

# Technical Documentation

## Competency Development Activities

### Competency Definition

Knowledge of procedures for developing technical and operational support documentation.

### Developmental Activity Levels

#### All (A)

*Applies to all competency levels*

#### Beginner-Basic Knowledge (B)

*A person at the Beginner-Basic Knowledge level has limited experience applying the competency. He/she applies general knowledge in common situations but has limited practical experience in applying the competency in a work environment presenting more complex situations.*

#### Mid-level (M)

*A person with mid-level proficiency has applied the competency repeatedly and successfully in the performance of his/her job but still has much to learn about the advanced aspects or behaviors associated with the competency. A person at this level can usually apply the competency on his/her own.*

#### High (H)

A person at the High level has extensive knowledge of and experience with this competency and can apply the competency exceptionally well on the job without assistance. At this level one is an expert and has enough experience to teach the competency to others.

### Articles, Books, and Websites

**B** Roebuck, Chris, Effective Communication, AMACOM, 1999.

This book addresses how to: improve your communication skills using a simple, effective program; get your message across to your boss, your team, and your peers; make written communications reports; learn not only how to communicate your ideas to others, but also how to get them to communicate effectively with you.

**M** Piotrowski, Maryann, Effective Business Writing, HarperCollins, 1996.

This useful guide helps the reader write clearly and in an appropriate format, style and tone. Numerous examples show how to overcome writer's block, organize messages for maximum impact, achieve an easy-to-read style, find an efficient writing system and much more.

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**M** Hess, Kären M., Wroblewski, Henry M., For the Record: Report Writing in Law Enforcement, Innovative Systems - Publishers, Inc., 2002. 940309181

This is a self-study textbook and workbook designed for basic, remedial and advanced training in writing professional police reports.

**M** Noonan, Peggy, Simply Speaking: How to Communicate Your Ideas With Style, Substance, and Clarity, HarperCollins, 1998.

In her book, Noonan offers clear and simple advice on how to communicate effectively with others. She provides lessons she has learned, as well as examples from famous speakers like Lincoln, Churchill, Reagan and more.

#### Activities

**B** Ask a superior, peer, or friend to give feedback on your writing. Revise it if their understanding of your ideas does not match your intent. Also, have someone proofread your writing for grammar, punctuation, spelling, and sentence structure errors. Take note of the errors made most often and learn rules for improvement.

**B** Consider using a template to fill out your reports. This will ensure that you are including the most critical information ( who?, what?, when?, where?) in your report. If your organization does not have a template, look for templates in other organizations that have similar reporting requirements.

**B** When writing reports, verbalize what happened to a colleague. Once you have told them what happened, ask them to review your report. Does the report match your story? If not, what is missing? Go back and revise the report based on your colleague's feedback.

**B** Volunteer to participate in agency initiatives to draft regulatory or administrative policies.

**M** Update existing users' manuals, standard operating procedures or other documents used to explain your organization's policies and procedures.

#### Coaching Suggestions for Managers

**M** Have team members make a list of people in other departments, functions, organizations, etc. who depend on information your group generates day-to-day. Have the team members create survey questions (written or verbal) that ask: Are they receiving the critical information expected or needed from your group? Have the team members summarize the responses and present the information at the next staff meeting. If other people are not getting the information needed, work with the team member to establish a process to ensure that information gets out to them.

**M** Review staff/team members' writing. Critique their clarity, logic and presentation. Review any issues with grammar and spelling, if necessary. Work with them on drafts as they develop

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more effective written communication