



Are Your Acting Foremen Properly Trained?

The scene is quite common. The foreman says, "I have to run back to the shop to get the part – Joe, you are in charge until I get back." Or, "Joe, I'm going on vacation for two weeks and you are in charge."

Does your company have a formal training program for acting foreman or a "seat of the pants" approach? If an incident happens, will the "acting foreman" know what to do? It literally can be a life or death position for an acting person.

Acting leading training should only be offered to those willing to take the leadership role. From a safety and productivity standpoint, it is not wise to select an unwilling participant.

This should be a two-phase training program. The first phase is for the person who will be in charge for only a few hours or a day. The next phase is a month-long in-depth program for a person who will be in the acting position for a more extended period.

Short-term

Short-term acting supervisors are usually employees who have been with you long enough to know company policies for safety and work. Typically journeymen, these employees should:

- Be trained in first aid and CPR.
- Know how to use your company's communications equipment, including cell phones, company radios, GPS, etc.
- Know where the call list of emergency numbers is located. Remember that dialing 911 does not always work in all locations. Hospital 800 numbers may be fast for life-flight medical aid.
- Know whom to notify in the company. Each location or vehicle should have an emergency call list.
- Know how to secure the scene until company representatives arrive.
- Know what to say and what not to say to onlookers, press, etc.

Note: Each utility will have to develop specific acting requirements. One company in the electric industry requires that a short-term acting position must be trained in:

- Clearance and switching procedures
- Dispatch notification
- Hot-line orders
- Outages
- Accident procedures
- Switching programs
- Job-hazard analysis
- Minimum work clearances
- Grounding
- Lockout/tagout
- Safety manual
- Hazardous spill-control procedures
- Security procedures



Long-term

A long-term acting position would require the above, plus:

- Proper conduct
- Ethics
- Leadership
- Material/equipment layout
- Work assignments/scheduling
- Work orders
- Personnel procedures
- System operation
- Purchasing procedures
- Timekeeping
- Sick leave/vacation procedures
- Incident investigation
- Work rules

The permanent supervisor must know who the trained individual is that can fill in on a temporary basis. If the work force is union, there may be additional considerations for temporary appointments. Your program will need to be tailored to your company.

If a company is to value safety, quality and reputation, then a trained work force is essential.

- Howard Schumacher
Department of Energy
Folsom, CA
(Retired 2003)

*Copyright 2002 * National Safety Council * All Rights Reserved. Reviewed 4/05.*