



10-Minute Supervisor Trainings

Kentucky Soil and Water Conservation Commission

FEBRUARY 2014

BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Each conservation district supervisor and employee should make sure that he or she is presenting the district in the best possible light when representing the district. This includes not only when going to represent the district when talking with groups like the local fiscal court or at a partner group's meeting, but also in day to day communications. It's important for communications to be conducted in a business-like manner so that the district's customers will trust the district supervisors and staff to answer their questions and safeguard their information.

Telephone:

- Always use a pleasant tone of voice. You might be having a hard day, but that's not the customer's fault.
- Be sure to answer the telephone quickly. Customers will generally only allow the telephone to ring 4-5 times before they give up.
- If it is possible with your current telephone system, include an answering machine or voicemail. This allows customers to know that you're out of the office and when you'll be returning. If a customer does leave a message, make sure to get back with them as soon as possible. You might not have an answer for their question yet, but make sure to let them know that you have received their message and you're working on finding an answer for them.
- When answering the telephone, identify the district so that the customer knows that he has reached who he was trying to reach.
- Always answer all questions to the best of your ability. If the customer is asking a question that you can't answer, refer them to someone who can or find the answer and get back in touch with them.





E-mail:

- Use the same grammar, punctuation and structure that you would for a letter on paper.
- Never use text-speak for district emails. Spell out all words fully.
- Capitalize your message using sentence case. Things that are typed in ALL CAPS are considered yelling in e-mails.
- Use the features that are included in your email. Most email programs have a lot of business-friendly functions already built-in. These include, but are not limited to, automatic spell check, return receipts, out of office notifications, etc.

Presentations:

- When speaking before groups, make sure to include background information on the district (who you are, what you do, etc.).
- Always include contact information so that the people who have heard your presentation know where to go for more details.
- Be prepared to answer questions regarding your programs and your functions. Even if you're speaking regarding a specific program, you might get questions regarding others. For example, a board member might go speak at the local Farm Bureau meeting regarding your local cost share sign-ups, but Farm Bureau members might also ask about the equipment the district has for rent or when the cut-off for state cost share will be.
- If you don't know the answers to questions, do not leave that question unanswered. Find an answer and get in touch with the person who asked to report back to them. The conservation district isn't expected to know everything about everything, but as an elected official, each supervisor has a responsibility to serve his or her constituents. So your answer might be an in depth answer ("These are the steps you need to take to get an Ag Water Quality Plan...") or it might be quick referral to someone else ("That's a Division of Forestry program. You'll want to call them at this number...")

Use the resources available to you:

- Field representative
- KACDE area representative
- Local library (possible computer classes or adult education classes)
- Local Chamber of Commerce (possible business communication hand-outs or classes)