



ROAD BUSINESS



Benefits of Highway/Public Works Department Self-Assessment

1. Improve effectiveness
2. Promote staff and community pride
3. Clarify budget needs
4. Identify operation and management needs
5. Enhance professional image
6. Promote team work and staff development
7. Encourage interdepartmental coordination
8. Identify duplication and wasted effort
9. Promote public awareness
10. Improve communication

On the Road in New Hampshire

Highway and Public Works Department Self-Assessment

Self-assessment is a systematic review of management and operations policies and practices. It enables department managers to compare their policies, procedures, and practices to those of successful departments. A nationwide committee of public works officials has developed a self-assessment model. In the *Public Works Management Manual*, they list the benefits of applying the model: Those benefits are shown in the box above.

Department managers can achieve these benefits by applying self-assessment to specific functions. They can identify strengths and deficiencies, and then use their strengths to improve deficiencies. For example, if they have a clear policy for training crewmembers, they can adopt practices to improve individual's knowledge and/or skills. If they have sound procedures to identify mainte-

nance needs and solutions, they can prepare and justify increased budgets.

By involving staff and crews in the self-assessment process, a department can improve internal communications. By involving other municipal officials and the public, it can improve external communications.

The City of Dover Department of Community Services has undertaken department-wide self-assessment. Their experiences will be highlighted in a Compensation Funds of New Hampshire (CFNH) workshop on October 8. The workshop will introduce self-assessment to selectmen, road agents, public works directors, and other town officials. Drawing on participants' responses, the UNH T² Center and CFNH, among others, will help departments apply self-assessment.

To register for the CFNH workshop, call Kimberly at 1-800-698-CFNH (2364). For information about the self-assessment process, call the UNH T² Center at 862-2826 or 1-800-423-0060.

Sources

Ross, Dennis ed. 1996. *Public Works Management Practices*, 2nd ed. Kansas City MO: American Public Works Association.

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