skill/ability at all levels of the organization and it is a well-known fact that the strength of any organization increases as individuals assume greater responsibility. In addition, future organizational leaders are being prepared and present productivity is enhanced.

### **BARRIERS TO DELEGATION**

Simply recognizing the benefits of delegation is generally not enough to convince many supervisors to delegate. They also need to overcome the barriers to delegation, which they have developed over time.

There are any number of reasons why supervisors at any level may be reluctant to delegate. Some of the more commonly cited reasons are the following:

#### **Misunderstanding the Leadership Role**

Supervisors may mistakenly believe that it's wrong to share their responsibility with subordinates. This is basically a misunderstanding of the leadership role; leaders are expected to get the job done--not necessarily to do all the work themselves.

#### **Fear of Being Shown Up**

Sometimes supervisors fail to delegate because they're afraid they'll look bad if the subordinate does a good job. Effective leaders understand that **they** ultimately look better when subordinates do good work.

### Inflated Egos

Some supervisors are unwilling to delegate because they're convinced that they can do things better and faster than anyone else. While this may be true, more often than not it's a matter of inflated ego. The fact is that there are many routine tasks that subordinates can easily learn. And although their first attempt may not be **perfect**, their precision and speed will improve with practice.

When a paramedic preceptor is supervising a paramedic intern in the field, it is sometimes difficult to sit back on your hands and watch the intern take forever to complete a history and physical--or forever to make an assessment. But remember that the learning process is developing and through repetition the intern will pick up the pace and gain confidence and competence.

### Lack of Confidence in Subordinates

Supervisors may feel that subordinates cannot be trusted or that they lack the necessary knowledge or skills to assume greater responsibility. This may indeed be the case if all your subordinates are relatively new in their position. However, there is usually at least one, and sometimes several, subordinates who are ready.

### Favorite Tasks

The most likely tasks for immediate delegation are routine noncomplex ones. Unfortunately, many supervisors **like** these easier tasks; some even use them as an excuse to avoid more critical work.

### Fear of Losing Control

Delegation is most difficult for those individuals who need to closely control everything all the time. However, although delegation does require a certain amount of "letting go" on the part of the supervisor, it does not mean giving up control.

### Lack of Understanding

By far, the biggest barrier to delegation is a lack of knowledge regarding what to delegate, to whom, and how to do it properly. Understanding a few basic principles of effective delegation allows the supervisor to maintain overall control and minimizes the risk of potential failure.

## PRINCIPLES OF DELEGATION

Delegating for success requires strict adherence to nine basic principles. Each principle is discussed in detail on the following pages.

### Delegate the Right Task

There are some obvious supervisory duties that are inappropriate selections for delegating to subordinates. Specific examples of tasks which must be excluded from the delegation process will vary, depending on the rank one holds and/or the organizational structure. Nevertheless, the following tasks would be **wrong tasks** to delegate in any circumstance:

- personnel counseling and/or disciplinary actions;
- performance evaluations;
- tasks that involve confidential information which has been entrusted to you; and
- tasks that involve great risk (a mistake will be unacceptable).

If you're just beginning to delegate it's a good idea to discuss your plans with your own supervisor in order to determine what the supervisor feels is inappropriate. The CO, as is anyone occupying a supervisory position, is a link in a human chain. The CO links subordinates with those in higher positions. In most circumstances it is important to reach an understanding with superiors about what is being proposed to delegate. This understanding should be of a general nature to provide leeway as situations arise and change. Nonetheless, it serves at least one very functional purpose; it sanctions what is being done. It also serves several other purposes, not the least of which is helping to keep those at higher levels from involving themselves unintentionally and unnecessarily in matters best handled by others or in other ways. It helps keep them informed as to activities and contributions of one's subordinates and demonstrates one's own leadership abilities.

Tasks that should be considered for delegation might be remembered by the popular cliché, "something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue."

**Something Old:** A task you've wrestled with indefinitely; a task you haven't had time for; a routine task--delegate it. The fresh mind of a subordinate might readily solve an old problem.

**Something New:** An unexpected assignment that threatens to destroy your own time management planning--delegate it. A subordinate might well enjoy a challenge--or even a relatively mundane task that will constructively occupy some downtime.

**Something Borrowed:** A task that is normally not a part of a particular unit's assignment--delegate it. A task like this may well be a breath of fresh air to a subordinate tired of routine.

**Something Blue:** A headache for the supervisor--delegate it. For an enthusiastic subordinate, it might be fun.



Almost anything can be delegated. Even if a task is among the vital few, component parts of the task might be proper for a degree of delegation. Remember: one's responsibility as a manager/leader is to make certain the tasks are completed and the problems solved, not to do everything.

Practice the management by exception rule; delegate the authority to perform the many tasks that are not specifically excluded.

### **Delegate to the Right Person**

It is important that the supervisor know subordinates. The supervisor, ideally, should be as familiar with subordinates as with the equipment used. And remember, the question is not whether or not the subordinate can do the job as well as the supervisor can, but whether the subordinate can do it adequately.

General guidelines to be applied in selecting the right person include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Does the person have the necessary physical, mental, and/or emotional capabilities necessary to deal with the potential assignment? If not, can the person acquire them in an expedient fashion through study, practice, and/or training?
- Is the person ready to assume additional responsibility? Has the person demonstrated an ability to work well without close supervision?
- Does the person have sufficient self-confidence to take the assignment on and carry it through to conclusion?
- Does the person have the confidence and respect of those needed to work, solicit input, and/or ask for assistance?
- Is the person willing to undertake this additional responsibility (even without any special interest in the task) and/or vitally interested in the given task? Needless to say, the willing and/or interested person will do a better job.

If the answer to each of the above questions is "yes," then this person is a good choice. The person will likely do a good job and the delegation process will be successful.

### **Define Responsibility and Establish Deadlines**

Once you've selected the task to be delegated and you have identified a potential delegatee, you need to clearly define the limits of the responsibility being transferred. Meet with the subordinate and clearly communicate the task you wish to delegate:

- exactly what must be accomplished;
- quantity and quality expected;
- when the assignment must be completed; and
- who else needs to be involved.

In addition, you need to assure that the subordinate receives as much information as possible about the proposed assignment, such as; background information, why the task is necessary, relationship of the task to unit and/or organizational goals, relevant material, sources of additional information, etc. Provide or arrange for any necessary training.

It is vital that the assignment of the task and any specific instructions be clear. If the subordinate honestly does not understand the task or instructions, don't hold responsible and accountable for errors in the completion of the task or for failure to complete the task.

Finally, be sure to communicate why you chose the subordinate for the assignment. And emphasize **your** confidence in the ability to complete the delegated task!

### **Delegate Authority**

In order to carry out any assignment, the delegatee must also have the authority required. Authority is the right to make decisions and take action.

The supervisor has an obligation to clearly define the **limits** of the authority being transferred to the subordinate. Examples of degrees of authority that can be delegated include:

- authority to take action only after receiving supervisory approval (minimum authority);
- authority to take action and report end result to supervisor; and
- authority to take whatever action is required. No prior approval or followup report expected (maximum authority).

Whichever level of authority is granted, the **amount of authority must match the amount of responsibility**. Along the same line, if the delegated task requires the subordinate to interact with/lead others, the supervisor must advise all involved personnel of the delegatee's authority. This sanctions the subordinate's new role and it prevents possible roadblocks and interference from others.

### **Get Agreement**

Once you've clearly explained the responsibility, time limits, and authority of the delegated task, allow the subordinate an opportunity to accept or refuse the assignment. Only an ineffective leader would consider **forcing** a subordinate to do something outside of one's official job description. Successful delegation requires acceptance on the part of the subordinate. The subordinate should be **willing** to accept the additional responsibility. The reason is obvious--the relationship between commitment and effort is extremely strong. Thus, the more committed a person is, the more potential for success!

### **Demand Accountability**

Accountability is having to answer for results. In delegation, the supervisor shares the responsibility for completing a specific task/function to a subordinate and also shares sufficient authority to complete the assignment. The subordinate is now **accountable** to the supervisor for completing the assignment. The supervisor must assure that the subordinates understand what they are accountable for. In other words, it must be clearly communicated to the subordinates that their final product/result will be evaluated against the expected results previously delineated.

It is necessary to understand that delegation is not--and must not be--an abdication of personal responsibility and accountability on the part of the supervisor. In **any** delegated task, the delegator (supervisor) always retains **ultimate responsibility and accountability**.

As should be clear at this juncture, delegation is not an "easy way out." It is not a shedding of responsibility, but rather a method of sharing leadership with capable subordinates.

### **Establish Feedback Mechanisms**

An established time should be set up for the delegatee and supervisor to meet at periodic intervals to review progress, deal with problems that arise, and, more generally, to provide an opportunity to touch base. Positive and constructive feedback to the subordinate is a vital ingredient of this meeting. Periodic written reports from the delegatee may be desirable in addition to or in lieu of the scheduled meeting with the supervisor. If such is deemed of value, dates, format, and other requirements should be discussed and agreed to by both the supervisor and subordinate.

The type and frequency of feedback mechanisms must be determined by the complexity and/or importance of the assignment and the supervisor's confidence in the subordinate. Feedback mechanisms are intended to alert the supervisor to problems before they reach crisis proportions. In general, the supervisor needs to strike a balance between receiving enough feedback to maintain control and demanding so much feedback that the subordinate ends up feeling untrusted.

### **Provide for Emergencies**

Once the delegated task is underway, the supervisor needs to retreat. The delegatee now has the ball and must be allowed the freedom to run with it.

Allow the delegatee an opportunity to correct mistakes without interference. Naturally, if a significant error occurs at any point and if self-correction is not forthcoming, it must be tactfully corrected. Otherwise, the truly successful completion of the task is jeopardized. In correcting such errors, the supervisor must focus comments on the behavioral mistake, not upon the person.

Be prepared for the delegatee to approach the task in a way you may not have considered. Be willing to accept that **your way is not the only way!** As long as the delegatee is making progress toward task completion and is remaining within the prescribed guidelines, the supervisor must be willing to tolerate diverse approaches/methodologies.

Staying in the background as the project unfolds may be difficult; however, the effective supervisor must master the tendency to jump in. Jumping in negates the very reasons for delegation. Besides that, constant and unsolicited help suggests to the subordinate a lack of confidence and trust on the part of the superior. The results: demoralization, frustration, and perhaps even intimidation.

A simple "how's the project going?" communicates interest without nosiness. Once again, the supervisor must strike a balance between showing too much interest and seeming not to care at all.

The best approach is to provide minimal supervision while maintaining an open door to deal with unexpected emergencies.

### **Reward Accomplishments**

Provide positive reinforcement for ongoing progress throughout the project. Remember, a given step does not have to be perfect to deserve a pat on the back. A simple compliment can make hours of work suddenly seem worthwhile.

When the delegated task is completed, sit down with the subordinate to review the total process. If the final product meets or exceeds the established criteria, be generous with praise and recognition.

Provide constructive feedback on possible improvements. If any of the stated expectations were not met, discuss the deficit(s) openly in order to assure improvement on the next assignment.

Assessment of the **process** should be made. The supervisor should solicit feedback from the subordinate as to what else could have been done as the delegator to have facilitated the delegation process.

### **REVERSE DELEGATION**

Reverse delegation occurs when a supervisor accepts responsibility for a task that rightfully belongs to a subordinate. In reverse delegation the supervisor accepts ownership of a problem/task that belongs at a lower level. For example; if a subordinate turns in an incomplete report, the supervisor just corrects it instead of returning it to the subordinate for corrections.

While any supervisor may, on occasion, be justified in accepting such responsibility, reverse delegation must be the exception, not the rule! If reverse delegation occurs regularly, several negative consequences occur:

- Subordinates get rewarded for poor performance; thus, they have more incentive to fail than to succeed.
- The supervisor is perceived as someone who is unwilling to face issues; thus, leadership credibility is eroded.
- Subordinates are never required to own up to inadequate performance in required tasks; thus, they are deprived of opportunities for growth and self-development.

In addition, every time the supervisor assumes ownership of a subordinate responsibility, the supervisor takes time away from supervisory functions. Thus, the more often it happens, the less productive the supervisor.

## **SUMMARY**

Successful delegation is both a science and an art. It is predicated on knowledge about human behavior and entails definitive skills. Simultaneously, the possession of the relevant knowledge and skills means little if one cannot or does not apply them effectively. Delegation, in reality, is personal and individual. It depends on informal relationships. From this frame of reference one can identify the knowledge required and proceed with the primary rules of delegation.

## **Principles of Delegation Process**

The supervisor should feel comfortable in the position and possess the requisite technical knowledge and skills to occupy that position if assumed. With these two preliminary assumptions, there are two essential requirements of the supervisor: knowledge of self and knowledge of subordinates.

### Knowledge of Self

The effective leader at any level of the organization must be in touch with himself/herself. This begins with recognizing one's own strengths and weaknesses as a fire/EMT service professional. What are one's own areas of expertise? Of interest? In what areas is there adequate knowledge and understanding without expertise? In regard to management skills and styles, what are one's strengths and weaknesses? What are one's personal pitfalls in management and in delegation? What is one's own professional goal?

The answers to these kinds of questions will help one in determining what tasks might best be delegated to others and what to be alert to in the exercise of delegation.

### Knowledge of Subordinates

The only way for a supervisor to lead effectively is to know the subordinates well both professionally and individually.

The same questions about self essentially apply to knowing one's subordinates. What are their strengths, their weaknesses, their interests, their professional goals? Any or all of these may impact subordinate's willingness to accept a task or succeed in performing the task. These answers may also provide guidance in matching the delegated tasks to the right person.

Before even thinking about delegation, **know yourself and know your subordinates.**

### Follow the Basic Rules

Adhere to the basic principles of effective delegation outlined in this module. Take your time--don't over delegate. Select less critical low-risk tasks for initial delegation attempts. If your first delegation effort backfires, analyze the process, identify errors, and learn from your mistakes. Then try again, armed with the assurance that delegation works when properly executed.

The payoffs for successful delegation are well worth the leadership effort required. Both the supervisor and the subordinate grow. Morale and productivity increase.

## GLOSSARY

1. **Accountability**--Having to answer for results.
2. **Authority**--The right to make decisions and take action.
3. **Delegation**--The sharing of authority, responsibility, and accountability between two or more people.
4. **Leadership**--The process of influencing others toward the achievement of organizational goals.
5. **Responsibility**--An obligation to make decisions and take actions.





# ***COACHING***

## **OBJECTIVES**

*The students will:*

- 1. Identify characteristics of effective coaches.*
  - 2. Identify the similarities between effective coaches and effective leaders.*
  - 3. Identify four critical coaching techniques.*
  - 4. Match coaching techniques with subordinate performance.*
-



**Activity C.1**

**Characteristics of Effective Coaches**

**Purpose**

To identify the characteristics of effective coaches.

**Directions**

The class will brainstorm a list of characteristics of an effective coach. Space is provided below for you to copy those characteristics, if desired.

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**I. THE LEADER AS COACH**

- A. "Coaching is face-to-face leadership that pulls together people with diverse backgrounds, talents, experiences, and interests, encourages them to step up to responsibility and continued achievement, and treats them as full-scale partners and contributors." (From *A Passion for Excellence*.)
  
- B. Characteristics.
  - 1. Vision.
  - 2. Self-confidence.
  - 3. Humility.
  - 4. Confidence in others.
  - 5. Flexibility.

**II. VISION**

- A. Vision is having a mental image of a possible and desirable future condition. (Bennis)
- B. Seeing beyond the obvious.
- C. Visualizing the big picture.
- D. Future orientation.
  - 1. Treating failures as opportunities for learning.
  - 2. Searching for improvements.
  - 3. Recognizing trends.



## Activity C.2

### Recognizing Trends

#### Purpose

To recognize coaching trends within and outside the fire department/emergency medical services (EMS).

#### Directions

1. Groups 1 and 2 brainstorm answers to the following question: "What are possible future trends that are started **inside** the department that might someday impact your company?"

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2. Groups 3 and 4 brainstorm answers to the following question: "What are possible future trends **outside** the department that might someday impact your company?"

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3. List your responses on the easel pad.
4. Select a spokesperson to report your findings to the rest of the class.
5. You have 10 minutes to complete this activity.







**IV. CONFIDENCE IN OTHERS**

A. You get what you expect.

B. The Pygmalion effect--the powerful influence of one person's expectations on another person's performance.

1. High expectations lead to high performance.

2. Low expectations lead to low performance.

C. Personal feelings.

1. Managers tend to **like** good performers and **dislike** poor performers.

2. When you **like** someone you send more **positive** messages--reinforcing good behavior.

3. When you **dislike** someone you send more **negative** messages--giving no incentive to improve.

4. Need to focus on **behavior** not **personalities**.

5. Communicate **positive** messages to **all subordinates**, regardless how you **feel**.

**V. FLEXIBILITY**

A. Every player is important.

1. Each individual deserves specialized attention.
2. Focus on getting **maximum** performance from **everyone**.

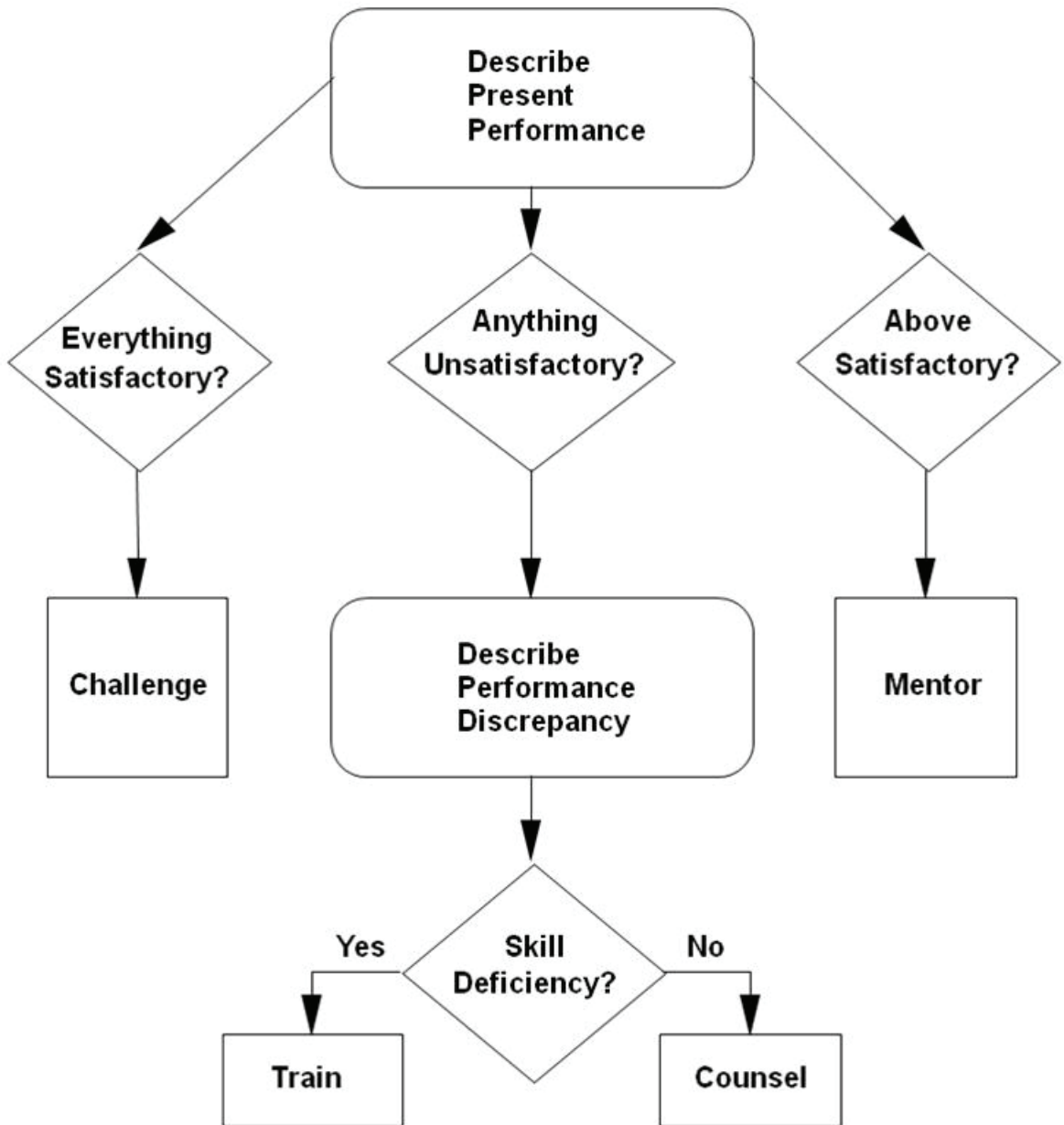
B. Training--a coaching technique.

1. Correcting unsatisfactory behavior.
2. Maintaining proficiency.
3. Providing feedback.
4. Teaching new employees.
5. Preparing for new assignments.
6. How can it be done?

- C. Counseling--a coaching technique.
  - 1. Working with someone to help solve a problem.
  - 2. The counseling interview.
    - a. Prepare.
    - b. Schedule meeting.
    - c. State problem then **listen**.
    - d. Discuss alternative solutions.
    - e. Agree on a plan of action.
    - f. Follow up and encourage.
    - g. Don't give up.
  
- D. Challenging--a coaching technique.
  - 1. Helping people maximize their potential.
  - 2. Building on existing strengths.
  - 3. Setting attainable goals.
  - 4. Encouraging them to stretch.
  - 5. How can it be done?

- E. Mentoring--a coaching technique.
  - 1. Recognizing above-average potential.
  - 2. Helping to fine-tune skills.
  - 3. Providing leadership opportunities.
  - 4. Providing exposure.
  - 5. Selling the individual to upper-level managers.
  - 6. Career planning.
  - 7. How can it be done?
  
- F. Matching technique to performance.

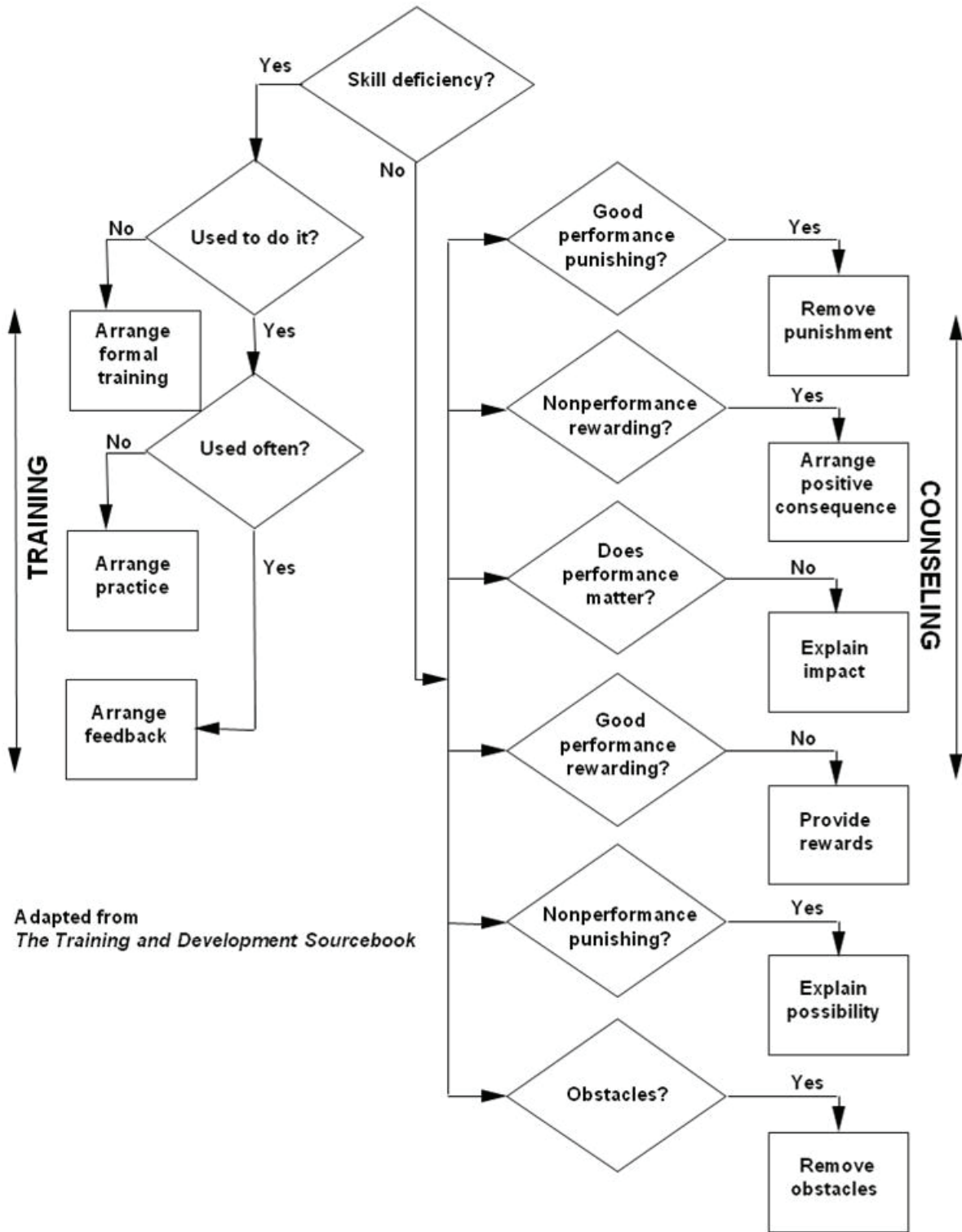
COACHING ANALYSIS MODEL #1



G. Remember:

1. Coaching is a **dynamic** process which responds to changing needs/ performance.
2. Effective leaders continuously monitor performance and adjust their approach as needed.
3. You may have to use different techniques simultaneously on the same individual.
4. You cannot ignore problems.
5. Training and counseling are not **punitive** techniques.

COACHING ANALYSIS MODEL #2



Adapted from  
The Training and Development Sourcebook



### Activity C.3

#### Matching Coaching Techniques to Subordinate Performance

##### Purpose

To match coaching techniques with subordinate performance.

##### Directions

1. On the following pages, four firefighters/emergency medical technicians (EMTs) are described. In each case assume that you are the CO. For each case:
  - a. Use the Coaching Analysis Model #1 to decide which coaching technique(s) you would use for this individual (challenge, counsel, train, mentor).
  - b. Explain why you selected the technique(s).
  - c. If you select either **challenge** or **mentor**, list 4 or 5 actions you might consider in order to apply the technique effectively.
  - d. If you select **train**, describe the problem and use the Coaching Analysis Model #2 to determine the type of training required.
  - e. If you select **counsel**, describe the problem and use the Coaching Analysis Model #2 to determine possible factors that are contributing to the problem.
2. Document your report on easel pad paper.
3. Select a spokesperson to report your decisions to the rest of the class.
4. You have 30 minutes to complete this activity.

### **Firefighter/EMT #1**

- with the department 8 years;
- knows every aspect of the job well;
- admired by other crew members;
- devotes substantial off-duty time as coach for a church softball team (winning team);
- acts as officer when you're not there;
- while acting officer, has difficulty presenting company school (does not like speaking in front of the group);
- while acting officer, delegates work effectively;
- is not enthused about in-service inspections but does a good job;
- has begun to study for promotion test twice but each time has stopped several months before the test and has not taken the exam;
- responds well to suggestions for improvement;
- learns new skills easily;
- is always well groomed;
- has an excellent attendance record; and
- understands the department's goals and occasionally takes heat from the more negative crew members on some of the less popular programs.

### **Firefighter/EMT #2**

- with the department 15 years;
- senior person in station;
- driver on pumper for 10 years;
- safe driver (no accidents);
- is content with status as driver;
- average performance in most areas of responsibility; and
- recently made major mistakes in setting up a relay pump operation at a fire in a remote location.

### **Firefighter/EMT #3**

- six months on job, 19 years old;
- still in probationary status;
- unsatisfactory performance in written exams and procedures;
- tries to be "one of the crew" by participating in horseplay, card games, and other station activities such as horseshoes, Ping-Pong, chess, etc;
- gets kidded when studying about being a "goody two shoes" by the other crew members; and
- is often the object of practical jokes.

### **Firefighter/EMT #4**

- with the department 4 years;
- recently took over as driver after much encouragement from you (he didn't want the responsibility);
- most work is satisfactory;
- enjoys orienting new members in station duties and responsibilities;
- seldom does more than what's demanded;
- good appearance;
- seldom uses "sick" time but usually arrives at the station just a minute or two prior to his official reporting time;
- enjoys fiddling around with the station computer; and
- has a degree in computer science.



## INTRODUCTION

The word "coach" usually brings to mind vivid pictures of professional and college sports coaches--the well-known individuals who push our favorite teams to victory. Upon further reflection, we recognize that most of us have had the experience of being coached by someone else--a piano teacher, a Little League coach, the person who taught us how to ride a bike, etc. The best coaches in our past are the folks who believed in us (sometimes more than we believed in ourselves), challenged us to excel, and were always there when we needed them.

The most effective leaders are those who recognize the similarities between coaching and leadership. This module will help you to improve your leadership effectiveness by making you more aware of the characteristics of effective coaches and by helping you to apply specific coaching techniques in your supervisory role.

## THE LEADER AS COACH

In *A Passion for Excellence*, Tom Peters and Nancy Austin define coaching as "face-to-face leadership that pulls together people with diverse backgrounds, talents, experiences, and interests, encourages them to step up to responsibility and continued achievement, and treats them as full-scale partners and contributors."

That's a rather long definition, but if we analyze the pieces, we find some critical implications. An effective coach:

- Has regular one-on-one interaction with each individual player.
- Accepts individual differences while encouraging teamwork.
- Demands the best from everyone.
- Holds people accountable.
- Praises and rewards good performance.
- Trusts and respects each individual.
- Listens to everyone's ideas.
- Is willing to compromise.

Obviously the most effective leaders also do all of these things and end up having effective work groups. Let's see if we can identify the critical characteristics of such leaders.

## VISION

Leaders with vision are able to develop a "mental image" of a "possible and desirable future condition" and to communicate that image to others in such a way that they want to be a part of making it happen. (Bennis.)

Company Officers (COs) with vision have a **"future orientation."** They recognize trends both inside and outside the department, which will eventually have an impact on how the company functions, and they prepare subordinates to meet the challenge. They treat individual or company failures as opportunities for improvement. They constantly seek out ways to enhance present methods, techniques, etc.

COs with vision have an ability to **see beyond the obvious.** They recognize each subordinate's potential and work diligently to help reach that potential. They recognize and use each individual's unique skills and abilities.

Finally, COs with vision are able to **visualize the big picture.** They themselves recognize the importance of the company's role in the overall success of the department, the importance of each individual in the overall success of the company, and the importance of the services provided by the department to the community. They work hard to make sure that every company member also recognizes these ideas.

## SELF-CONFIDENCE AND HUMILITY

Effective coaches have a strong sense of their own value and a firm belief that they can make a difference in the team's performance. Similarly, effective COs recognize that they have earned their position of authority through demonstrated ability and potential. They take pride in their success and they recognize their value to the organization.

Effective COs are confident that they can personally make a difference in company performance. They accept the fact that they are responsible for the success or failure of the unit and of each individual. They have enough self-esteem to be able to focus on leading rather than just being "one of the guys."

Effective COs work hard at staying on top of technical skills and knowledge. They are generous about sharing their own expertise with subordinates.

Just as effective coaches always balance their own self-confidence with a recognition that the team is what really matters, effective COs readily admit their success is dependent on the company members. They understand that leadership involves getting things done through others. If you can't get someone else to do what they are supposed to do, you're not leading effectively.

The best COs recognize that they cannot accomplish the work for which their assigned company is responsible without the cooperation of company members. Thus, humility means that **"the**

**best officers accept the fact that they need their subordinates more than the subordinates need them!"** (Fournies, *Coaching for Improved Work Performance*, 1978.)

If we start approaching our leadership role based on this premise, our top priority will be to do everything possible to help subordinates succeed.

## CONFIDENCE IN OTHERS

A former NFL head coach said: "I never criticize a player until he's convinced of my unconditional confidence in his ability." (Coach John Robinson, L.A. Rams.) Leaders understand what management research has demonstrated time after time--**what leaders expect from their subordinates and how leaders treat their subordinates usually determines their performance.** A unique characteristic of superior leaders is their ability to transmit high performance expectations that are invariably fulfilled.

The powerful influence of one person's expectations on another person's performance is referred to as the Pygmalion effect. (From George Bernard Shaw's "Pygmalion," later called "My Fair Lady," in which Eliza Doolittle is transformed from a poor street flower vendor into an elegant lady because someone believed in her!)

The Pygmalion effect was described by J. Sterling Livingston in the September/October, 1988 *Harvard Business Review*. "The way managers treat their subordinates is subtly influenced by what they expect of them," Livingston said in his article, *Pygmalion in Management*.

The idea here is that leaders get what they expect from subordinates. If you communicate high expectations and if you demonstrate confidence that the subordinates have the ability to fulfill these expectations, they generally will. On the other hand, if you communicate a belief that the subordinates lack the ability to perform, they will usually fail.

## FLEXIBILITY

Effective coaches recognize the need to vary their technique according to how an individual player is doing. A player in a "slump" gets different treatment than a player "on a roll." Similarly, effective leaders can adapt coaching techniques to best meet the needs of each person they supervise. In other words, they are committed to doing whatever is necessary to get **maximum** performance from **every** individual.

COs need to be able to effectively use four distinct coaching techniques: training, counseling, challenging, and mentoring. They need to know **when** to use each of the techniques.

## Training

**Training** might be **correcting** unsatisfactory skills, techniques, procedures, etc., **teaching** new skills, techniques, procedures, etc., or **maintaining** proficiency in required tasks. It can be informal (instant feedback, one-on-one demonstrations, etc.) or formal (classroom, drill tower, outside seminars, etc.).

## Counseling

**Counseling** is helping someone else solve a problem. While counseling in the broad sense of the word can deal with any sort of problem, formal counseling done at the CO level should be limited to helping individuals correct unsatisfactory work behavior. The counseling technique requires a face-to-face discussion between the leader and the subordinate. This discussion, sometimes referred to as the **counseling interview**, is conducted in private, with no interruptions. The focus of the leader is as follows:

- Preparation--Prior to the interview, define the problem in specific behavioral terms. Collect hard data on when, how often, why, etc.
- Schedule a meeting. Make sure you select a time when you won't be hurried--most counseling sessions take 30 to 40 minutes. Don't schedule the interview too far in advance--this just makes the person "stew" about what to expect.
- At the start of the interview state your case (the problem is...), and emphasize your desire to help solve the problem.
- Then listen.
- Reach agreement on the problem and **causes**.
- Discuss alternative solutions and select the best one(s).
- Get the subordinate to **commit** to a plan of action. Be supportive and patient, but insist on a plan.
- Follow up after the interview. Praise any and all steps toward improvement.
- Don't give up--if performance drops or improvement stops, counsel again!

## Challenging

**Challenging** is helping an individual to maximize potential. It involves encouraging people to "stretch." It focuses on enabling people to build on existing strengths. But there's a fine line



between stretching someone **to** their limits and **beyond** their limits. Encouraging someone to do something unattainable results in reduced subordinate self-confidence and distrust of the leader.

## Mentoring

**Mentoring** is taking a personal interest in the career development of a promising subordinate. You become a mentor when you recognize unusual potential in a subordinate and begin to provide leadership opportunities for him/her. Usually this involves helping to prepare the subordinate for promotion. However, in cases where the above-average employee has no interest in promotion, the mentor's role is to find ways for the subordinate to fine-tune skills and abilities without moving up.

## Matching Technique to Performance

**The Coaching Analysis Model #1** is a useful reminder for when to use each of the coaching techniques described in the preceding section. (See SM p. C-14.)

As you start using the model, keep the following points in mind:

- This is not an evaluation of the individual covering the past 3, 6, or 12 months. It's an appraisal of present behavior in order to determine which technique is most appropriate **today!**
- A **satisfactory** employee meets minimum standards in all areas of the job. Does what's required but not much beyond in either quantity or quality. This person needs to be **challenged** to increase productivity and contribute more.
- An **above-satisfactory** employee exceeds minimum standards in most areas of the job. Usually does more than what's required, both in quantity and quality. The CO should begin **mentoring** this individual.
- Any **below-satisfactory** performance needs immediate **training** or **counseling**, even if the individual excels or is adequate in most other areas. If the performance problem is due to a skill deficiency, provide training; if not, provide counseling.

Training and counseling require further analysis. The Coaching Analysis Model #2 will assist you in determining the most feasible solution to the performance problem. (See SM p. C-16.)

As you use the model, keep the following points in mind.

### Training Analysis

- If the person never knew how to do it well, it's time for formal training.
- If the person once knew how to do it well, but has forgotten due to infrequent use, it's time to provide supervised drills/practice sessions.
- If the skill is used frequently, arrange for one-on-one feedback while the skill is being used.

### Counseling Analysis

- Use the questions in the column to prepare for the counseling interview.
- Get as clear a picture as possible based on your own observations.
- Present your findings at the beginning of the interview, but recognize that you need to hear what the individual thinks before you have the total picture.
- Then follow the steps outlined on SM p. C-24 for the rest of the interview.

### SUMMARY

Coaching is a dynamic process that responds quickly to changing subordinate needs/performance. An effective CO continually monitors performance and applies the most appropriate technique.

In practical terms this means that a CO will, at times, be required to use more than one technique on the same individual at the same time.

The emphasis in coaching is on **supportive** behavior, which enables subordinates to reach their full potential. But an effective coach also understands that sometimes this is not enough. If coaching techniques have been tried and performance continues to be unsatisfactory, formal discipline must be initiated. This topic is discussed in another module.

However, for most of your subordinates the coaching characteristics and techniques covered in this module will usually reward you with an effective company and enthusiastic, productive company members.

## GLOSSARY

1. **Coaching**--Face-to-face leadership that pulls together people with diverse backgrounds, talents, experiences, and interests, encourages them to step up to responsibility and continued achievement, and treats them as full-scale partners and contributors.
2. **Counseling**--Working with someone to help them solve a problem.
3. **Mentoring**--Taking a personal interest in the career development of a promising subordinate.
4. **Negative Reinforcement**--Providing negative consequences (discipline) for unsatisfactory performance.
5. **Positive Reinforcement**--Providing positive consequences (rewards) for satisfactory or above satisfactory performance.
6. **Pygmalion Effect**--The phenomenon in which one person's expectations influence another person's performance. High expectations lead to high performance; low expectations lead to low performance.



# ***DISCIPLINE AT THE COMPANY LEVEL***

## **OBJECTIVES**

*The students will:*

1. *Identify the value of positive discipline.*
  2. *Describe how to use discipline to correct improper employee behavior.*
  3. *Describe how to apply discipline consistently, fairly, and impartially.*
  4. *Identify the value of progressive discipline.*
-



**I. INTRODUCTION**

A. The perfect fire department/emergency medical services (EMS)--yours?

B. Every department has difficulties.

C. Discipline is behavior and order maintained by training and control.

A disciplinary system spells out specific punishments for specific infractions.





**Activity DP.1**

**Reasons Discipline is Avoided**

**Purpose**

To apply discipline consistently, fairly and impartially.

**Directions**

1. In your small groups, discuss reasons why supervisors avoid discipline.
2. List reasons why supervisors are **reluctant** to use disciplinary procedures to correct improper employee behavior.

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3. Select a spokesperson to report your group's responses.



**II. POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE DISCIPLINE**

A. Negative discipline:

1. Punishment.
2. Win-lose.
3. Resentment.

B. Positive discipline:

1. Self-discipline.
2. Educational process.
3. Focus on correcting.
4. Aim to improve work behavior.
5. Mildest possible penalty.

**III. RULES AND REGULATIONS**

- A. "Hot stove" theory:
  - 1. Warning.
  - 2. Immediate.
  - 3. Consistent.
  - 4. Impersonal.
  - 5. No apologies, no gloating.
  - 6. Nonemotional.
  
- B. Rules are key to effective discipline if they are
  - 1. Understood and communicated.
  - 2. Applied equally.
  - 3. Enforced.
  - 4. Written.
  - 5. Needed.
  
- C. Nonenforcement endangers.

D. Must be reviewed periodically.

**IV. THE IMPORTANCE OF DISCIPLINE**

A. To the department.

B. To the CO.

C. To the firefighter/emergency medical technician (EMT).

D. Fair treatment for all employees.

**V. COMMON VIOLATIONS AND ACTIONS**

- A. Common disciplinary problems.
- B. Common disciplinary actions:
  - 1. Informal discussion.
  - 2. Verbal warning.
  - 3. Written reprimand.
  - 4. Fine.
  - 5. Suspension.
  - 6. Demotion.
  - 7. Termination.

**VI. PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE**

- A. A positive corrective plan which is reasonable, fits the offense, and gets increasingly severe for repeated infractions.
- B. Value of progressive discipline:
  - 1. Minimum punishment.
  - 2. Fair.
  - 3. Required for followthrough.
  - 4. Vital if appealed.
  - 5. Gives employee a chance.
- C. Progressive discipline versus "zapping."
  - 1. "Zapping" takes place when:
    - a. Marginal employee is known to supervisor but no specific punishable offense is committed.
    - b. Eventually, the employee **does something** punishable.

- c. Supervisor "zaps" the employee with a greater punishment than warranted.
  
- 2. "Zapping" is an attempt to "get" the employee for all past unpunished behaviors.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3. "Zapping" is usually overturned.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 4. CO needs to ask
  - a. Does the discipline fit the present violation?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. Is the discipline likely to correct behaviors?



**Typical Actions Chart**

<b>Offense</b>	<b>First Offense Discipline</b>	<b>Second Offense Discipline</b>	<b>Third Offense Discipline</b>
Tardiness	Verbal warning	Reprimand	Suspension (progressive)
Insubordination	Suspension	Termination	
Missed alarm	Warning/Suspension	Suspension	Termination
Sloppy work	Warning	Reprimand/Suspension	Suspension/Termination
Improper conduct	Warning/Suspension	Reprimand/Suspension	Termination
Violation of safety regulations	Warning Suspension	Reprimand/Termination	Suspension
Stealing	Suspension/Termination	Termination	
Fighting	Suspension/Termination	Termination	

D. Considerations:

1. Prior violations.
2. Extenuating circumstances.
3. Seriousness.

**VII. THE DISCIPLINARY INTERVIEW**

A. The steps:

1. Prepare--investigate and gather facts.
2. State your case.
3. Listen.

4. Indicate seriousness.
5. State expectations.
6. Get commitment to change.
7. End on positive note.
8. Document actions.
9. Inform about appeal process.

B. Checklist:

1. Setting.
2. Listen.
3. Don't interrupt.
4. Stay calm...don't lose your temper.
5. Don't argue.
6. Stick to facts.
7. Focus on behavior.

- C. Common errors:
1. Not being clear.
  2. Improper or no documentation.



**Activity DP.2**

**Evaluating Disciplinary Processes**

**Purpose**

To evaluate disciplinary processes for correct and incorrect practices.

**Directions**

1. The instructor will show three video scenarios and lead the class in one role-play which depicts a CO disciplining a subordinate.
2. As each video is shown or the role play is acted out, write down incorrect and/or correct behaviors modeled by the CO.

**Video Scenario 1--Behaviors Observed**

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**Role-Play Scenario 2--Behaviors Observed**

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**Video Scenario 3--Behaviors Observed**

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**Video Scenario 4--Behaviors Observed**

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## Activity DP.2 (cont'd)

### Role-Play Scenario 2

**Role-Play:** *The scenario is inside a firehouse office, where a **lieutenant** is sitting at a desk, working on papers. A **firefighter/EMT** will enter. There should be a chair by the desk.*

*Notes or instructions for the reader are **not indented**, and should not be read aloud. Dialogue, or text to be read in the role-play exercise, is indented under each character role.*

A knock on the door.

The **LIEUTENANT** looks up from paperwork as **FIREFIGHTER/EMT** comes in.

#### **FIREFIGHTER/EMT**

Hi, Lieutenant. You wanted to see me about missing the call last shift?

#### **LIEUTENANT**

(sternly, gesturing to chair)  
Sit down.

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT** sits.

#### **LIEUTENANT**

Darn right I do. I can't have anyone not getting on that fire apparatus when the alarm rings. You blew it...  
(hits desk with hand and stands up, shouting)  
...and I'm going to make an example out of you.

#### **FIREFIGHTER/EMT**

(squirming in his chair)  
I'm really sorry about missing the call. I promise it won't happen again.

#### **LIEUTENANT**

(still standing, voice raised)  
It's too late. It should never have happened in the first place. I've been on the job for eight years now, and I've never missed a run.

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT**

(trying to protest)

But...

**LIEUTENANT**

(stopping him with a raised hand)

But nothing. Empty out your locker. I'm relieving you of duty and recommending that you be fired.

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT**

(pleading)

Please, Lieutenant. I've never been in any trouble before. Can't I have just one last chance?

**LIEUTENANT**

(remaining firm)

I'm going to teach you a lesson. And the other people in this crew will know I mean business when I say we can't tolerate rule breakers.

(raising voice, pointing to the door)

Now get out of here!

**FIREFIGHTER/EMT** gets up and leaves. **LIEUTENANT** sighs.

**END**



**VIII. BIZARRE BEHAVIORS**

A. Behaviors which are unusual and for which there may not be written rules or procedures.

B. Guard against overreacting.

C. Checklist:

1. Damage?
2. Work interrupted?
3. Safety problem?
4. Knowledge?
5. Correctable?
6. Illegal?
7. Department image hurt?
8. Morale damaged?

D. Follow normal procedures--don't overreact. Advise or appeal procedures.

E. If no rule--consult management.

**IX. EMPLOYEE VALUES**

A. Differences in attitude, willingness, commitment.

B. There will always be:

1. Undisciplined personnel.

2. Incompetent personnel.

3. Personnel who will not conform.





## Activity DP.3

### Determining Proper Discipline

#### Purpose

To use discipline to correct improper employee behavior.

#### Directions

1. Study your assigned scenario carefully and, using a flipchart, determine the immediate course of action as well as the future actions that should be taken by Lt. Maxwell or Captain Alexander.
2. After 25 minutes a spokesperson selected by your groups' will be asked to report your actions and the reasons for them to the class.

#### Scenario 1

You are Lt. Maxwell and are in charge of an engine company and the three firefighters/EMTs assigned to it.

Firefighter/EMT Jones is the senior member of your crew having 16 years in the department and having worked for you for the past 2 years. Jones has been a marginal employee for entire career, but has managed to avoid any serious disciplinary problems. Jones has been late for duty twice over the past year (overslept) and was officially reprimanded the second time.

Jones's appearance is usually pretty sloppy and you've been meaning to discuss this but haven't gotten around to it yet.

Last duty day while you were on personal leave for the day, you assigned Firefighter/EMT Jones as Acting Officer for the first time in hopes that the added responsibility would improve the behavior. While Acting Officer, Jones failed to do the required paperwork on two emergencies that occurred. The first thing today, Jones asked you for permission to leave the station for 2 hours to attend a brunch in honor of a family member who received a promotion at the office.

Although it is against the rules to allow firefighters/EMT to leave the station for personal business, you decided to let Jones attend this special occasion in hopes that something positive would turn Jones around to be a good employee.

Jones reported for duty, after the brunch, apparently drunk, 6 hours later.

1. What are your immediate actions?

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2. What are your future actions?

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**Scenario 2**

You are Captain Alexander and have recently been elected to your position in the Pleasant Valley Volunteer Fire Department.

You have just returned from an alarm in a small apartment building. You responded with your pump operator, Firefighter/EMT Mo Franklin, and three other firefighters/EMTs. Firefighter/EMT Franklin was the person whom you defeated in the election and he is very resentful because he feels that he has much more experience than you do and is a more competent firefighter/EMT. He has been a member for 24 years and served as a captain several years ago, but was not reelected because of his caustic personality. He is, however, one of the informal leaders of the department.

You were first-in officer, and, upon your arrival, there were three rooms heavily involved in fire. You ordered the other three firefighters/EMTs to stretch preconnected lines and ordered Franklin to lay the line to a hydrant 200-feet away. As the line was being laid, you observed the engine passing the hydrant and called on the radio to correct the mistake. You received no response to your radio message, contrary to departmental standard operating procedure (SOP). The dispatch center repeated your message so there is no question that Franklin received it. By the time your engine connected to the hydrant, the second-in engine had supplied water and knocked down the fire.

A short while later you told Franklin to pick up the hydrant line and received the sarcastic reply over the radio, "What do you think we **were** doing?"

**DISCIPLINE AT THE COMPANY LEVEL**

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In the recent past, Franklin has been critical in group situations of other firefighters/EMT and officers for their perceived errors on the fireground. In particular, he has commented that their judgment is not as good as his would be in similar circumstances. He tends to criticize the mistakes of others and then turn around and make the same mistake. When others ask him for assistance, he is only marginally helpful.

Franklin is always available to respond to daytime fires and has made many worthwhile contributions to the department in the past.

1. What are your immediate actions?

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2. What are your future actions?

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**Activity DP.3 (cont'd)**

**Sample Determining Proper Discipline Worksheet**

Identify an individual you supervise who has a performance problem which may require you to take disciplinary action now or in the future. Complete the following:

1. Describe the person's **current** performance.

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2. Describe the **desired** performance.

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3. List any action you have taken so far to correct the problem.

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4. What is the appropriate step in the positive discipline process to take at this point? (Consider action so far.)

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5. List the major points you will cover in your next discussion with this person.

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**X. FINAL TIPS**

- A. Cardinal Rule #1: Praise in public; criticize in private.
- B. Treat every case as if it will be appealed.
- C. When discipline is given, it is over. Do not keep referring to someone's mistakes.
- D. Apply discipline consistently, fairly, and impartially.
- E. Deal with behavior, not personality.
- F. Never discipline when you are angry.
- G. Reinforce good behavior.
- H. Set a good example.
- I. Do not "save up" discipline--act as soon as possible.
- J. Do not threaten punishment you cannot deliver.
- K. If you suspect substance abuse, get help from the chief's office.
- L. If in doubt on any disciplinary action, ask the chief's office.
- M. Do not play games with union by giving too much discipline, figuring it will be reduced when appealed.
- N. Do not transfer your problems; solve them.
- O. Be familiar with union contract's grievance procedures and employee rights.
- P. Know your rules and regulations thoroughly.
- Q. Be willing to treat an honest mistake as an honest mistake.



## INTRODUCTION

Disciplining employees is a task that most supervisors find difficult. It does not matter whether the supervisor works for IBM, Ford Motor Company, or is a Company Officer (CO) for a fire department. **All** have a reluctance to use discipline as an effective method of correcting improper employee behavior.

In all work environments--and especially in a paramilitary organization such as a fire department--rules must be enforced and improper behavior corrected.

Most departments have difficulty with inappropriate or obsolete rules; with administration or management perceived as not supporting all disciplinary actions recommended; with reductions or reversals of discipline when appealed; with some officers not enforcing the rules or transferring problem personnel rather than dealing with the improper behavior. Some of these difficulties arise from not having enough, or any, training in handling formal disciplinary actions.

Rather than deal with a discipline problem, some supervisors and managers make excuses for themselves. "The other officers don't, so I'm not going to be the only one enforcing rules around here." One of the most common excuses seldom verbalized is: "I do not want the crew to turn against me."

Every supervisor has a natural reluctance to discipline others--that's normal. However, you do have a responsibility to your organization. Discipline and rules are critical for your department to succeed in its mission.

Discipline is not necessarily synonymous with punishment. In many cases problems with employee behavior can be solved merely by pointing out to the employee that this behavior is not acceptable.

## POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE DISCIPLINE

Negative discipline involves negative behaviors: punishment--often harsh, win-lose climates, and interpersonal resentment.

A positive approach to discipline encourages self-discipline (build on mutual respect and self-control), and treats disciplinary actions as a necessary educational process, and is used to correct undesirable and unacceptable behavior by letting the person know through concrete experience and example what is expected. Disciplinary actions should be aimed at guiding the member, strengthening the self-discipline, and improving work behavior. The penalty should be the mildest that will bring about these changes.

Positive discipline is an attitude that must be accepted by the supervisor as an approach and developed in the subordinate.

## **RULES AND REGULATIONS**

Rules are the key to effective discipline in an organization. Rules must be thoroughly understood and communicated to all employees in the department. They must apply equally to all employees. If rules are not enforced they are meaningless. Not enforcing rules can damage morale and create hazardous situations where firefighters/emergency medical technicians (EMTs) might be injured.

Your rules should be a dynamic document--not a document cast in stone. Rules should be updated on a regular basis, with obsolete rules thrown out and new appropriate rules added. COs should strive to change unfair and obsolete rules by pointing out needed revisions to management and demonstrating negative results if "bad" rules are enforced.

Max Weber, a German sociologist, states that a major feature of a bureaucracy is that it ensures fair treatment for all employees by management. This is accomplished only when each employee has specified and official areas of responsibility that are controlled by rules; there is a clearly ordered system of supervision and subordination; and written rules are maintained as a means of managing.

Discipline is important to the department in that it reinforces departmental values and relationships. Discipline fosters order, not chaos. It resolves problems at an early correctable stage and clarifies management's expectations of subordinates.

Discipline is also important to the firefighter/EMT. It provides a certain level of security. It lets the firefighters/EMTs know what is expected of them. It sets boundaries and makes departmental goals clear. Effective discipline rewards employees for good behavior and can correct a problem before it is too late.

Discipline provides the tools for a CO to deal with improper behavior and increase company efficiency. It provides the framework for equitable and fair treatment of subordinates. Discipline contributes directly toward enhancing a power base and, if properly applied, will earn respect.

## **COMMON VIOLATIONS AND ACTIONS**

Some violations which are common in all fire departments include tardiness, absenteeism, insubordination, missed alarms, improper conduct, and sloppiness.

It is important to note that any or all of these examples might be symptoms of a more serious problem such as substance abuse or emotional disturbance. If you suspect either, you should seek guidance from a superior officer. Most departments have an Employee Assistance Plan (EAP) to assist employees with these particular problems. Usually, the administration has much more experience dealing with problems of this nature.

However, in all cases your responsibility as an officer is to take the appropriate action as it relates to the violation or improper behavior.

### **Common Disciplinary Actions**

Most departments have a set of disciplinary actions that vary from formal counseling to termination. Terminology varies, but basically these actions are:

- **Informal discussion.**
- **Verbal warning.**
  - Usually a first attempt to correct minor violations.
  - Sometimes written into employee's personnel record.
  - Gives employee a chance to correct behavior at an early stage.
- **Written reprimand.**
  - An official action for failure to correct behavior after one or two verbal warnings.
  - Sometimes the initial discipline for more serious violations of rules or procedures.
  - Usually part of an employee's official record.
  - Sometimes recommended by the CO and formally acted on by the fire chief.
- **Fine.**
  - Fines in different forms are effective methods to correct behavior. They may include forfeiture of pay or time, demotion, or extra work.
- **Suspension.**
  - Given for repeated violations.
  - Given initially for more serious violations.
  - Last step before termination.
  - Varies in length from 1 to 30 days.

- **Termination.**

- Only used when all efforts to correct employee behavior have failed.
- The employee cannot be rehabilitated or made to conform to departmental standards.

## **PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE**

Progressive discipline is a process that has the greatest potential to correct improper employee behavior with a minimal amount of punishment. It is a positive corrective plan rather than a negative approach that should be reasonable, fit the offense, and become increasingly severe for repeated infractions of the same rules.

Progressive discipline is required to implement more severe punishment if previous less severe punishment failed to correct behavior. Most cases lost or reversed on appeal were because the employee was never given a chance to correct behavior at an early stage.

In applying discipline, the supervisor must always be fair and impartial. The supervisor must consider prior violations of similar rules and whether there were any extenuating circumstances involved.

Remember the whole purpose of disciplining an employee is to correct improper behavior.

## **THE DISCIPLINARY INTERVIEW**

Having the proper setting for a disciplinary interview is important not only for the employee but also for the CO. Discipline should be a private matter that will correct employee behavior without embarrassment and with respect.

As a CO, you should thoroughly investigate what has occurred and have all your facts ready to discuss with the employee. The interview should take place where privacy is assured. Once the interview begins, get right to the point. State your case clearly and immediately. At this point, let the employee respond by giving the other side of the issue. If your facts are wrong, be willing to change. Listen; do not interrupt or lose your temper. Avoid arguing and stick to the facts. Be sure you discuss only the improper behavior and not the personality.

Indicate the seriousness of the improper behavior and what your expectations for the future are. Try to get a commitment to change from the employee. End the session on a positive note; never leave the employee feeling hopeless.

Be sure to inform the employee of any appeal procedures that are available. After the meeting be sure to document your actions.



A common error that some supervisors commit is being vague or unclear as to what improper behavior the employee demonstrated. It is extremely important that the supervisor clearly state what the improper behavior was and clearly state the supervisor's expectations for future behavior.

Improper or no documentation is perhaps the single most common error a supervisor commits. Documentation should be done, at the very least, whenever one or two verbal warnings have not corrected improper behavior or if the offense is of a serious nature. Proper documentation should specify exactly what the improper behavior was, when it occurred, and what action was taken to correct the behavior.

### **BIZARRE BEHAVIORS**

Bizarre employee behavior in this context means behavior unusual in nature and for which there may not be written rules or procedures that cover the behavior. COs need to guard against reacting to the bizarreness of the incident and focus directly on the seriousness of the behavior. A series of questions that will serve as a checklist to disciplinary possibilities includes

- Was there damage to equipment or property?
- Was work interrupted?
- Did behavior create an unsafe situation?
- Did the employee know better?
- Is the behavior correctable?
- Did the behavior violate the law?
- Was your department's image damaged?
- Did the behavior damage morale?

It is important for the CO to realize not to overreact to the incident and that your normal procedures should be followed. As in all disciplinary actions, the employee should be advised of all avenues of appeal. Public employees are usually held to higher standards of behavior than their private-sector counterparts.

### **EMPLOYEE VALUES**

Usually employees fall into one of three categories. The first is the employee with positive self-imposed discipline that matches organizational goals and values, who has their own and the public's best interest at heart. The second category includes employees with goals and values

that do not match the organization, but will adapt to the organization's goals and values. The third type will not adapt to the department's goals and values, and proper steps are needed to bring the employee in line or remove that person from the organization.

### **FINAL TIPS**

- Cardinal Rule #1: Praise in public; criticize in private.
- Treat every case as if it will be appealed.
- Once discipline is given, it is over. Do not keep referring to someone's mistakes.
- Apply discipline consistently, fairly, and impartially.
- Deal with the improper behavior, not the personality.
- Never discipline when you're angry.
- Reinforce good behavior.
- Set a good example.
- Do not "save up" discipline--act as soon as possible.
- Do not threaten punishment you cannot deliver.
- If you suspect substance abuse or emotional problems, get help from the chief's office.
- If in doubt on any disciplinary action--seek help.
- Do not play games with the union--giving too much discipline figuring it will be reduced when appealed.
- Do not transfer your problems; solve them.
- Be familiar with your union contract's grievance procedures and employee rights.
- Know your rules and regulations thoroughly.
- Be willing to treat an honest mistake as an honest mistake.

## GLOSSARY

1. **Discipline**--behavior and order maintained by training and control.
2. **Negative discipline**--based on threats and punishment.
3. **Positive discipline**--based on mutual respect and self-control.

