Learning Guide

Supervise a team of cleaners

29394 Supervise a team of cleaners

Name:

Workplace:
Creative commons

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial Licence. You are free to copy, distribute and transmit the work and to adapt the work. You must attribute Careerforce as the author. You may not use this work for commercial purposes. For more information, contact Careerforce at www.careerforce.org.nz
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Induction training</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning by doing</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddying</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modelling</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring progress</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging staff and building confidence</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring quality</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assigning and delegating tasks</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes and objectives</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New and different cleaning situations</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem solving</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building a team</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team meetings</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with policies and procedures</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being ‘safety aware’</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace safety management practices</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

You may be already working as a supervisor, or you may be hoping to step up to a supervisor’s role. Either way, this workbook will help you think about this role and what is involved in training and supervising cleaning staff.

How to use your learning guide

This learning guide supports your learning and prepares you for the unit standard assessment.

This guide relates to the following unit standards:

- 29394 Supervise a team of cleaners (level 4, 10 credits).

This learning guide is yours to keep. Make it your own by writing notes that help you remember things, or where you need to find more information.

Follow the tips in the notes column.

You may use highlighter pens to show important information and ideas, and think about how this information applies to your work.

You might find it helpful to talk to your workmates or supervisor.

Complete this learning guide before you start the assessment.

What you will learn

This topic will help you to:

- induct new cleaning staff.
- train staff in cleaning processes and methods.
- assign cleaning work, monitor progress and give feedback.
- manage new or different cleaning situations.
- communicate with and report to management and clients.
Induction training

When everyone starts a new job or role there will be an induction process. How formal this is will depend on the organisation and the type of cleaning role. Some aspects of induction may be undertaken by a manager or in some cases the client. Showing someone the ‘ropes’, however, is often the role of the supervisor.

This may involve teaching someone the basic principles of cleaning or it may be taking an experienced cleaner and showing them the requirements of a particular site or building.

In the past it was often the case that it was assumed that people would know how to clean, that it was ‘common sense’. This, however, is not the case and teaching someone the basic principles and how to use the chemicals safely is a very important part of someone’s induction into the job.

It may be that your organisation has an induction checklist or a pack which gives a structure to the induction process. If you don’t have either of these it is a good idea to write a list of all the things the person needs to know to ensure they work safely and efficiently.

Your organisation may also train towards the New Zealand Certificate in Cleaning Level 2 as part of the induction process.
An induction list may include the following information.

- Company and job expectations.
  - start and finish times.
  - how and who to inform regarding absences.
  - company policies.
- Key people in the organisation
  - introductions and roles.
- Basic cleaning principles.
- Avoiding injuries, for instance:
  - equipment for high and low surfaces such as extendable dusters.
  - use equipment such as a trolley to carry heavy objects.
  - ask for help if something is too heavy or awkward to carry safely.
  - never carry rubbish bags next to your body.
- Keeping fit and healthy, for instance:
  - use your legs to lift not your back.
  - drink plenty of water.
  - take breaks as required.
- Use chemicals safely.
  - read and understand the risks associated with all chemicals.
  - wear the correct personal protective equipment (PPE) when using chemicals.
  - use the correct chemical for each surface.
  - be aware of the safety of others when working with chemicals.
- Safety requirements, for instance:
  - evacuation procedures.
  - where first aid kits are kept.
  - where fire extinguishers or fire hoses are.
  - using residual current devices (if required).
  - workplace safety management practices (WSMP)

Here is an example of an induction checklist.
# Induction training – Welcome to Cleaning Plus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employee’s name</th>
<th>Start date and time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Payroll number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site</td>
<td>Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Permanent / Casual</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Part 1: Site Safety Induction
This must be completed before commencing work. Tick (✓) when the tasks are completed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Doing the job safely</th>
<th>Workplace tour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explain the employee’s individual safety obligations – refer to the handbook</td>
<td>Take the employee on a workplace tour pointing out relevant areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide and demonstrate Safe Work Procedures</td>
<td>Discuss site rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate the safe use of chemicals indicating warnings on the label</td>
<td>Show where chemicals and MSD sheets are stored</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide personal protective equipment (PPE) and show where to store it</td>
<td>Demonstrate entry exit passes and security access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate manual handling tasks and aids</td>
<td>Provide an ID badge/security access card</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain process of safety inspections and safety observations</td>
<td>Show where the safety noticeboard is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify Workplace Safety Representative (if applicable)</td>
<td>Point out restricted/non access areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss any special needs of the new person in order to complete tasks</td>
<td>Point out and explain Safety signage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client site safety induction (if applicable)</td>
<td>Introduce employee to other team members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain workplace incident reporting including near miss, injury, damage</td>
<td><strong>Emergencies</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazard spotting</td>
<td>Explain all emergency evacuation procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain hazard spotting and reporting</td>
<td>Explain reporting emergency procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show location of hazard/risk ID book</td>
<td>Explain phone call/alarm process for emergencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain process for reporting faulty equipment</td>
<td>Explain suspicious package/threats reporting process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show where danger and out-of-service tags are kept</td>
<td>Show where firefighting equipment is located</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify and site specific safety risks and show the risk register</td>
<td>Show where emergency mustering area is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Injury management</strong></td>
<td>Explain rules related to technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show first aid locations / first aid kits</td>
<td>Explain location of emergency showers and facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify first aiders</td>
<td>Explain break times and point out break areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain what to do in the event of an injury</td>
<td>Allocate locker (if applicable)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain incident reporting process and paperwork</td>
<td>Explain car parking / transport options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>General</strong></td>
<td>Explain waste disposal and recycling processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide manager, team and location contact details</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## On completion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>Employee sign:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Manager sign:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Learning by doing

With physical jobs like cleaning the usual way to learn is to ‘watch’ and then ‘do’. The ‘whys’ help to make sense of the processes but putting too much emphasis on theory without the practical can make it hard to embed the learning (embed means to make the learning stick).

Always with learning and training it is important to remember that people can’t take on board everything there is to know all at once. They need time to think about what they are learning and to put it into context so it makes sense to them. Only then will they remember.

It’s always useful to remember when you were just learning and how hard it was to learn everything at once.

Some important rules for training include the following points.

- Keep it simple.
- Know that you will most likely have to say things more than once.
- If people are still learning English use short precise sentences with simple everyday words.
- If there are people learning English in your team, then a picture of a trolley with all the equipment labelled can be very helpful for learning new words (maybe have one on the wall of the break room).
- Start off using the buddy system.

Buddying

When you buddy up with a new team member you, or another more experienced cleaner, work alongside the new team member to explain what they have to do and what the important things are that they must know about the site.

If you are teaching the person both how to clean and the site specifications, then you will need to take enough time to ensure both aspects of the job are learnt. The best way to teach the practical aspects of cleaning is to use the modelling technique.

Practice the buddy system by teaching one of your current team members a new task. Think about what worked well and what you could do better.
Modelling

The modelling process uses the following sequence:

- You do the task explaining what you are doing and why.
- The learner does the task while you watch.
- You tell them what they did well and show them again the things they did not do correctly, explaining why it matters.
- The learner does the task again. This time ask them to tell you what they are doing and why. This may be more difficult for people who struggle with English and you may need to help with words.

Modelling works well for learning practical tasks but it takes time for the learner to get into the swing of it so the actions are second nature and don’t need thinking about. Ongoing, therefore, the learner will need a coach.

Coaching

Being a coach means you are the go-to person for your learner. You are the one they come and ask when they are not sure what they should do in a situation or how they are supposed to do something that they may have been shown once but have since forgotten.

A coach has experience in the job, focusses on the tasks to be done, improving the person’s performance. Coaching is usually short-term, until the person understands and is able to do the job themselves.

To be an effective coach you need to establish a good relationship with your learner so they know it is ‘safe’ to ask questions and to come back to you if they haven’t quite ‘got it’.

This relationship starts right from the beginning. It may be that you will fulfil all the roles of buddy, model and coach so right from the start make sure questions are encouraged and your answers are adequate (if you don’t know, say so and find out).

Don’t despair if you have some questions repeated – it can take time to absorb everything. Be patient and encouraging, but don’t be afraid to explain what they are doing wrong if that is the case.

Think about

Remember how hard it was for you to learn the job. Thus be patient with new learners.

You may need to tell them things more than once especially if they are just learning English.
Mentoring

Coaching and mentoring have many similarities. Mentoring is about developing the individual not only for their current job, but also for their future roles. As such mentoring is ongoing, long-term, and lasts many months or even years. It provides a safe environment where the mentee can share whatever issues affect them, include things such as work/life balance, self-confidence and self-perception.

Traditionally mentoring enables a mentee to follow in the path of an older and wiser colleague, who can pass on knowledge, recommend personal and professional development, and who may be able to open doors to opportunities.

Monitoring progress

It is important to ensure that the learner is monitored. This gives you a chance to check quality but also to be available to answer any further questions that the person may have been too shy to come and ask directly.

It is important that the learner knows you will be monitoring them and that when you are around is a good time to ask any questions.

Monitoring should not involve ‘spying’ or trying to catch someone out. It is part of the training process and if the learner is expecting it then it can be a useful time for a catch-up and to further build the relationship.

Your organisation will have a performance appraisal system in place which monitors staff performance. New staff should have more frequent appraisals.
Encouraging staff and building confidence

Encouraging staff doesn’t just mean saying how good they are doing. If the comments are insincere, then that can undermine the learner’s confidence. However, noticing what they do well and mentioning it can be very rewarding for the learner.

Explaining what they need to improve on is also useful and if done in a measured way can help to build confidence in the fact that if they are doing something wrong they will be told so they can fix it.

Most people are keen to do a good job and it can be very undermining if it isn’t clear what is expected or if you think you aren’t being told when you do a task incorrectly.

Bad habits can quickly form and it is better to learn the job well at the beginning than to try and change when you are used to doing it a particular way.

Feedback

Feedback should be:

- given as soon as possible after the event.
- respectful of others’ contributions.
- given as constructive feedback.

Constructive means offering valid and well-reasoned positive/negative comment in a helpful manner, for example, “I really appreciated how well you explained the new job to me.”

One way of giving constructive feedback is called CRC:

- Commend – talk about what was done well.
- Recommend – suggest what could be said or done differently.
- Commend – finish with a positive comment.

So feedback might go like this:

“You do this task really well but you haven’t got this right yet. This is how you do it. Now you have a go.”
Monitoring quality

An important part of any supervisor’s job is to train staff to understand and work towards quality results, and then to monitor to ensure these standards are maintained.

Most organisations have an auditing process which involves a checklist of tasks to tick off when they are at the required standard and a process to follow if they are not.

Everyone has to take responsibility for their own work, the quality of cleaning, the efficiency of how they work and the end result. Cleaning staff should self-audit their work, by going through a physical or mental checklist of their own work against client requirements and organisational standards. That process may result in organisational standards being confirmed as met, or deficiencies may be identified.

Customers don’t usually notice the work of cleaners unless the work is not done well. Monitoring quality using auditing processes is a chance to ensure complaints are kept to a minimum.

There is, of course, the likelihood that cleaning can be done to an excellent standard and it can easily be messed up by someone else (such as walking across a clean floor in dirty boots) but this cannot be avoided.

Question

What is your organisation’s process for monitoring quality?

What is your role in the maintenance of quality?
Assigning and delegating tasks

Once the learner has understood and applied the cleaning processes to the required standard, they can have tasks assigned to them to do.

When you first assign a task to someone, they may take longer than you do. This is because the person you have assigned the task to is still learning. You will find that they quickly become competent and reliable.

The more experienced and reliable the other person is, then the more you can assign to them and the more responsibility you can give them.

When you hand over not only the task but also the responsibility and authority for doing the task to standard, this is called delegation.

Delegation is more than telling people what to do. It can be used to develop your people and yourself. It grooms successors for jobs and it motivates people. It is not just a technique for freeing up your time, although it should do so, if your delegation is done properly.

You should record who has been delegated what task/s, or your organisation may have a chart that sets out what tasks cleaners are able to do, based on their experience and/or training level.

Before you delegate, ask yourself:

- Does the person have the necessary expertise to complete the task?
- Does the task provide an opportunity to grow and develop another person’s skills?
- Is this a task that will recur, in a similar form, in the future?
- Do you have enough time to delegate the job effectively? Time must be available for adequate training, for questions and answers, for opportunities to check progress, and for remedial work if that is necessary.

Delegation may initially feel like it takes more time than it’s worth, but by delegating effectively, you can expand the amount of work that you and your team can deliver.

Assign tasks and delegate

Your team will be able to deliver more.
Outcomes and objectives

When delegating, you must know the results or outcome you want the person to achieve. To be sure you give the person all the information required to do this, set objectives.

Objectives need to be SMART.

- Specific – make your objectives short and succinct. “What exactly do you want to achieve?”
- Measurable – How will you know that the objectives have been achieved?
- Achievable – Are there any barriers which would prevent these objectives from being achieved?
- Realistic – Are they possible to achieve?
- Timely – What timeframes would work and what will you do to ensure they are achieved in time?

Sometimes the acronym is expanded to SMARTER.

- Ethical – working ethically means thinking about how you work with people and choosing to do the ‘right’ thing for your team members.
- Recorded – ensuring delegations are recorded.

Write

Set out an objective here and give it the SMART test:

Objective:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is it specific/clear?</th>
<th>Yes / No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is it measurable?</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is it achievable?</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is it realistic?</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is it timely?</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Where are delegations recorded in your organisation?
New and different cleaning situations

As a supervisor you may have to scope new and/or different cleaning jobs, or jobs in a new or different environment. This may mean meeting with your client to find out their requirements.

Any new cleaning job has to be planned, scoped, and sized. You may need to consider the following requirements.

- Tasks – what needs to be done?
- Processes – how are things to be done? Are there any health and safety requirements? Is a risk assessment needed?
- Time – how long will it take? How often is cleaning required? When does it need to be done eg a certain time of day or day of the week?
- People – how many? What skills do they need? Who will do it? What supervision is needed?
- Resources – what equipment and cleaning agents are required? Is transport required to get people and/or equipment there?

Any new cleaning situation requires you to be adaptable.

Being adaptable

Being adaptable means being able to deal with new situations and where necessary make changes to accommodate the changes.

Many people don’t like change, but change is definitely a part of life and people who are adaptable are valued in organisations.

The cleaning industry has gone through some interesting changes in the last few years with the introduction of microfiber cloths and new equipment such as extendable dusters. Cleaners have had to adapt their work habits to take advantage of these innovations and for the most part they have quickly seen the benefits.

As a supervisor it is often your role to introduce new equipment and new ways of doing tasks and it is up to you to think about how to demonstrate the benefits to your team members so they will embrace the changes.
Problem solving

Everyone has problems to solve, but stepping up to a supervisor’s role brings different problems to those faced by a cleaner.

Just like writing objectives, writing down a problem keeping it as clear and simple as you can, is the first step to solving the problem.

Think about

Consider a problem that you have had to deal with recently. Answer the following questions and see if you find an answer that will work.

- Define the problem.
  - Who are the people involved (if applicable)?
  - What are the main issues?
- Brain storm the issue looking for the root cause of the problem.
- Brain storm possible solutions to the problem.
- Analyse each proposed solution and find one that solves the problem long term using the SMART criteria.

More info

Root cause means the real reason behind a problem. On the surface the problem may be that someone is always aggressive, but the root cause may be that the person is very frustrated and unhappy in their work.
Building a team

Cleaning teams can work together in all sorts of different ways. In some high security areas teams can all work together to clean a particular area and then move on to the next area of the building when everyone has finished their tasks locking the doors behind them.

Another team may be made up of people who all have their own areas to clean such as parts of a hospital. Some areas are more highly specialised than others which means that people may clean the same areas every day.

Some cleaners may never meet the other team members as it is a ‘team’ in theory only. The supervisor may have a group of cleaners that are classified as his/her team even though they all work in different buildings.

As a results of these differences, it can be difficult for a cleaning supervisor to build a team with all members feeling included in the group. Having said that, it is important that the supervisor is consistent in messages to various team members and makes the most of the expertise of the group. For instance, it may be useful to use a cleaner who specialises in isolation rooms to talk to other cleaners about the practicalities of infection control.

Cultural implications

Working with people from different cultures can be rewarding and interesting. It can also be the source of misunderstandings and some problems. If you have team members from different cultures, then it may be useful to create opportunities for people to show some aspects of their culture such as a shared lunch.

Often it is best to talk about the differences rather than pretend they don’t exist. This will also help prevent difficult situations arising. For example, someone may not join the group at lunch time and this may be seen as being rude, but it might be that the person is Muslim and it is during Ramadan.

More info

You’ll find more information about teams in the learning guide for unit standard 9681 working in a team or group.

More info

Ramadan is the Holy month in the Islamic faith. People fast from approximately sunrise to sunset.
Team meetings

For groups who work in different buildings it may be useful to arrange a team meeting on a regular basis even if it is not very often. Some organisations have health and safety toolbox meetings which are often the only time team members get together. Using that meeting to pass on health and safety advisories and changes to policies or procedures is important, but so is the sense of team which comes from meeting up with your colleagues so you know you’re not alone.

Although it is important not to overload these meetings, they can be a good time to talk about team objectives both short and long term. Objectives need buy-in and staff need an opportunity to contribute their ideas and concerns. The more inclusive you are in setting and working towards objectives, the easier it will be.

It is important to ensure that there is a consistency of purpose which is understood by all. This takes determination on the part of the linking supervisor to ensure the same messages get through. It may be useful to have something in writing so everyone gets the same message. It is then up to the supervisor to get feedback from staff back to the team and organisation.

As a team leader or supervisor, you need to be socially aware and see people in the bigger picture, not just as workers. Everyone is more than just the role they undertake at work. Being aware that there are lots of reasons why people act in certain ways can help you to show empathy and support when it is needed.

For instance, if someone’s work is not up to scratch, there may be something going on at home which is impacting on their work and it may not be possible to leave every problem at home.
Working with policies and procedures

Every organisation will have policies and procedures explaining what the rules are (policies) and how to implement them (procedures).

Sometimes organisations use different terms. For instance maybe procedures are called standard operating procedures (SOPs) or safe work practices (SWPs). Whatever they are called, they represent the way tasks should be done to ensure quality and safety.

As a supervisor it is up to you to ensure that your team members know what the policies and procedures relevant to their role are. It is also part of monitoring for quality, that these procedures are done as indicated.

Reporting

Your organisation will have reporting procedures which must be followed.

For instance, they may relate to:

- personnel – eg rosters, days and hours staff work.
- quality – eg auditing, compliance
- accidents, incidents and emergencies – know where the forms are and make sure your staff are aware of what they have to do.
- clients – eg cleaning contracts, job schedules, risk assessments.

Reporting must be clear and done promptly, in a timely manner.

Being ‘safety aware’

Safety is essential in every role in every organisation. Every team member has responsibilities for safety and it is up to you as a supervisor to ensure that everyone has done the relevant training and works safely.

Just like cleaning to a high standard requires noticing the detail of what is happening (or not happening), so does health and safety. Train your staff, and yourself, to notice hazards and potential problems so they can be dealt with as soon as possible.

Use the hazard register as it is designed to ensure that the right people know about real and potential hazards so they can be mitigated.

Emphasise being ‘safety aware’ to your team.
Workplace safety management practices

ACC has a workplace safety management practices (WSMP) programme which recognises medium to large businesses (more than 10 employees) that have implemented effective health and safety systems and practices in their workplaces.

If you qualify, it adds to the many business benefits of keeping your staff safe and rewards you by reducing your ACC work cover levies. It is also a great way to position your business as an example of good practice in your market.

The three-step entry process starts with a self-assessment, then an application, followed by an on-site audit of your workplace(s) by an ACC approved auditor.

If the auditor finds that your health and safety practices meet the workplace safety management practices audit standards, your business will receive a work cover levy reduction which will apply for 24 months.

Benefits to your business

A workplace safety management practice is a great tool for developing and/or strengthening your health and safety systems.

Workplace safety management practices:

- provide you with a framework for building successful and sustainable health and safety practices in your workplace.

- help you to reduce the number of accidents and injuries – which is likely to mean more motivated and productive employees, lower absenteeism, fewer business disruptions, and reductions in the costs of sick pay and hiring temporary replacement staff.

- demonstrate your commitment to the wellbeing of your staff, customers, clients, suppliers and visitors.

- provide official recognition of your health and safety practices.

- boost your reputation both in the business world and as an employer of choice.