

## Chapter 9: Managing Participants on the Construction Site

There are several basic management techniques that construction trainers can use to effectively supervise participants on the work site:

1. Take attendance and emphasize the importance of getting to the site on time
2. Have an organized daily work schedule
3. Create leadership development opportunities
4. Keep track of tools participants will need to learn construction skills
5. Keep a daily log of accomplishments
6. Evaluate learning on the construction site regularly
7. Be consistent in enforcement of the participant contract and infractions



### Participant Attendance

It is important that the construction site have a list of participants who are supposed to be on the site each day. This list can be used as an attendance sheet as well. Attendance should be taken first thing every day, with a staff person monitoring the attendance sheet so that participants don't sign in for one another. It is also necessary to mark the time that participants sign in so that there is a clear record of participant tardiness. Some programs use a timecard approach so participants punch in and out for accurate timekeeping. Construction trainers have found that consistent emphasis on participants attending every day on time is essential for teaching appropriate work ethics that will help young people get and keep a job once they complete the YouthBuild program. You will find the YouthBuild Construction Site Daily Attendance Sheet in Appendix B.

There should be specific procedures for communication between the program manager, counselors, and construction staff regarding participant attendance in the program as a whole. The construction site will need to be notified in writing when any student needs to leave the site for part of the day (for counseling, court appearances, etc.) or when a participant permanently leaves the program.

### Daily Work Schedule

A routine on the work site helps to make it a more effective learning environment. While the majority of each day is dedicated to production, many programs have found that a small amount of time for scheduled activities on the work site provides the structure that allows for focus and consistency. It also dramatically improves the learning process. Have a clear plan for the day and communicate it to all participants. At the beginning of each day, it is important to review the daily work schedule and explain the construction work to be accomplished as well as review how the day's work fits in with the broader construction schedule.

Many YouthBuild programs follow a daily schedule that includes the following elements:

- **Morning meeting:** This is a brief time at the beginning of each workday to gather participants together and plan the day. By focusing the participants on the work of the day, regular morning meetings can dramatically affect the tone of the work site. This time can be used to take attendance, assign tasks, assign tools and materials, and write briefly in journals about expectations for the day or skills learned the day before. Staff should give participants a picture of the work over the next few weeks and how their work today fits into a larger plan. This is also a good opportunity to review issues of site safety by the student safety monitor. Programs with a student pledge also recite the pledge at morning meetings.
- **Demonstrations:** At the end of the morning meeting, participants can observe the site instructors demonstrating a new skill or a new aspect of an old skill. For example, participants might observe and then practice correct hammering technique or learn how to lay out a wall before performing the task. Demonstrations help everyone remember that most skills on the work site are new to participants and need to be explained if participants are to learn them correctly.
- **Time for performing assigned tasks:** Every day teams of participants should be assigned to specific tasks and enough tasks so that participants are doing meaningful work without any idle time. Participants should have the opportunity to work diligently for an extended period of time in order to practice the skills and develop competence. They should know who their supervisor and co-workers will be for the day, whether to expect interruption to unload a scheduled delivery of materials, or any other relevant information. In assigning teams of participants, factors to consider are:
  - Which participants haven't yet had an opportunity to work in a certain area?
  - Which participants need practice on a particular skill?
  - Is there one participant who can effectively mentor another participant?
  - Which participants work best together?
  - Which participants need to learn to work together?
  - How critical to the rest of the schedule is the completion of that task?
  - What is the rapport between particular participants and supervisors?
  - What skill level or expertise is required to complete the task?

Instructors should move from team to team, observing participant performance while advising and instructing. As much as possible, instructors should avoid doing the work themselves. They may need to work alongside participants for short periods of time to illustrate how to perform a task. The construction manager should periodically observe construction trainers and give feedback on how to improve supervision of participants.

It is not easy supervising a large group of inexperienced workers, so it is important to keep all participants active and make sure to break out the tasks so that everyone has something to do at all times.

- **Regular skills assessment:** Allow time or regular assessment of participant skills. In collaboration with the vocational education instructor, construction trainers can observe and test each participant as they perform each skill, and then use the competency checklist to record skill acquisition. Consider recognizing participants for skill attainment in a meaningful way, such as by displaying a wall chart on which they earn checks for correctly performed skills.
  - **Clean-up:** Ensure that participants do a thorough clean-up of the site every day. Too often, instructors and a few participants do all of the clean-up work while others hang around and do nothing. Participants need to learn that proper clean-up and storage of materials is an essential part of a safe work site and doing the job well. They should be instructed in correct and safe clean-up procedures and should not be allowed to leave the site until everyone has finished clean-up.
  - **Afternoon meeting:** After the site has been cleaned, participants will feel a sense of accomplishment. A brief meeting should be held to review the tasks that were performed and discuss problems that came up and ways to do things differently the next day. A safety review should include a discussion of clear cases of safety violations, illnesses, injuries and near misses. Acknowledgement and praise of the day's accomplishments will boost morale, recognizing participants who worked hard, took initiative, listened well, or worked well in teams. A brief announcement should be given of the plans for the next day and reminders for everyone to be at work on time. Participants should sign out when they leave.
- In addition to this daily schedule, some YouthBuild programs have a weekly schedule to include structured time for safety meetings and review of accomplishments versus objectives for the week.

## Create Leadership Development Opportunities

An important factor in managing participants on the site is sustaining their interest in what they are doing and learning. This can be enhanced by creating leadership development opportunities on the construction site. Examples of leadership development opportunities are included in the next chapter on site activities.

## Keep Track of Tools

It is important to keep a running inventory of the location of all program tools and equipment with an equipment sign-out sheet to ensure that participants will be able to find the proper tool when they need it. Someone should ensure that each tool has been returned to its proper storage location and is in good working condition or any lock-out-tag-out at the end of each day. The job of tracking and monitoring tools can be rotated among the participants as a leadership training opportunity.

## Daily Construction Training Report

A daily log, or construction training report, serves as a record of the work that was accomplished on a given day, problems that arose, or any accidents that may have occurred. It is important to fill out the report each day, rather than relying on memory to fill it out at the end of the week. It is helpful to have a senior construction trainer or site supervisor keep track of the major events of each day. Daily records should document attendance, work performed, problems that emerged relating to the construction or to the participants, special accomplishments, and new tasks or procedures begun on the site. Participants can contribute to the report by describing the accomplishments from their perspective. This will give them a sense of progress and help

maintain motivation on the site. It is also useful to include pictures of the work site at different stages of construction.

The YouthBuild Daily Construction Training Report is included in Appendix B.

## Evaluate Learning on the Construction Site Regularly

It is very important that participants receive feedback from the construction staff about how they are doing. Evaluations are a formal way to give students feedback about their progress, the skills they need to work on, and their overall performance.

The construction manager has several key responsibilities regarding participant evaluation. These are to:

- Schedule regular, formal evaluations of participants on the work site. Many programs do this about every two months in conjunction with academic evaluations. Many programs require a positive performance evaluation on work habits in order for a participant to receive a raise.
- Develop forms for construction staff to use for evaluations. The Construction Competency Checklist can serve as a format for documenting skills. Also needed is an evaluation form for giving feedback on work habits and overall performance. A [Biweekly Participant Performance Evaluation and Biweekly Performance Self-Evaluation](#) is available in Appendix B.
- Make sure that the construction trainers meet individually with each participant to personally give them feedback and go over their evaluation forms.
- Utilize weekly group meetings as a time for publicly recognizing achievement, and plan award ceremonies at least every two months.
- At daily wrap up, give YouthBuild “appreciations,” or public acknowledgment of specific accomplishments, good deeds, and valiant efforts of individual participants and staff.

## Be Consistent in the Enforcement of Participant Contract and Infractions

If the program has a participant contract which spells out standards for participant behavior regarding attendance, lateness, fighting, and other issues that may emerge on the site, it is useful to have a copy of the contract at the construction site so staff can reference it if problems arise. It is essential to be consistent both in the enforcement of the contract with all participants and in citing infractions. It is helpful to have a form on which construction trainers can record violations of the contract that can be passed on to the counseling or case management staff. The [YouthBuild Infraction Sheet](#) is included in Appendix B.

## Chapter 9 Resources in Appendix



### APPENDIX B

- [Biweekly Participant Performance Evaluation and Biweekly Performance Self-Evaluation](#)
- [YouthBuild Construction Site Daily Attendance Sheet](#)
- [YouthBuild Infraction Sheet](#)