



Office of Training and Development On-the-Job Solutions Series Communication Tips

Technology and electronic communication should be used to supplement, not replace, human interaction.

Email Tips



- Be concise and to the point in your email. As a rule, emails should not be longer than one screen.
- Use the "subject" line to inform (e.g., Meeting changed to April 5) rather than merely identify the topic (Meeting change). You will increase the odds that people will pay attention.
- Be careful what you include in your email – you never know where the message will be forwarded.
- If you will be away from your office for the day, or longer, set up an auto-reply in your email (and voice mail) so the sender will know that you are not ignoring their message.
- Don't overuse "urgent" in subject line. People will ignore it if it's used too often.
- Don't automatically "reply to all" if the email response or discussion does not apply to everyone in the original message. Recipients in the "to" line are generally the ones requested to take action; staff in the "cc" line are FYI only.
- Follow a "2 Reply Rule." If your message requires you to reply to a message more than twice, the discussion may be better handled "live."
- Never send an email when you are angry. You can write it, but don't send it. Take some time to chill out; then re-read and revise or rewrite your email before you hit the send button.
- Avoid sarcasm in your emails...people may misinterpret your message.

Contact OTD: (916) 928-8330 or via the CDFW Intranet

Phone Tips



- Take notes while on the phone. Taking notes keeps you focused and involved in the conversation.
- If a request will take more than a day or two to research and/or complete, let the requestor know that you are working on the request, so they are not left wondering.
- Before ending the conversation, recap what has been agreed upon to eliminate any misunderstandings.

Voicemail Tips



- On your outgoing voicemail recording, clearly state when the person calling may expect a call back. This will take away the caller's guesswork and will eliminate them calling back two or three more times.
- When leaving a message, state your name and phone number clearly at the start and end of your message. That way the recipient won't have to replay the message to get your number down correctly.
- Be proactive in reducing voicemail "tag." Answer these three questions when you reach someone's voicemail: (1) why you called; (2) what you need; and (3) when you are available for call backs.
- Stick to one issue per voicemail. If you have more than one issue to cover, it may be best to talk "live" and call later.

What OTD has for you:

- Department Orientation
- Supervisor's Toolkit (on CDFW Intranet)
- Leadership Development Series (classes: Stepping up to Supervision, Images of Leaders) and more!
- Scientific Community Development Program, CEQA, Wildlife Necropsy and more!