

SUPERVISORS DOCUMENTING CHECKLIST

"What do you mean the documentation doesn't prove what we said? I know that's what I meant when I wrote it."

Have you ever had this experience? If not, consider yourself lucky. If you have don't feel bad, just about everyone has been there. Whenever documentation of an incident or action (lack of action) is necessary for future reference certain elements must be covered in order for the document to have meaning and be successful.

So what are the mystery elements? This can be a highly confusing and elusive area. Let's try to break it down into some basic elements. When documenting keep in mind that each document should be dealing with a specific issue or concern to have the greatest impact. Many times we try to cover as many things as we can (the 'shotgun' effect) in each document. While this may cut down on our writing time, it will not usually strengthen the case.

Okay, so where do we start? We know what we are talking about and how our area operates, but anybody outside of our system does not, and they are the ones who generally make the final decisions. Therefore we should start from that standpoint. Usually this is more beneficial to our employees anyway because it may help clear up some of what they do not understand.

All right, enough about all that, what are those mystery elements? Here's where it gets fun. All you have to do is make sure that these basic areas are covered in your document and you will be well on your way to a successful communication.

How does the employee know what they are expected to do?

Job Descriptions, team meetings, verbal assignments, written assignments, work schedules, job standards, co-workers, etc.

How do we know that they know what is expected of them?

Signed job description, orientation and training documentation, verbal conformation, questioning on job standards, job duty demonstration, etc.

Have they received training on what is expected of them?

Training documentation, Supervisor or co-worker training, in-services, other classes or training, prior experience, etc.

How do we know they have had training?

Signed training sheets, Supervisor notes, documentation of prior experience, certificates or licenses, copies of in-service records, etc.

Have they ever performed the duty (duties) successfully?

Testing, Supervisor observations, co-workers observations, clients or customer comments, productivity or documentation records, etc.

If not, have they received additional instruction or information on how to do it?

Written training requests and content, Supervisor notes of poor performance, specific information given, time frames allowed, etc.

Have you evaluated the employee?

When, what areas of job duties were covered, were they successful, were you being truthful about how they are really doing (would you want all of your employees to be like them), areas of improvement, etc.

Were they given the opportunity to ask for help or provide feedback as to what may be causing them problems?

How were they notified that it was okay to ask for help, did they ever ask for help, did they know who to go to for help, how did they know, etc.

Have they been warned regarding the consequences of not correcting the situation or their actions?

Verbal conversations, written communications, when, what was stated, time frames given, specifics on poor performance improper action, etc.

Did they understand the warning and know their job is in jeopardy?

Signed warning statement, acknowledgement of warning content during supervisory meeting, comments by employee, etc.

How do we know they understood the warning?

Actions by the employee, comments by the employee, Supervisor observations, etc.

Now I know what you are thinking, *"How can I get all that information together?"* It's really not as hard as it may seem. First of all remember that not all of the elements will be applicable to all situations. Try to cover as much of each as possible. If you have been keeping track of the employees' progress, as you should, most of this will already be completed. You will just have to gather your notes and specific supervisory contacts along with the training records, and you are just about done.