

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND DEVELOPMENT

SECRETARY'S POLICY AND PROCEDURE MEMORANDUM (PPM) NO. 62

SUBJECT: DOTD Knowledge Management Program

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 22, 2007

INSTRUCTIONS: This memorandum supersedes all other memoranda and manuals.

1. KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The continued performance of the DOTD, despite vacancies that may occur, is critical. The Knowledge Management Program, consisting of the mandatory Continuity Assurance Program and the optional Succession Planning Program, will ensure the continued performance of the agency by focusing on training employees on critical tasks and emphasizing Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and other manual development. The overall goal of the Knowledge Management Program is to prepare the DOTD for continued operation in the event that any individual employee leaves the Department. Tracking accomplishments for the Continuity Assurance Program is essential to ensure adherence to the program objectives. Section Heads and District Administrators shall submit the Critical Task List for their respective area to his/her Office Head for review, on a biennial basis.

2. CONTINUITY ASSURANCE PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The main components of the Continuity Assurance Program are: 1) critical task training and 2) the development of Standard Operating Procedure and other manuals. Employees who participate in the DOTD's Continuity Assurance Program must understand that their participation does not guarantee future job advancement. The appropriate DOTD selection guidelines must be followed in accordance with Policy and Procedure Memorandum No. 33, Selections and Appointments.

The DOTD's Executive Management fully supports this proactive approach in addressing business needs and holds Appointing Authorities, Supervisors, and employees accountable for its continued success. In the administration of this program, the DOTD is fully committed to equal employment opportunity for all employees, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, political affiliation, disability, age, or pregnancy.

A. Continuity Assurance Program Objectives

- (1) To accurately capture the tasks identified as critical for the Department.
- (2) To ensure that an adequate number of employees are trained on critical tasks.

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- (3) To enhance employee loyalty, morale, and retention by providing challenging and positive developmental opportunities.
- (4) To help preserve "institutional knowledge" and perpetuate a knowledge management culture that is evidenced by the knowledge-sharing activities encompassed by this program, e.g., cross-training, formal internal and external training, knowledge transfer groups, increased use of Standard Operating Procedure/individual reference manuals, etc.
- (5) To develop Department-wide written procedure manuals to be used for documentation and training purposes (to include Standard Operating Procedure manuals and other manuals as necessary such as the DOTD Administrative Manual, Engineering Directives and Standards Manual, Loss Prevention Safety Manual, and others).

B. Continuity Assurance Program Definitions

- (1) Critical Task is a task that is highly specialized and integral to the success of a particular area. It is a task that, if not accomplished, results in a serious adverse effect upon the mission accomplishment, survivability, or safety of the DOTD.
- (2) Employee Development Opportunities are training methods used to prepare individual employees for critical task completion by developing/enhancing skill competencies.
- (3) Standard Operating Procedure Manual is a collection of Standard Operating Procedures that are used to complete a particular task. This manual can be kept in paper form, but should also be maintained electronically for easy access and updating. It can also be known as a desk manual or reference manual.
- (4) Knowledge Transfer Group is a group of individuals who share a specific work function or career field and who systematically meet to share job knowledge, experiences, and best practices. Most wisdom in organizations is passed on by sharing knowledge between employees during formal and informal meetings. These groups will afford employees the opportunity to share experiences and valuable historical information to others of the DOTD.

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C. Continuity Assurance Program Responsibilities

Appointing Authorities for each Office, Division, District, Section, or other organizational work unit are responsible for ensuring the successful continuation of this program. Each will ensure that his/her organizational unit complies with its intent and requirements. Each will further ensure that the following activities take place on a continual basis, as necessary:

(1) Identification of critical tasks

Determine which tasks are essential to the organizational unit's operations and, if not completed, would cause a serious adverse effect;

(2) Assessment of critical task training participants

Participants for critical task training must be identified. The ideal number of employees desired for training depends heavily upon the task at hand. Appointing Authorities should therefore make the determination of the number of training participants to ensure adequate knowledge sharing in his/her area. Appointing Authorities are encouraged to select those participating in Critical Task Training in an objective manner. Attention should be paid to those with the ability (e.g., license, knowledge background) and desire to learn and successfully perform new tasks;

(3) Employee Development Opportunities

Employee Development Opportunities should be established by the Appointing Authority and monitored to ensure the knowledge and application of a critical task are being transferred. This can include, but is not limited to, the following:

- (a) Weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly meetings between the employee currently performing the critical task and the participant(s);
- (b) Internal or external training classes offered to transfer critical task knowledge;
- (c) Online classes offered by various organizations;
- (d) Conference attendance relevant to the task at hand;
- (e) Review and discussion of Standard Operating Procedure and other manuals;

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(4) Standard Operating Procedure Development

Standard Operating Procedure manuals are to be developed for every position in each section/district, as practical with supervisory oversight. Employees may develop their own manual or work with other employees if they share the same job duties;

(5) Development/Updating of Department-Wide Manuals

Department-wide manuals that are currently established such as the DOTD Administrative Manual, Engineering Directives and Standards Manual, Safety Policies and Procedures Manual and others should be kept in current status. Additional manuals, as needed, should also be developed.

(6) Use of Knowledge Transfer Groups

Knowledge Transfer Groups consisting of employees within a designated Office may be used as deemed necessary by the Office Head or Appointing Authority to facilitate knowledge transfer of designated topics of interest. These groups, also referred as peer groups, can include employees holding different or the same job titles and should meet as necessary to fulfill the mission of the group (can be weekly, biweekly, monthly, or any set schedule).

(7) Continual Program Implementation

The Continuity Assurance Program will be implemented through a continuous process. Should a critical task trainer or participant vacate his/her position or otherwise not be able to continue participation, the Appointing Authority shall find a replacement trainer or participant, if available. If the participant(s) has displayed competency in the critical task, the Appointing Authority shall, as he/she deems necessary, choose another critical task to be trained with the same or different participant.

D. Continuity Assurance Program Assessment

- (1) Appointing Authorities should assess the overall process on an ongoing basis. The following steps shall be taken: Track individual progress of Continuity Assurance Program efforts and make adjustments where necessary.
- (2) Obtain feedback from trainers and participants to determine how they regard the process.

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- (3) Monitor the development of Standard Operating Procedure and other manuals and set deadlines for the completion as is appropriate for his/her area. Manuals should be updated as deemed appropriate by the Appointing Authorities.

### 3. SUCCESSION PLANNING PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Succession Planning is the systematic process of developing a broad pool of employee talent to meet the staffing needs of the DOTD now and in the future. It will ensure the continued performance of the agency by making provisions to address the effects of expected retirements of incumbents in critical at-risk positions in the Department. It will also prepare for unplanned departures of other employees who occupy highly specialized, one-of-a-kind, and/or traditionally hard-to-fill positions. The overall goal of Succession Planning is to have the right people with the right skills at the right place at the right time.

The use of the DOTD's Succession Planning Program is not mandatory; rather, it is to be utilized by Appointing Authorities on an as-needed basis. The main components of Succession Planning are: 1) the identification of critical at-risk positions; 2) the assessment of potential applicant pools for those positions; 3) the establishment of position competencies required for positions which have inadequate applicant pools; and 4) the development of employees to be considered for future placement into critical at-risk positions when they become vacant. Employees who participate in the DOTD's Succession Planning Program, however, must understand that his/her participation does not guarantee future job advancement. The appropriate DOTD guidelines must be followed in accordance with Policy and Procedure Memorandum No. 33.

The DOTD executive management fully supports this proactive approach in addressing staffing needs. In the administration of this program, the DOTD is fully committed to equal employment opportunity for all employees, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, political affiliation, disability, age, or pregnancy.

#### A. Succession Planning Program Objectives

- (1) To provide an ongoing pool of well trained and broadly experienced employees who are ready and able to step into critical at-risk positions as vacancies develop.
- (2) To encourage individual advancement, not only in leadership roles but in all levels throughout the organization.
- (3) To enhance employee loyalty, morale, and retention by providing challenging and positive developmental opportunities that will facilitate advancement in desired career paths.

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- (4) To align competency-based employee development efforts with the DOTD's strategic objectives such that a ready supply of employee talent will be available to meet the agency's current and future objectives.
- (5) To reduce the time and expense needed to fill vacancies in critical at-risk positions because position competencies will have already been identified, and a broader pool of talented employees will have been developed.
- (6) To help preserve "institutional knowledge" and perpetuate a knowledge management culture that is evidenced by the knowledge-sharing activities encompassed by this program, e.g., cross-training, mentoring, formal internal and external training, increased use of standard operating procedure/individual reference manuals, increased use of double encumbering, etc.

B. Succession Planning Program Definitions

- (1) Critical At-Risk Position is a position occupied by an employee who is eligible to retire within the next five years (planned vacancy) or a highly specialized, one-of-a-kind, and/or traditionally hard-to-fill position occupied by an employee who is not soon-to-be eligible for retirement (unplanned vacancy). In either case, the Appointing Authority will have pre-determined that the position must be promptly re-filled with a qualified applicant when vacated.
- (2) Position Competency is the combination of the knowledge, skills, abilities, professional, and personal characteristics/traits that an employee must possess to successfully perform a particular job.
- (3) Skill Gap is the difference between the competencies the employee already possesses and those that he/she must develop to successfully perform a particular job.
- (4) Individual Development Plan for Succession Planning is a formal plan designed to address an employee's skill needs in order to prepare him/her to successfully perform a particular job.
- (4) Employee Development Opportunities are training methods used to prepare individual employees for advancement by developing/enhancing position-required competencies, thereby closing/reducing skill gaps (e.g., position-specific training courses, cross-training, assignment to special project(s), job shadowing).

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C. Succession Planning Program Responsibilities

Participation in the Succession Planning Program is optional. Appointing Authorities for each Office, Division, District, Section, or other organizational work unit are responsible for determining the level of participation in this program in his/her area(s). They are also responsible for the implementation and successful continuation of this program. Each will ensure that his/her organizational unit complies with its intent and requirements, as applicable. Each also has the option to annually present to the Executive Staff, a written report on critical at-risk positions and the steps taken to ensure that work quality and productivity will be maintained upon employee departure from critical, at-risk positions. Each will decide to exercise the option for the following activities on an annual fiscal year basis:

(1) Identification of critical at-risk positions

- (a) Determine which positions are essential to the organizational unit's operations, and if vacated, must promptly be re-filled upon employee departure;
- (b) Evaluate essential positions identified in (1) above to determine which ones are expected to be vacated within the next five years (planned vacancies) utilizing, as necessary, the retirement eligibility report provided in Manager Self Service in LEO, his/her own personal knowledge of employees' retirement plans, or by individually inquiring about employees' retirement plans with his/her employees, if practical;
- (c) Determine if there are any other positions which are not soon-to-be-vacated, but are highly specialized, one-of-a-kind, or will be difficult to re-fill due to a lack of qualified applicants (unplanned vacancies);
- (d) Include all positions identified in Items (2) and (3) above as potential positions in the Succession Planning process giving highest priority to positions that are of greater criticality or occupied by an employee who is currently eligible to retire;
- (e) Include an evaluation of the actual need to fill the position in the future, to fill the position in the same way, to determine if job requirements or duties have changed, to determine if the organization's needs may better be achieved by filling the position at a different title or level, and to determine if reorganization or combination of the position's tasks with another position will

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eliminate the need to re-fill the position. The Headquarters Human Resources Section is available to provide assistance.

(2) Assessment of Potential Applicant Pools

Potential internal applicant pools for positions identified in (1) must be assessed for adequacy. The ideal number of employees required for an applicant pool depends heavily upon the individual position at hand. Obviously, if there are multiple positions in the same job title with similar requirements, creating a fairly substantial pool is desirable and probably feasible. However, if the position requires very specialized knowledge/skills, there may only be a limited number of employees who could feasibly be trained and developed to succeed to the position. In view of this, consideration should include the number of employees in the section or district who might be interested or available for the position when it becomes vacant who will not require any special development or training. Available employee records should be reviewed to get more details about which employees are realistically ready to step into a position. The organizational chart should be reviewed to determine if there is a sufficient number of employees in "feeder" positions which need no special development or training. If necessary, discussions should be initiated with employees or supervisors within the section or district to obtain information about the potential applicant pool.

(3) Establishment of position specific competencies

Position-specific competencies must be established for positions which have inadequate internal applicant pools. If an insufficient number of employees or no employees at all exist within the organizational unit who are currently ready and able to step into a critical at-risk position, a determination of whether or not there are other employees who may be developed for future advancement must be made.

In order to establish an adequate potential pool of qualified applicants and provide appropriate developmental opportunities to those employees, the essential competencies of a critical at-risk position must be established. Position competencies make up the required knowledge, skills, abilities, and personal characteristics and traits that an employee must possess to successfully perform in the position. The guidelines for establishing competencies are as follows:

- (a) The incumbent of the position, the incumbent's direct supervisor, and anyone else who is familiar with the position (e.g., the second-line supervisor) may work as a team to establish the competencies



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that are required for the position at hand. A member of the Headquarters Human Resources Section is available to also serve as a team member. The following tools and any others deemed helpful, may be used to establish position competencies:

- 1 Official Position Description Form (SF-3) for the critical at-risk position
- 2 Civil Service Job Specification (found on the Civil Service website: <http://www.dscs.state.la.us>)
- 3 Performance expectations documented on the current incumbent's Performance Evaluation System Form (PES)
- 4 Selection criteria previously used to fill the position, if available
- 5 List of Sample Job Competencies found on the Human Resources website; these competencies should be modified as necessary to fit the particular position.

Using these documents and his/her own knowledge of the skills and talents required, team members will develop a list appropriate to the position. Once competencies are established, they should be weighted in order of importance and criticality to successfully perform in the position.

(4) Employee Development

Since the purpose of Succession Planning is to ensure the development of an ongoing pool of employees who are well trained, experienced and able to compete for vacancies as they develop, there will obviously be some participating employees who will ultimately not be selected for advancement when a vacancy occurs. Identification of employees for development for consideration for future placement into critical at-risk positions, when vacated, must comply with the principles of EEO and the Civil Service merit system. Employees must be advised that his/her participation in this program does not guarantee future job advancement. Employees must also understand that non-participation does not prohibit them from consideration for future job advancement when vacancies develop.

A competency-based Individual Development Plan for Succession Planning should be developed and implemented for each participant identified. This will establish a formal plan or schedule of developmental

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activities to address skill gaps between the position-required competencies and those actually possessed. A methodology to provide each participant with oral and written feedback on individual progress on a regular basis should be established.

(a) Identification of Employees for Participation

In order to determine interested and available participants in the Succession Planning process, direct supervisors may choose one or more of the following approaches:

- 1 Inquire with all direct reports about his/her career goals during the employees' PES planning process.
- 2 Develop all employees who are direct reports to the position and who are also interested in participation.
- 3 Include all employees in designated job titles.
- 4 Formally announce plans for Succession Planning for a particular position to solicit employee interest.

The criteria used to identify employees for participation should be objective and job-related. Supervisors should avoid having individuals simply "nominate" employees whom they think have "potential." Regardless of the method used, it will be subject to the same type of standards and selection criteria that are used to fill a vacant position.

(b) Individual Competency Analysis

Once participants have been identified, the current skill level of each employee must be compared to the required competencies of the projected vacancy to determine the skills that need to be developed. That is, an Individual Development Plan for Succession Planning should be established for each participating employee. An Individual Development Plan should be completed for participants on an annual basis. The Individual Development Plan may be incorporated as a separate performance factor in the employee's annual Performance Evaluation System (PES).

Supervisors may identify the skills an employee has already attained by reviewing his/her personnel records, training course completions, education, and/or work experience inside and outside

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of the agency. Employees may also be required to complete a self-assessment questionnaire as an additional method of assessment.

(c) Individual Development Plan for Succession Planning

Once the employee's competency levels have been determined, the supervisor should develop the Individual Development Plan to include the following:

- 1 Identification of developmental experiences and training each employee must achieve;
- 2 A schedule for completion of the training and development activities;
- 3 Documentation of the employee's performance and progress in his/her developmental plan.

D. Program Assessment

Once Succession Planning has been initiated, Appointing Authorities should assess the overall process on an ongoing basis. The following steps should therefore be taken to assess the Succession Planning Program:

- (1) Track individual progress of Succession Planning efforts and make adjustments where necessary.
- (2) Obtain feedback from participants to determine how they regard the process.
- (3) When vacancies occur, determine whether there is a relationship between who was selected and the employee's performance in the Succession Planning Program.
- (4) Determine whether employees who complete the training and development are staying with the agency or are leaving for employment elsewhere after completing the training.

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4. FURTHER INFORMATION

Additional information on the Continuity Assurance Program and the Succession Planning Program process, including supervisory aids, may be found on the Human Resources Section's website on the DOTD Intranet. For individual assistance with the DOTD's Continuity Assurance or Succession Planning processes, please contact the Headquarters Human Resources Section at (225) 379-1259.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Shawn D. Wilson", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Shawn D. Wilson, Ph.D.  
Secretary