

CENTRAL OFFICE EMPLOYEES
TRAINING AND DEVELOPING

1. GENERAL

1.01 This Section describes training procedures and records which are necessary for an orderly training and development program for employees.

1.02 Training and developing employees is a major responsibility of each supervisor. Training must be a continuous activity because of changes in central office equipment, force additions and transfers, and high standards of service to be maintained.

1.03 Training is done on-the-job and in Schools. The goals are to provide a competent work force to meet service and cost objectives and to develop those individuals who can progress in the business.

1.04 Bell System or Southwestern Bell Telephone Company courses are used in the training Schools. A supervisor submits requirements for this training and then schedules employees to attend the desired courses.

1.05 On-the-job training is done mostly by the supervisor. It may supplement School training by providing closely supervised work experience on the equipment covered in these courses or it may satisfy other training requirements not handled by Schools. These requirements usually pertain to subjects which do not warrant formal classroom training or are unique to an office or a small number of offices. Training needs made known from work evaluations are also a key part of a supervisor's on-the-job training program.

2. SUPERVISOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES

2.01 Employees are initially trained in Schools which cover the type of work they will be doing. These Schools are usually conducted on a continuing basis. The supervisor should request that persons requiring training be scheduled for the appropriate courses. Particular needs may vary according to the size of the office and the amounts and kind of equipment installed, as well as the required hours of coverage. Requests for School training should be made far enough in advance so that training can be scheduled and completed in time for new service or features to be added in the employees office.

2.02 A supervisor should aim to acquire as much force flexibility through training and job experience as is required to provide adequate coverage during vacations, absences, and out-of-hours tours. This is not to say that, for a large force in a large office containing various kinds of equipment, all employees should be trained on everything. Such an operation would needlessly increase training costs. However, it is necessary that a supervisor obtain enough cross-training and experience to have capable force coverage during the periods the building is attended. For out-of-hours work, the force should be sufficiently trained to handle alarms and emergencies in all equipment, including power. They should be able to perform basic service restoration procedures in the various types of equipment in which they have not been fully trained.

2.03 Some supervisors consider training needs as being urgent only when an employee is new in a position. Because of the ratio of the small amount of knowledge already acquired to the large amount of knowledge yet required, they make urgent requests that the new employee be sent immediately to School. These supervisors apparently feel that their training responsibility is satisfied when the employee has been entered in the required course, because they tend to ignore continuing training needs, both School and on-the-job, from then on.

2.04 Training needs are a continuing responsibility of supervisors. Each employee must be:

- (a) Initially trained on the various things which are the basic job requirements at the time of induction into the employee's present job.
- (b) Retrained when required, which implies the additional responsibility that competence be checked periodically.
- (c) Properly trained on each new major change in the job requirements.

3. DETERMINING TRAINING NEEDS

3.01 Training needs are determined in different ways. For example, the addition of a new service or feature may require that all of a large portion of the force be trained. In other cases, because of different levels of competence, the needs of the individuals on the force may vary significantly from employee to employee. The determination of the training needs of individuals requires careful thought by supervisors. Accordingly, greater emphasis is given to these considerations in this Section.

3.02 Generally, there are two main sources for determining the training needs of the individual employee. The first is through the maintenance of a record of training given, which can be compared with a list of training requirements for the particular job. The second is through knowledge obtained from evaluations of the employee's work. Both of these are important ingredients in an overall training program.

3.03 The use of an individual record of each employee's training implies that there should be a list of items for which each employee should be trained. Because of the varying needs of different offices, the list may best be made up by the supervisor for each office. The supervisor may refer to the Bell System or Southwestern Bell training courses, adding local requirements which would be unique to each office.

3.04 The detailed training list serves as a reference from which the supervisor programs items for training. Some training may be given to groups of employees but much training is done on an individual basis.

3.05 The second source of training needs comes from the supervisor's work evaluations. When results are below standard, a need for training may be indicated. While in some cases poor work may stem from carelessness or poor attitude, supervisors should guard against reaching such conclusions without proper evidence. Generally, it is best for the supervisor to assume a need for technical training until otherwise demonstrated.

3.06 Training needs which are determined from work evaluations should be scheduled without delay. If there is an appreciable delay in doing the required training

the employee may be assigned to a different type of work. When this happens, the effectiveness of the on-the-job training program is weakened. It is important that the employee continue to do similar work assignments so that the supervisor may check on the effectiveness of the training.

3.07 Supervisors must coordinate work assignments, work evaluations, and on-the-job training. All kinds of work done by each employee should be sampled, not only to check quality and efficiency, but also to determine who needs training.

4. THE TRAINING PROCESS

4.01 The training process consists of several steps. There is a tendency for supervisors to skip steps or to slough off some steps because of demands on their time. If training is not done well, if it is not appropriate, or if its effectiveness is not checked through follow-up, the end result will be less than what is required for the job. The time spent doing a partial or careless job will be for naught, resulting in an adverse effect on service and cost and a greater increase in training time required later. This results from the continuation of the incorrect habits which the training was intended to correct.

4.02 The steps of the training process are:

- (a) Determine need
 - New employee
 - Transferred employee
 - New office feature
 - Company policy change
 - Safety lesson
 - Results of work evaluation

- (b) Schedule training
 - Coordinate with work assignments
 - Supervisor's reminder to meet training obligation
- (c) Prepare for training
 - Supervisors do necessary "homework", i.e., what is to be covered, how training is to be done (demonstrate, explain, coach)
- (d) Give the training - Demonstrate, explain, coach, have employee demonstrate
- (e) Assign employee to work requiring use of knowledge
- (f) Evaluate work - Inspect, observe, interview
- (g) If results are not satisfactory, repeat the process

4.03 When employee returns from School, the supervisor should have work assignments prepared so that soon after they return the employees are required to apply the knowledge. The supervisor verifies this by observing work, by inspecting work, or by interview using the question-listen technique.

4.04 When supervisors do not follow this procedure, employees are apt to attach little importance to the training. Some may even look on the time away from the job as a period for relaxation. Supervisors must require a reasonable return of knowledge for the time invested, so that employees feel the urgency for learning.

4.05 Form E-5459, Schedule, (Exhibit 1) should be used as a training schedule. Training sessions may be missed, but only for valid reasons, such as absence, emergencies, or last-minute impositions of the job. The training schedule with missed sessions crossed out is a reminder of incomplete training requirements.

4.06 Normally, training is scheduled for one or two weeks in advance. Each week, the schedule should be extended for one more week. While it is not essential that the schedule be extended the same number of weeks for each employee, this is often the case. In the instance of a new employee on the force, however, it may be best to plan training program over a longer period of time, extending it beyond the schedule for other employees.

4.07 The selection of training items is made on the basis of several requirements:

- (a) New circuits, practices, procedures, or test equipment.
- (b) Work inspections and work observations made as a part of the work evaluation program.
- (c) Need for advanced training as employee proves competent in the basics.
- (d) Periodic reviews of methods which are used infrequently, such as restoration procedures, or of others which by their nature allow no leeway for unfamiliarity (fire drills, use of fire-fighting equipment, etc.).

4.08 The training schedule should also be used to program all follow-up training sessions. This will probably be a question-listen session. The supervisor will try to

find out how well the employee has learned the material. Next, the supervisor will assign the employee to work which requires the use of this training. This is a follow-up of the training and practical experience, to see if the employee has become competent. At this time, the supervisor will inspect several of the employee's trouble tickets and observe one or two troubles, to see how well they were handled.

5. TRAINING METHODS

5.01 There are several methods the supervisor can use for on-the-job training. Interviews using the question-listen technique, demonstrations by employees, explanations and demonstrations by the supervisor, and practical experiences are examples. It is important that a supervisor use the most suitable method for imparting the knowledge. It is not always necessary that the supervisor act as a teacher.

5.02 Employees who have sufficient backgrounds can teach themselves many things. It may be necessary for them only to study a Bell System Practice. Afterwards, the supervisor can test their knowledge or clarify misunderstandings by use of the question-listen interview.

5.03 In some cases it is appropriate to assign an employee to work with another having more experience. However, if either the employee to be trained or the employee doing the training spends most of their time training and watching, productivity will suffer. The supervisor must check that the experienced employee imparts only proper procedures or approved methods to the inexperienced employee.

5.04 Training is most effective if the learner is required to participate: to adjust equipment, to trace circuits, and to operate test sets, etc. This learn-by-doing teaching technique should be used whenever practical. Other visual aids, such as diagrams and pictures, may ease the learning process. The supervisor may with little effort, be able to obtain or prepare useful training aids.

5.05 The training meeting should be no longer than necessary. The supervisor should be well prepared. Questions from the force should be invited afterwards. However, the meeting should not be allowed to degenerate into a free but pointless discussion. When a question arises which concerns only one person, the discussion with this person should be postponed until after the group meeting has been adjourned. It is important that the time of the entire group is not taken up with something that does not concern them.

5.06 The overall objective of a training program, both School and on-the-job, is to improve results through the increased proficiency of the force. There will be occasions when repeated training in a given area fails to produce satisfactory results. This may be caused by lack of the ability required to perform the work satisfactorily.

5.07 Sometimes employees consistently produce work which does not meet minimum requirements. When such a case occurs, the supervisor must be able to demonstrate, with complete documentation, that the work standards are reasonable, that the employee has been retrained, and has been advised of poor performance. If the case warrants, the employee should be warned of possible consequences.

5.08 These cases should occur rarely. However, when they do, the supervisor's boss must be told of their development and advised of pertinent facts. The supervisor must be certain that reasonable effort has been applied and each step clearly and accurately recorded. Experience proves that, when the training process is followed as outlined in this Section, cases requiring disciplinary treatment are rare.

6. TRAINING RECORDS

6.01 When training has been given in a School or on-the-job, it should be noted on the employee's personal training record. The supervisor enters the training subjects on Form E-5491, Training Record, (Exhibit 2) when training is given.

6.02 The training subjects are obtained, as previously described, through work evaluations and office requirements. While there may be some advantage in the use of preprinted list of training subjects, there would be the disadvantage of having many subjects not applicable to a particular office.

6.03 Form E-5491, Training Record, (Exhibit 2) has a column for indicating the last time an employee's competence was checked. "Competence" means the ability to perform properly all that is required in the subject and to be explicit in the reference associated with it. Skill should be judged on demonstrated ability to perform, when possible, and not just from a word description of how an operation is done. When a supervisor initials the Competence Checked column, there should be evidence that the employee is indeed capable. Whenever contrary evidence is found later, the entry should be corrected. When this occurs, retraining

should be scheduled and given. Later, competence must be reevaluated and noted in the appropriate column. The date shown should be the date that competence was last checked. Each time a check is made, the entry should be updated. Training records should be scanned for old dates which might indicate the need for reevaluation of an employee's competence.

6.04 Form E-5491, Training Record, (Exhibit 2) should follow the employee when transferred to another work force. This record can provide a valuable bridge between supervisors by giving the receiving supervisor an accurate idea of the capabilities of the new employee. The new supervisor should make evaluations based on merit, but will benefit from knowing what training has been given and what competence-checking has been done. A complete and current training record is a useful document to refer to when a supervisor makes a periodic appraisal of an employee.

