

Supervisory Training Guide

1. Behaving like a supervisor

To an employee who has never been a supervisor before, taking on their first supervisory role can be overwhelming. This is especially true for supervisors promoted from within their former team; suddenly being in charge of people who were once their peers—some of whom may have more seniority than them, or applied for the same supervisory position—can take considerable adjustment. Our [New Supervisor Training](#) course provides a thorough overview of what employees need to know when they embark on their new roles.

New supervisors should be prepared to make the change from being a peer to being management, and should be trained in the practical consequences of this change. For example, supervisors can still be friends with their direct reports, but the new position brings with it a new, higher standard. Make sure that new supervisors are familiar with your organization's [Code of Ethics Policy](#), and specifically how it applies to their new role in a management capacity.

2. Managing time and work

Every employee is responsible for managing their own time and work, but supervisors must also manage the time and work of their direct reports. Supervisors need to keep track of the workloads of their direct reports, and appropriately apportion tasks, keeping an eye, too, on deadlines and quotas across their team. Even employees with excellent time management skills may not easily make the transition to supervising, and may need further help through [Time Management Training](#).

3. Communicating like a supervisor

A significant portion of any supervisor's time is spent communicating. Supervisors have to explain things to their direct reports and provide updates to their own managers; they have to handle delicate and sensitive conversations; they have to know when to speak and when to listen. A foundation of [Effective Communication Training](#) is a good start, but only represents half of the skillset supervisors need; more than just communicating well, supervisors may need [Handling Difficult Employee Conversations Training](#) so they can appropriately and tactfully handle situations that even seasoned supervisors may find challenging.

4. Handling disciplinary actions

One of the biggest and most difficult changes new supervisors must deal with is disciplining their direct reports. Having to discipline someone is never easy, and without proper training and preparation, a new supervisor could easily make a mistake, whether by deviating from the correct disciplinary procedure or by not following through with discipline when it is warranted. Either case does a disservice to the organization, and risks a host of side effects.

Having a [Progressive Discipline Policy](#), and ensuring that new supervisors know and understand the contents of that policy, will instill in them the confidence to handle these delicate tasks appropriately and effectively. Naturally, [Progressive Discipline Training](#) can help, too, and so can providing a [Progressive Discipline Guide](#). Enforcing discipline is a stressful but ultimately essential part of any supervisory role, so it's crucial that you ensure any supervisors within your organization are up to the job.

5. Complying with the law

Supervisors are held to a higher standard of responsibility under Canadian occupational health and safety legislation. In some jurisdictions, they must receive special training regarding these responsibilities. Supervisors in Ontario, for example, must complete [Occupational Health and Safety Awareness Training for Supervisors](#) and [Workplace Violence and Harassment Training for Managers \(Ontario – Bills 168 and 132\)](#) over and above whatever training they received as employees. Supervisors should also know that they can be held criminally liable for injuries suffered by workers under their direction.

Becoming a supervisor for the first time is rife with possibilities, but also fraught with challenges. With adequate support and a proper new supervisor training program that touches on many of the skills new supervisors may not have previously learned, employees can learn the basics of their new role allowing them to grow and flourish. Organizations choose their employees for supervisory roles because they believe they will succeed. However, most new supervisors need some help transitioning into their new role. Training and support can help employers ensure that their supervisors live up to their full potential.

How can you help train and support new supervisors for each skill? HRdownloads™ offers unlimited resources, including HR documents, online employee training, and on-demand HR advice that can help you make sure that new supervisors are not only aware of the new roles and responsibilities that come with their position, but that they know how to meet the challenges they will face.

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