

3. Managing Productivity, Performance, and Morale

- **The Recreation and Park Department has made accountability based on performance standards and staff development key components of the Department's strategic plan.**
- **The major barrier to the Department's job performance is the high absentee and injury rate, especially among gardeners. In FY 2004-2005, gardeners on Worker's Compensation or sick leave totaled 16.3 full time positions, or 7.6 percent of the 215 gardener positions. Department employees in general on Worker's Compensation or sick leave in FY 2004-2005 totaled 44.39 full time positions, or 4.9 percent of the 900 full time positions.**
- **The cost to the Department in lost work days due to Worker's Compensation or extended sick leave are high. The Budget Analyst estimates that salary and mandatory fringe benefit costs for 44.3 full time positions lost to Worker's Compensation or sick leave each year are approximately \$2.6 million. Reducing these lost work days by 25 percent would increase the Department's productivity, an opportunity cost savings of approximately \$650,000 annually.**
- **The Department only began to require performance evaluations of Department employees in FY 2004-2005 and still has not developed a formal written policy. The Budget Analyst found that employee performance varied widely across the Department and that managers need to improve the quality and consistency of performance goals to ensure that the public receives quality service.**
- **The Recreation and Park Department also needs to improve access to training opportunities; in FY 2003-2004, only 10 percent of Department employees attended Department or outside training programs and although the Department did not track training in FY 2004-2005, in the first quarter of FY 2005-2006, only 7 percent of Department employees attended training programs. The Department especially needs to provide job skills training and develop opportunities for recreation, gardener, and custodian staff to ensure that these employees are able to provide the best possible service.**

- **Strong employee performance and accountability and good public service depend on the Department staff's morale and perception of their jobs. In interviews and focus groups, the Budget Analyst found significant need for improvement, especially in communication among executive managers, supervisors, and front line staff, and the need for front line staff to be better integrated into developing and planning the work program.**

Productivity, Performance and Morale in the Recreation and Park Department

The Recreation and Park Department's Strategic Plan, completed in December 2002, identifies organizational excellence as a key component in moving the organization forward. According to the Strategic Plan, organizational excellence includes:

- Creating an organizational structure that will meet the Department's goals and accommodate community needs.
- Developing a Department-wide accountability program for all employees based on measurable performance standards.
- Providing training and development opportunities for staff to allow them to refine and develop their job skills and better meet the needs of the community.
- Determining and maintaining adequate staff to perform Department functions and meet customer needs.

Recreation and Park Department managers and staff define poor staff morale as a key issue for the Department. In the five-year Operations Plan, published by the Department in 2004, the Department stated its goal to develop an accountability program based on measurable performance standards with a strategy to develop incentive programs that improve morale and reward individual and group contributions to the Department. The components of this plan include:

- Creating recognition programs for outstanding service and performance.
- Improving morale and creating Department-wide sense of team spirit and team work.
- Educating San Francisco residents about the significant contributions of Recreation and Park Department staff to the City's quality of life, and promoting public awareness about the Recreation and Park Department's areas of jurisdiction, examples of excellence, and breadth of programming.

The 2004 Operation Plan also addressed issues of staff training and development, with the goal to provide training and development opportunities to Department staff.

The Department's Management of Performance

The Recreation and Park Department has several avenues to better manage performance, including:

- Promoting a safe work environment to reduce the incidence of workplace illness and injury.
- Managing sick leave and attendance to improve job performance and productivity.
- Implementing performance evaluations for all employees that effectively monitor and evaluate employee performance.
- Providing opportunities for employee training and development.

Although the Department has programs or procedures to manage performance, including attendance, the Department needs to improve its management of employee performance.

Reduced Productivity from High Incidences of Workers Compensation, Personal, Family Medical and Sick Leave

The Department has significant lost work time due to work related injury and illness, personal or family leave, and sick leave, contributing to reduced productivity and understaffing. According to the FY 2005-2006 Efficiency Plan, 32 of the 220 gardeners, or 14.5 percent, were on workers compensation or some other type of extended leave, in September 2005.¹

As noted in Table 3.1, in FY 2004-2005 gardener leave time, including worker's compensation, personal, sick, and family medical leave, equaled 16.29 positions, or 7.6 percent of 215 filled gardener positions.²

¹ Eight of the 32 gardeners who were on extended leave in September of 2005 were on worker's compensation leave.

² The management audit reviewed all leave commencing in July of 2003 through October of 2005.

Table 3.1

Number of Recreation and Park Department Employees on Worker's Compensation, Personal, Sick, or Family Medical Leave, Total Number of Days on Leave, and Number of Full Time Positions Represented by the Number of Days on Leave,

FY 2004-2005

| | FY 2004-2005 | | |
|---|------------------------------|---------------------|--|
| | Number of Employees on Leave | Total Days on Leave | Number of Full Time Positions Represented by Total Days on Leave |
| <u>Gardeners</u> | | | |
| Worker's Compensation | 10 | 1,859 | 5.09 |
| Personal, Sick Leave, and Family Medical Leave ¹ | <u>42</u> | <u>4,087</u> | <u>11.20</u> |
| Total Gardeners Leave | 52 | 5,946 | 16.29 |
| Actual Filled Gardener Positions | | | 215 |
| Percent of Gardeners on Leave Compared to Actual Filled Positions | | | 7.6% |
| <u>Custodians</u> | | | |
| Worker's Compensation | 1 | 45 | 0.12 |
| Personal, Sick Leave, and Family Medical Leave ¹ | <u>7</u> | <u>405</u> | <u>1.11</u> |
| Total Custodians | 8 | 450 | 1.23 |
| Actual Filled Custodian Positions | | | 59 |
| Percent of Gardeners on Leave Compared to Actual Filled Positions | | | 2.1% |
| <u>All Other Classifications</u> | | | |
| Worker's Compensation | 12 | 1,487 | 4.07 |
| Personal, Sick Leave, and Family Medical Leave ¹ | <u>94</u> | <u>8,282</u> | <u>22.69</u> |
| Total All Other Classifications | 106 | 9,769 | 26.76 |
| Actual Filled Positions in Other Classes | | | 626 |
| Percent of Gardeners on Leave Compared to Actual Filled Positions | | | 4.3% |

Source: Recreation and Park Department

¹ The portion of employees and associated days on leave due to Worker's Compensation claims may be greater than represented in Table 3.1 because the Recreation and Park Department has coded some employees who are on leave due to Worker's Compensation claims as "Family Medical Leave" rather than "Worker's Compensation Leave" although the *total* number of employees on leave and the *total* days on leave is unchanged,.

Managing and Reducing Lost Work Time due to Work Related Injury or Illness

The Recreation and Park Department has included the need for improved safety awareness and precautions to reduce personal injury and the loss of work due to preventable injury in the FY 2005-2006 Efficiency Plan. Reducing work related injury and illness is one of the Department’s performance measures. The Department reports year on year reductions in new injuries: a 10 percent reduction in FY 2003-2004, and a 33 percent reduction in FY 2004-2005. The target for reduction in new injuries in FY 2005-2006 is 28 percent.

The Department’s expenditures for Worker’s Compensation claims has increased in FY 2003-2004 through FY 2005-2006 at an average annual growth rate of 7.9 percent. The increase in budgeted expenditures in FY 2005-2006 compared to actual expenditures in FY 2004-2005 results from increases in Worker’s Compensation reimbursements and the inclusion of administrative costs.

Table 3.2

Increase in the Recreation and Park Department’s Expenditures for Worker’s Compensation Claims

FY 2003-2004 through FY 2004-2005

| | FY 2003-2004 Actual Expenditures | FY 2004-2005 Actual Expenditures | FY 2005-2006 Budgeted Expenditures | Average Annual Growth in Expenditures |
|------------------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| Worker’s Compensation Claims Costs | \$2,763,000 | \$2,547,000 | \$3,218,570 | 7.9% |

Source: Recreation and Park Department

The Department has several avenues to reduce Worker’s Compensation claims and control costs. The most effective avenue to reducing Worker’s Compensation claims is to prevent injury in the first place. Additionally, the Recreation and Park Department can control costs through temporary transitional work programs and better claims management.

Claims Management

An employee’s Worker’s Compensation rights are determined by State law. The State of California implemented workers’ compensation reforms in April of 2004 that included a two-year cap on temporary disability payments for most types of injuries, incentives for workers to return to work, and stricter guidelines for determining permanent disability.

These reforms were accompanied by annual increases in temporary disability and permanent total disability benefit payments in 2003 through 2005. These changes in the State law are expected to contain growth in Worker's Compensation costs.

Reporting and Communications

Although the City's Department of Human Resources manages Worker's Compensation claims for all City departments, the Recreation and Park Department can work with the Department of Human Resources to better manage Worker's Compensation claims. The Recreation and Park Department Environment, Health and Safety manager proposed a performance agreement with the Department of Human Resources Worker's Compensation Division which included procedures for regular communication and reporting. Currently, the Environment, Health and Safety Manager receives quarterly invoices for claims billing and weekly copies of letters sent to employees with claims. Additionally, the Environment, Health and Safety Manager meets quarterly with the Worker's Compensation Division claims staff and speaks daily with the staff as needed.

Plans of Action

According to the Environment, Health and Safety Manager, each open Worker's Compensation claim should have a plan of action, which sets a forward-looking plan for the claimant, including treatment and return to work plans. The Department of Human Resources has not consistently completed action plans for Recreation and Park Department claimants. According to the Environment, Health and Safety Manager, the Department of Human Resources Worker's Compensation Division had completed 6 percent of the action plans in June 2005, 22 percent in July 2005, and 12 percent in August 2005. The Department of Human Resources Worker's Compensation Division recently hired a new director, and the Recreation and Park Department Environment, Health and Safety Manager expects continued improvement in this area.

Temporary Transitional Work Programs

The Recreation and Park Department has a modified duty program, or "Temporary Transitional Work Program," that allows employees to return to work in a limited capacity. According the Environment, Health and Safety Manager, the Recreation and Park Department's program is similar to programs established by other City departments. Employees can work in a temporary transitional work assignment for 90 days if their injury is improving or at least maintaining. At 90 days, the Environment, Health and Safety Manager reviews the employee's condition more closely to ensure that the employee is progressing toward the goal of returning to work in full capacity.

As shown in Table 3.3, in FY 2004-2005 the number of work days that were available for modified duty assignments were 3,848, or approximately 14.7 full time equivalent positions. The Environment, Health and Safety Manager reports that a preliminary count of temporary transitional work assigned days in FY 2004-2005 is 1,834, or 47.8 percent of available days.

Table 3.3**Number of Temporary Transitional Work Program Days Available and Assigned, FY 2002-2003 to FY 2004-2005**

| | FY 2002-2003 | FY 2003-2004 | FY 2004-2005 |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Available Days | 3,558 | 3,309 | 3,848 |
| Full Time Equivalent Positions Equal to Available Days | 13.6 | 12.7 | 14.7 |
| Assigned Days | 2,781 | 2,136 | 1,834 |
| Full Time Equivalent Positions Equal to Assigned Days | 10.7 | 8.2 | 7.0 |
| Percent of Available Days that are Assigned | 78.2% | 64.6% | 47.8% |

Source: Recreation and Park Department

The Recreation and Park Department has not fully utilized the number of available days for temporary transitional work assignments. Under the current procedure, the employee's supervisor initiates the temporary transitional work assignment when the employee submits a medical release from his or her health care provider, reporting the employee's work restrictions. The supervisor then determines if a temporary transitional work assignment can be provided within the supervisor's unit. If a temporary transitional work assignment is not available in the supervisor's unit, the supervisor is supposed to ask his or her manager about the availability of temporary transitional work assignments elsewhere in the division or Department.

The Recreation and Park Department General Manager needs to ensure that temporary transitional work opportunities are fully utilized not only for employees with work related injuries but for all employees on extended sick leave who are eligible. Although the Department does not track whether employees working in temporary transitional work assignments are on Worker's Compensation or some other type of leave, the Environment, Health and Safety Manager states that only two to three employees with non-work related illnesses or injuries participate in temporary transitional work assignments.

Under the current protocol, individual supervisors are responsible for providing temporary transitional work assignments for employees able to work with medical restrictions, and if such work is not available in the immediate unit, report up the chain of command to find temporary transitional work assignments elsewhere in the Department. The General Manager should assign the Director of Operations and the Director of Administration and Finance, and other senior managers, with responsibility for monitoring and tracking employees on Worker's Compensation and other leaves who are able to return to work with medical restrictions and the availability of temporary transitional work assignments. The Human Resources Division Manager should coordinate centrally information on employees who are able to return to work with medical restrictions and the availability of temporary transitional work assignments. The Director of Operations and the Director of Administration and Finance, and other senior managers, should prepare and present a joint monthly report, coordinated by the Human

Resources Division Manager, to the General Manager, detailing (a) employees on Worker's Compensation or other extended leave, the type of leave, and the length of time on leave, or if the employee has combined several types of leave, the total length of time on leave, (b) employees able to return to work with medical restrictions, and (c) the availability and assignment of temporary transitional work.

Injury and Illness Prevention

The Recreation and Park Department has developed a "Supervisor's Safety Handbook" that defines the Environment, Health and Safety program and the Injury and Illness Prevention Program, establishes health and safety goals, and sets out the Department's policies and procedures. The Supervisor's Safety Handbook sets the Department's requirements for safety awareness meetings and mandatory safety-related training. Each discipline within the Department has a matrix of safety awareness meetings for be completed in a given order. For example, gardeners and landscaping employees must attend ten safety awareness meetings, which include walking and working surfaces, automobile use, emergency action plans, injury and illness reporting, brush removal, garbage handling, and shoveling and digging.

Attendance at the safety awareness meeting is one of the Department's performance goals and included in employee's performance evaluations. All employees, supervisors, and managers are required to attend 70 percent of safety awareness meetings in order to receive a "met objective" performance rating and 100 percent to receive an "exceeded objective" performance rating.

Because lost work days due to work related injuries represents significant lost productivity to the Department, the General Manager needs to insure that work place safety and injury and illness prevention are a priority for all employees. The General Manager should assign the Director of Operations, the Director of Administration and Finance the Director of the Capital Program, and Director of Partnerships and Property with responsibility for monitoring and tracking employees' and supervisors' safety awareness meeting attendance. The Human Resources Division Manager should coordinate centrally performance evaluation data on safety awareness meeting attendance to assist the respective division directors monitoring and tracking attendance.

The Recreation and Park Department should consider further steps in setting safety awareness and injury and illness prevention as a priority, including (a) increasing the percent of safety awareness meeting attendance necessary to receive a "met objective" performance rating, and (b) include other safety prevention protocols in the annual performance evaluation goals and objectives, such as periodic safety inspections, on-time accident reporting, timely provision of medical slips, and days to complete corrective actions.

Managing the High Incidence of Lost Work Time due to Sick Leave, Family Medical Leave, and Personal Leave

The Recreation and Park Department's policies on leaves of absence, sick leave with or without pay, family medical leave, and personal leave correspond to the City's policies overall. Although the Recreation and Park Department Human Resources Division reviews sick leave requests on a case by case basis and requires authorization by a health care provider before the leave is approved, the incidence of extended sick leave continues to be high, cutting into Department productivity. The Department has an interest in providing sufficient flexibility in its sick leave policy to ensure that employees can return to work when fully able, but needs to ensure that employees return to work at the earliest opportunity.

The Department needs to review its practices in monitoring extended leaves, and senior managers need to work with the Human Resources Division to evaluate extended leave requests and determine if the leave time can be shortened or if the individual employee will be able to return to work in full capacity. The Department should return employees on extended sick leave to temporary transitional assignments whenever possible or work with the employee to find alternative placement if the employee cannot return to his or her permanent position, as discussed below.

During the course of the management audit, the Budget Analyst identified three instances in which a request for sick leave or a claim for Worker's Compensation leave was closely associated with a disciplinary action. In such cases the Department needs to work with the City Attorney to determine if the requested leave is legitimate sick leave under City policy, if discipline problems can be resolved in a timely manner and the individual should return to work, or if more progressive discipline should follow, including termination.

Americans with Disability Act Accommodations

The Recreation and Park Department's policy is to notify employees who have been on leave for six months or more of the employee's options to seek alternative work assignment under the Americans with Disability Act. The Department also sends Americans with Disability Act information to employees who are on Worker's Compensation Leave and have been determined by their medical provider to have reached maximum medical improvement and are therefore unable to return to their position in full capacity.

Under City policy, the employee is responsible for notifying the Department if the employee needs accommodation to return to work. Nothing in City policy requires the employee to request such accommodation. According to the Human Resources Division staff, the Department does assist an employee requesting accommodation within the employee's work unit first, then within the Department, and finally in other City departments. Employees can be placed in other classifications if they meet the qualifications of the class and the pay rate is within 5 percent of their current pay rate.

In FY 2004-2005, the Recreation and Park Department mailed 16 letters to employees, notifying them of their eligibility for American with Disabilities Act accommodations, and received nine requests for accommodation. Four employees were able to return to their position with accommodations, three employees were determined ineligible for placement, one employee retired, and one employee is currently seeking medical separation.

Implementing Performance Evaluations

Although the Recreation and Park Department has had a long standing policy to conduct employee performance evaluations, referenced in the Employee Handbook provided to all newly-hired employees, the Recreation and Park Department does not, in fact, have a formal written policy regarding performance evaluations. Prior to FY 2004-2005, Recreation and Park Department managers and supervisors did not formally evaluate employee performance. The Recreation and Park Department implemented a six-month pilot program in July of 2004 for managers and supervisors to write performance evaluations for all employees. Since the inception of the pilot program in July of 2004, 724 of the 948 eligible employees, or 76 percent, have received performance evaluations, although 89 of those evaluations were after the end of the six-month pilot period in January of 2005.

Supervisor and Employee Participation in the Performance Evaluation Process

Human Resources Division staff conducted a one-day training for supervisors and managers and have made available follow-up training on evaluating employee performance and writing performance evaluations. The Human Resources Division staff also have procedures to remind supervisors and managers when employee performance evaluations are due or have not been completed on time.

Although the Department is monitoring whether performance evaluations are completed, the Department has not set up a process to evaluate the quality or effectiveness of performance evaluations. During interviews with Department supervisors and focus groups with Department employees, the management audit found need for improvements in the performance evaluation process. Most supervisors thought that the performance evaluations could be a valuable tool if done correctly, but employees were less certain that performance evaluations were helpful.

According to some Department managers, the performance evaluations are a necessary vehicle to address the problem of unequal performance among Department staff. However, the Department has not ensured that all performance evaluations are completed in a timely manner or that the performance goals are consistent and appropriate to the job.

Timeliness of Performance Evaluations

The management audit team interviewed quadrant and other program managers and rode along with six randomly-selected supervisors. The management audit found that supervisors had difficulty completing employee performance evaluations on time. Even

supervisors who had completed employee performance evaluations during the pilot project did not necessarily complete the mid-year employee performance evaluations and were not certain that they would complete the annual 2005 employee performance evaluations prior to the January 2006 deadline.

The Department needs to evaluate supervisors' management of time and ability to complete the performance evaluation for all employees. Although some supervisors may have been unable to complete performance evaluations on time for all employees due to staffing levels, other supervisors may have difficulty managing their time and scheduling performance evaluations for all employees.

Consistent and Appropriate Performance goals

The Department needs to assess weaknesses in setting and evaluating performance goals and to establish guidelines for the types of goals to be included in the performance evaluations, to ensure that performance evaluations address consistent and effective standards. Both supervisors and employees identified a need for consistent performance standards for all employees. Supervisors stated that, while some employees responded well to the performance evaluation process and set appropriate goals identifying what the employee was trying to achieve, other employees did not understand the process well or set goals that were too low or too easy to achieve. Additionally, employees found that the quality of performance reviews and support varied widely from supervisor to supervisor.

The pilot program to implement performance evaluations was initiated more than 18 months ago and therefore, the Recreation and Park Department General Manager should complete an assessment of the performance evaluation process and approve a formal policy.

Providing for Staff Training and Development

The Recreation and Park Department's Strategic Plan calls for training and development opportunities for staff, which include providing access to job and task specific training opportunities and creating standards for professional preparation and continuous learning. As part of the strategic planning process, the Recreation and Park Department has developed action plans to implement the strategic plan. The action plan calls for:

- Establishing a training development committee.
- Writing a training plan based on a needs assessment.
- Writing and implementing a training information communications plan.
- Performing training on various subjects.

According to the Manager, Environment, Health and Safety, the training development committee has been integrated into a more general Health and Safety program advisory committee, which meets quarterly and includes staff from different disciplines within the

Department. The Department has recently completed a development and training needs assessment for supervisors that will be used as the basis for the FY 2005-2006 training plan.

The Environment, Health and Safety Unit staff implemented the training information communications plan through distribution of the “Recreation and Park University” course catalog, which lists training and education programs provided by the Recreation and Park Department or other City Departments, by posting on the Department’s web site, emailing copies quarterly, and sending out hard copies two times per year. In addition, the Environment, Health and Safety Unit staff identify specialized training provided by outside agencies, such as earthquake preparedness training.

During the management audit interviews and focus groups, Department managers, supervisors, and employees identified the need for more training and development of Department staff. Several managers or supervisors noted that performance among staff was uneven, which could in part be addressed by training and development programs. Both recreation supervisors and park section supervisors stated that newly-hired recreation and gardener staff did not always have needed skills. Also, non-custodian supervisors and custodial staff need better training in custodial practices.

The budget for training and development decreased by \$88,353, or 46 percent, from \$191,980 in FY 2004-2005 to \$103,627 in FY 2005-2006. Because of the reduced budget, the Department is offering fewer recreation and gardening skill development courses.

Only a small number of Department employees attend training sessions. In FY 2003-2004, the Department’s performance measures show that 10 percent of Department employees attended in-house and outside courses.³ The Department did not track the number of employees attending training sessions in FY 2004-2005 but in the first quarter of FY 2005-2006, 7 percent of Department employees attended training sessions.

The Human Resources Division needs to develop the training information communications plan to ensure that employees throughout the Department are aware of, and have access to, the Department’s training program to ensure broader participation than currently exists.

Job Skills Training for Recreation, Gardener and Custodial Staff

As noted above, skills-based training programs for gardeners and recreation staff were reduced in the FY 2005-2006 budget. Interviews with Department staff show a need for job skill training from recreation, gardener, and custodial staff. Department employees can receive tuition reimbursement of \$500 per employee per year through the City’s memoranda of understanding with the employees’ unions. Because managers, supervisors, and employees have all identified skills development for recreation and

³ This number does not include safety and awareness training requirements.

gardening staff as a major issue, the Department needs to work with recreation and gardener staff to increase employee participation in training programs.

The Recreation and Park Department has recently hired two new managers to oversee the Neighborhood and Citywide Services Divisions. Additionally, the Department is hiring five additional Neighborhood Services Managers in addition to the three existing Neighborhood Services Managers, totaling eight management staff. These new management staff need to establish training and skills development as a priority.

The Recreation and Park Department needs to develop a formal training plan for recreation, gardener, and custodial staff. The proposed formal training plan should include a mentoring system to allow more experienced staff to assist the training of newly-hired or less skilled staff. Additionally, the Department needs to establish formal channels for employees to attend classes through the San Francisco Community College system, including horticulture and recreation classes, and to develop protocols for receiving tuition reimbursement for attending classes.

Training in Custodial Practices

During supervisor, manager, and employee interviews, the management audit found that non-custodial supervisors of custodian staff did not possess the necessary knowledge and skills to support custodial staff in best practices. In Section 2 of this management audit report, the Budget Analyst recommends that the Department reorganize management oversight of custodial staff, resulting in custodian teams reporting to the Neighborhood Services Managers. The Department needs to develop custodial service protocols, based on best practices, and develop best practice and management training for the Neighborhood Services Managers and the assistant custodian supervisors. The Department also needs to develop job specific training programs for custodians. Training funds are not currently allocated to custodial training.

Impact of Communication and Community Relations on Morale

Communication and Staff Morale

The Department lacks appropriate internal communication channels, particularly channels that transmit information from the General Manager and other high level management to front-line staff. Staff member report not learning in a timely manner, if at all, about new policies and procedures, management updates, the hiring of new staff, facility openings and closures, and large events sponsored by the Department. One gardener reported that he did not learn about the appointment of the permanent General Manager in July of 2005 until several months had elapsed.

Because both the Department's management structure and physical nature are highly decentralized, with facilities spread throughout the City, most front-line staff never have reason to go to the Department's administrative offices at McLaren Lodge. Also, because (a) the Department has significant technological limitations, and (b) many staff

work outdoors or in remote facilities and do not have regular access to computers, much less voicemail, it is not practical for these staff to receive their Department information via email.

Currently, the only consistently reliable information pathway for all Department staff is through the memos that are attached to paychecks. However, some staff, especially those in mobile crews or at remote locations, report that they sometimes do not receive their paycheck memos on a regular basis. Consequently, these staff may be reading outdated information in their paycheck memos. Further, even when timely, staff members report that the information presented in paycheck memos is frequently of little value to them.

Some staff can rely on their immediate supervisors for information, but this reliance depends on the regularity in which staff members meet with their supervisors, the quality of information the supervisors themselves have access to, and the quality of information that supervisors convey to their staff. Because not all supervisors hold regular meetings, the existence and frequency of interactions with supervisors varies throughout the Department. Those front-line staff who do attend regular meetings with their supervisors and peers, particularly on a division or quadrant level, appreciate the opportunity to interact with others and receive updates on a regular basis. All staff, when questioned in focus groups, expressed a strong interest in having more regular meetings. The General Manager should, therefore, require that all supervisors hold regular meetings with staff, meetings that should be supplemented with periodic larger or department-wide meetings. These regular meetings need to address staff desires in particular for information related to promotional opportunities, changes in Department policies and procedures, upcoming events, and upcoming permits and reservations scheduled for their work locations.

Front-line staff members often receive their information about the Department from a variety of informal sources. Examples commonly cited include word-of-mouth from fellow staff, rumor from community members, and local media. One staff member working in Golden Gate Park reported receiving updates about Harding and Fleming Golf Courses' renovation and the PGA Tour, Inc. tournament by reading the local newspaper. These informal communication pathways pose a significant danger in that the information being conveyed may not be accurate.

The failure of the Department to facilitate internal communication causes the Department to operate less efficiently. For example, if a gardener is not told by Citywide Services' recreation programs or the Permits and Reservations Unit that there is going to be a large athletic event on a field in his/her beat, the gardener cannot plan the field's watering schedule accordingly, so that the field is not too wet when the meet takes place. Such a communication failure could potentially result in the need to restore or re-seed the field's damaged turf.

In addition to the Department operating less efficiently, communication failures are contributing significantly to the staff morale problem. There is a significant cultural disconnect between the front-line staff and the administrative staff at McLaren Lodge. The spatial breadth of the Department's operations and the lack of consistent channels of

communication fuel a sense among front-line staff that the administrative staff do not understand what is going on "in the field."

Staff members frequently report that they choose not to communicate their concerns and ideas to their immediate supervisors because it is not a worthwhile undertaking. According to one gardener, because there is little encouragement to share ideas with management, "Nobody tries anymore. Nothing makes a difference." Some staff feel that supervisors do not communicate their concerns upwards because there is a culture to "take care of it." This approach, in turn, contributes to upper management not understanding the needs and concerns of front-line staff.

The Department should establish task groups that work on specific problems identified by front-line staff. The task groups should develop recommendations and implementation plans and include a reporting mechanism. For example, there should be task groups to review and evaluate options for radios/phones in the field and review problems in cash and revenue handling in recreation facilities. Additionally, the eight new Neighborhood Services Managers should work with supervisors to ensure they are including employees in work planning and problem solving processes.

Department staff are interested in finding out the ideas and direction of the new administration, but many report not having met the General Manager or the new Director of Operations. In focus groups and interviews, Department staff said that this lack of contact with senior managers suggests that front line staff are not as central to the Department's success as administrative staff. The General Manager should ensure that he and senior level staff have the opportunity to meet and interact with all Department staff, and vice versa. This may be via hosting annual or semi-annual Department-wide meetings or by attending smaller quadrant or section-level meetings on a rotating basis.

Conclusions

Although the Recreation and Park Department has implemented policies and procedures to improve staff performance in the past two years and has developed consistent procedures to promote health and safety, staff morale remains low and lost work days due to Worker's Compensation or extended leaves remains high. The Department needs to review and improve its performance evaluation and extended leave procedures to improve performance evaluation effectiveness and productivity. The Department also needs to improve communication between line employees and managers and among the various sections of the Department to keep employees better informed and provide a sense of integration and involvement in the Department as a whole. The Department also needs to support staff in their intersection with the community.

Recommendations

The Recreation and Park Department General Manager should:

- 3.1 Complete an assessment of the performance evaluation process and approve a formal performance evaluation policy.
- 3.2 Direct the Director of Operations and the Director of Administration and Finance to submit joint quarterly reports to the General Manager that track in detail: (a) employees on Worker's Compensation or other extended leave, the type of leave, and the length of time on leave, or if the employee has combined several types of leave, the total length of time on leave, (b) employees able to return to work with medical restrictions, (c) employees on Worker's Compensation and other leaves who are eligible for, been notified of, and have accepted temporary transitional work assignments, and (d) employees on Worker's Compensation and other leaves who are eligible for, been notified of, and have requested Americans with Disabilities Act accommodations, and the status of those accommodations.
- 3.3 Assign the Director of Operations, the Director of Administration and Finance, the Director of the Capital Program, and the Director of Partnerships and Property with responsibility for monitoring and tracking employees' and supervisors' safety awareness meeting attendance, in coordination with the Human Resources Division Manager.
- 3.4 Consider further steps in setting safety awareness and injury and illness prevention as a priority, including (a) increasing the percent of safety awareness meeting attendance necessary to receive a "met objective" performance rating, and (b) include other safety prevention protocols in the annual performance evaluation goals and objectives, such as periodic safety inspections, on-time accident reporting, timely provision of medical slips, and days to complete corrective actions.
- 3.5 Establish policies governing staff meetings, which include (a) requirements for regular staff meetings between supervisors and line staff, staff meeting topics, including information on promotional opportunities, changes in Department policies and procedures, upcoming events and upcoming permits and reservations scheduled at the work locations, and (b) schedules for periodic division-wide and Department-wide staff meetings.
- 3.6 Establish opportunities for Department staff to meet with the General Manager and senior level managers, including setting up annual or semi-annual Department-wide staff meetings and attending smaller quadrant or section-level meetings on a rotating basis.

The Human Resources Division Manager should:

- 3.7 Evaluate supervisors' management of time and ability to complete the performance evaluation for all employees for those supervisors who do not meet their performance goals and develop time management protocols for Department managers and supervisors as appropriate.
- 3.8 Assess weaknesses in setting and evaluating performance goals and establish guidelines for the types of goals to be included in the performance evaluations, to ensure that performance evaluations address consistent and effective standards.
- 3.9 Work in coordination with the Director of Operations and the Neighborhood and Citywide Services Managers to develop protocols and communication channels to increase recreation and gardener staff participation in training programs.
- 3.10 Work with the Department of Human Resources Worker's Compensation Division Director to develop a regular reporting schedule, including (a) identifying the types of reports, and (b) the schedule for receiving the reports.
- 3.11 Develop protocols to identify and notify employees on extended leave who are eligible for temporary transitional work of available work.
- 3.12 Review and evaluate existing protocols to monitor employees who are absent from work on extended sick or other types of leave to identify improvements in procedures to return employees to work through temporary transitional work assignments or American with Disabilities Act accommodations.
- 3.13 Work with the Department's senior managers to evaluate extended leave requests and determine if the leave time can be shortened or if the individual employee will be able to return to work in full capacity.
- 3.14 Work with the City Attorney's Office in the instance that requested sick leave corresponds to disciplinary action to determine if the requested leave is legitimate sick leave under City policy, if discipline problems can be resolved in a timely manner and the individual should return to work, or if more progressive discipline should follow, including termination.

The Director of Operations should:

- 3.15 Direct the Neighborhood and Citywide Services Managers to establish training and skills development as a priority.
- 3.16 Direct the Neighborhood and Citywide Services Managers to develop a formal training plan for recreation, gardener, and custodial staff, which includes a mentoring system to allow more experienced staff to assist the training of newly-hired or less skilled staff.

- 3.17 Direct the Neighborhood and Citywide Services Managers to work with the Human Resources Division Manager to establish formal channels for employees to attend classes through the San Francisco Community College system, including horticulture and recreation classes, and to develop protocols for receiving tuition reimbursement for attending classes.
- 3.18 Direct the Neighborhood and Citywide Services Managers to develop custodial service protocols based on best practices.
- 3.19 Direct the Neighborhood and Citywide Services Managers to develop best practice and management training for the Neighborhood Services Directors and the assistant custodian supervisors, and job specific training programs for custodians.
- 3.20 Direct the Neighborhood and Citywide Services Managers to implement task groups, which include front line staff, to work on specific problems, such as radio and phone availability in the field or cash and revenue handling at recreation facilities, and which develop recommendations, implementation plans, and a reporting mechanism.
- 3.21 Develop protocols to ensure supervisors are including employees in work planning and problem solving processes.

Costs and Benefits

The costs to the Department in lost work days due to Worker's Compensation or extended sick leave are high. The Budget Analyst estimates that salary and mandatory fringe benefit costs for 44.3 full time equivalent positions that are lost annually to Worker's Compensation or extended sick leave are \$2.6 million per year. Reducing these lost work days by quarter would increase the Department's productivity, an opportunity cost savings of approximately \$650,000 annually.