



June 2007

Summary - Do's and Don'ts for writing performance standards

Do:

Set clear objectives. State precisely what are you trying to achieve and why.

State objectives in simple, easily understood language.

Be concise.

Review existing performance standards, including District guidelines and checklists to save time and track project goals and objectives.

Circulate drafts of standards among colleagues, counsel, and cooperating agencies to get new ideas and identify unconsidered issues or weaknesses.

Seek out experienced advice.

Share lessons learned from successes and failures. If something worked in the past, do not reinvent it. Reuse it as appropriate.

Set explicit and realistic timeframes for accomplishing project objectives. Consider the time required to achieve project objectives.

Require documentation of baseline and post site preparation conditions. Include reporting standards and timeframes.

Identify any required meetings and inspections including associated timeframes.

Don't:

Be vague or ambiguous. Vague and ambiguous performance standards make it difficult to evaluate compliance or require corrective measures.

Leave room for interpretation of performance standards. Unclear conditions may prevent enforcement of performance standards and achieving project objectives.

Expect others to read between the lines. Be certain all involved parties understand performance standards.

Remember, standards must be achievable and capable of being monitored with available resources.