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Establishing Work Requirements and Individual Accountability

July 2019 / Employers Council

Managers generally get good, solid performance from their employees when their expectations are clearly communicated and understood. In establishing credible workplace standards and expectations, managers should realistically take into account: 1) their employees' skills, training, and experience; 2) the availability of resources such as adequate facilities, tools and equipment; and 3) how skilled direct supervisors are in working with and motivating employees.

Managers' Basic Expectations of Employees

- On time and ready to work as scheduled
- Take only scheduled lunch and other breaks
- Observe workplace procedures and rules, particularly safety rules
- Comply with general workplace conduct expectations
- Solid effort in meeting the organization's goals

Setting Job Performance Expectations

- Getting optimal job performance from employees requires that managers clearly communicate performance standards and expected outcomes.
- Establishing and communicating expectations makes achieving desired results much more likely.
- If performance standards aren't already well-established, managers must determine and communicate their expectations.
- If performance falters, managers must understand why standards and expectations are not being met.

Questions to consider when determining possible causes of substandard performance:

- Are my employees fully trained?
- Are there any misunderstandings regarding my expectations?
- Are there special operating or maintenance problems?
- Have I considered each employee's capabilities?
- Am I, as a manager, performing effectively?

Key Points to Remember

From the highest organizational level down to first-line supervisors, the first step is to identify expected performance levels and outcomes. Then, those expectations should be clearly communicated to employees so they understand their role in meeting those expectations.

If managers allow performance standards to slip, the new, lower level of performance soon becomes the standard. When that happens, it can be very difficult to return to the original standard.