

REGIONAL TRAINING PLAN
Metro 4 Inc. and Southeastern States Air Resource Managers Inc.
Forest Park, Georgia
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I. INTRODUCTION.

This Regional Training Plan is the product of consultations between the member agencies of Metro 4, Inc. (Metro 4) and Southeastern States Air Resource Managers Inc. (SESARM) and staff of the United States Environmental Protection Agency's Regional Office in Atlanta (EPA). The purpose of the plan is to provide a template for member agencies to use for development of agency-specific training plans and to serve as an agency training plan for member agencies that do not have other such plans. Federal air pollution control grants issues under Section 105 of the Clean Air Act require development and utilization of training plans as conditions of federal grant work plans. The concepts outlined in this plan are intended to enhance the early knowledge and expertise of new employees, to assist mid-tenure employees in further development of skills and abilities, to renew and reinforce the skills of veteran employees, and to prepare staff for possible promotional opportunities.

A total of twenty-four air pollution control agencies are represented by Metro 4 and SESARM. These agencies are located throughout the southeastern states of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. Approximately 1,820 authorized positions existed within the member agencies based on a 2002 survey. In 2002, the employee turnover rate was approximately 11% per year and approximately 15% of the agency employees had two years or less of experience. While these statistics may vary over time, the need for aggressive training programs is clear. A continuing cycle of resignations, transfers, retirements, and other separations create the necessity for development and maintenance of strong training programs within the agencies.

Air pollution control is an important fact of environmental protection in our local and state jurisdictions. Among the many expectations of our constituents are technical expertise, sound policymaking, and resultant trustworthiness. The field of air pollution control is complex, the regulations are extensive and the decisions made by agencies have significant health and economic implications. Developing and maintaining a competent staff are critical components of the public service mandates to which our agencies respond.

This Regional Training Plan lays out a strategy for understanding training needs, maintaining an inventory of training opportunities, and delivering training in a systematic and logical manner. The rest of this Plan will outline the specifics of how to accomplish the goals outlined above. This Plan may be adopted by member agencies of Metro 4 and SESARM that do not have independent training plans of their own.

II. INVENTORY OF POSITION TITLES.

The first step in developing a training plan is compiling information on various categories of personnel positions. Looking at the categories from the most general level first, the following hierarchy of position categories and titles are applicable:

A. Administrative category

1. Administrative support
2. Clerk
3. Office coordinator
4. Receptionist
5. Secretary

B. Technical category

1. Chemist
2. Engineer
3. Engineer, associate
4. Engineer, in training
5. Engineer, PE
6. Environmental specialist
7. Environmental technician

C. Management category

1. Director
2. Manager
3. Program coordinator
4. Supervisor

D. Other specialized categories

1. Asbestos
2. Budgeting
3. Data management
4. Emissions inventory
5. File maintenance
6. Inspector
7. Inventory
8. Personnel
9. Planning
10. Public education
11. Public information
12. Purchasing
13. Regulation development

III. INVENTORY OF WORK AREAS.

The second step in the training plan development process is the identification of all work areas that contribute to the specialized training that agency staff will need. The work areas that are common in air pollution control agencies include:

- A. Administration
- B. Ambient monitoring
- D. Asbestos
- E. Emissions inventory
- F. Enforcement
- G. Information technology, hardware support
- H. Information technology, software support
- I. Inspections and other compliance activities
- J. Permit application review and permit development
- K. Planning
- L. Public education
- M. Public outreach
- N. Regulation writing
- O. Shop, equipment support
- P. Training

IV. IDENTIFICATION OF TRAINING NEEDS.

The agency training coordinator, in consultation with agency management, will identify basic training needs of each work area and job title. This general inventory of training needs will form the basis for initial and ongoing general training of employees. While it may not be specific to an individual position or staff person, such a core list of training courses is important because it establishes a consistent level of abilities, sensitivities, and standards for all employees.

Training needs beyond core courses will vary among work areas and job titles. The training coordinator will work with supervisors and managers to identify special knowledge, skills, and abilities that are important to specific work areas. Supervisors and managers will also be consulted regarding training needed for specific job duties of individuals who are hired to work in those areas.

Through this combination of increasingly more specific training needs as one reviews work areas, job titles, and individual staff members, a comprehensive inventory of training needs will be developed. This information will be used to provide training to individual staff, to identify courses to be offered each year within the agency, to guide identification of regional courses to be offered through regional consortia, and to assist EPA in planning, development, and presentation of training at the national level.

V. DEVELOPMENT OF TRAINING PLANS.

The agency will develop formal training plans. These plans will contain an inventory of training needs by work area, job title, and specific training requirements for each employee. They will also identify the sequence in which training courses should be presented and any prerequisites that should be met prior to attendance at a specific course. This information will be provided as a guide to agency management as well as to staff so that both management personnel and staff will fully understand training expectations and the commitment the agency is making to their professional development.

VI. DEVELOPING AN INVENTORY OF AVAILABLE COURSES.

There are a multitude of sources of training courses. These sources are listed in a table at the end of this section.

U.S. EPA offers a variety of courses, many of which are available at any time an agency needs access to them. These include self-instructional courses and some Air Pollution Training Institute (APTI) courses that have been recorded on tape or disk. In addition, EPA periodically offers courses that are broadcast via satellite to downlink locations within many local and state agencies. EPA also periodically offers other training and information exchange via webcasts, other broadcasts, and conference calls. Lastly, each EPA region offers occasional courses and workshops initiated by EPA programs or at the request of local and state agencies. Information on EPA-sponsored training can be obtained from the satellite downlink coordinator, the EPA training program, and from regional EPA training coordinators.

Metro 4/SESARM and other regional consortia offer a menu of training courses each year. The courses include EPA APTI courses, specialized courses, and other miscellaneous courses and workshops. In the Southeast, these courses are offered across the region based on training needs, transportation considerations, federal

funding, and the availability of course support materials and instructors. Information on regional consortium training can be obtained from the respective training coordinator of each consortium.

Colleges and universities offer an additional training resource option to agencies. Some schools offer APTI courses during the year, especially those that are designated by EPA as training centers. They include two programs at Rutgers University and programs at the University of Cincinnati, the University of Tennessee, the University of Chicago, the University of Texas at Arlington, and Cal Poly-Tech. These colleges and universities, along with many others, also offer additional courses either as part of special training initiatives or as part of their standard curricula. Opportunities for receiving training from these providers is most practical for agencies within an easy driving distance of the campus or other training venue.

Many private instructors offer APTI courses and other training. Some of the instructors routinely work with EPA to update APTI course and instructor materials. Others only offer specific courses. The courses can be held in many locations to meet the needs of a specific agency. These instructors may be used by colleges and universities, regional consortia, or individual agencies. Such arrangements are usually made through one-on-one discussions between the sponsoring agency and the instructor.

Within many city, county, metropolitan, and state government structures exists a general government training program. These programs usually support the general, non-technical training needs of that agency. Subject areas may include time management, stress management, harassment in the workplace, supervisory and management training, and many other courses that are applicable to a broad range of agency employees. Coordinators of such programs may be contacted to schedule, and perhaps even to develop, desired courses.

Many agencies support most or all of their own training needs. Agencies may contract with training providers or they may use in-house personnel to provide needed training. Individuals within agencies should be encouraged to provide general and specific training needs for individuals and groups to their respective training coordinators.

Information on these training opportunities can be obtained via the following resources:

Training Resources Table	
Source	Contact Information
Agency Training Programs, Air	Individual agency training coordinator
Agency Training Programs, General	Training program coordinator
Colleges and Universities	http://www.epa.gov/training/providers
Instructors, Private	Call Metro 4/SESARM for information
Metro 4/SESARM	http://www.metro4-sesarm.org/training
Regional Consortia	See Metro 4/SESARM Links page
STAPPA/ALAPCO Tools for Trainers	See members only web site
U.S. EPA Training Calendar	http://www.epa.gov/oaqps/training

U.S. EPA Course Catalog	http://www.epa.gov/oaqps/training/catalog
U.S. EPA OAQPS Training Office	919-541-0773 (Michael Letke)
U.S. EPA Regional Office	Various program and office numbers

VII. INTERACTION WITH AGENCY PERSONNEL.

During the interviewing and hiring process, prospective employees will be advised of knowledge and expertise requirements that their positions demand. Opportunities and expectations for training will be discussed. During each evaluation period and at other times as appropriate, agency management will discuss not only performance and productivity but also progress within the individual employee's training plan. A review of courses provided during the evaluation period will be conducted along with an assessment of whether the courses were satisfactorily completed. A plan for correcting any deficiencies such as failing a test will be designed. The evaluation meeting will also include identification of any required training needs that should be met during the next rating period. Lastly, the adequacy of the existing individual employee training plan will be reviewed and amendments will be made as needed. Employees and their managers will be encouraged to identify all training needs that will maximize the productivity and job satisfaction of each employee.

VIII. PROCEDURES FOR PROVISION OF TRAINING.

After identification of training needs and available courses, the next step is the actual delivery of training. Agencies will participate in courses sponsored and hosted by federal agencies, Metro 4/SESARM, and other state and local agencies when opportunities present themselves. Agencies may assist Metro 4/SESARM in presentation of courses utilizing federal training grant funds when courses are scheduled in their respective jurisdictions. Agencies will also present courses of their own initiative. In all cases where agencies are solely or partially responsible for hosting and/or presentation of a course, the following general guidelines apply:

A. Identification of Course Schedule and Advertisement of Course.

Agencies will publicize to their employees and when appropriate to Metro 4/SESARM the date, location, course title, instructor, and whether slots will be available to staff of other agencies. Metro 4/SESARM will post all of its sponsored courses on its web site. Upon request, it will also post courses initiated and sponsored by individual agencies.

B. Confirmation with Instructor.

The agency sponsoring training will confirm with the intended instructor that instruction services will be needed and will provide all pertinent information. The instructor will be responsible for providing a course description and agenda. All pertinent information about the course will be provided to the instructor. The training coordinator will confirm

with the instructor the maximum number of students to be allowed in the course. The training coordinator will gather information from the instructor regarding specific instruction needs for the course. This confirmation will include whether audiovisual equipment, flip charts and/or dry erase boards, a microphone, or a podium are needed. Audiovisual equipment may include a laptop computer, digital projector, standard overhead projector, slide projector, DVD player, VHS player, laser pointer, or video monitor.

Training materials are usually provided during the presentation of training courses. The training coordinator is responsible for confirming whether the instructor will provide materials or whether the agency is partially or totally responsible for the materials. For APTI courses, U.S. EPA usually provides the student manuals. The training coordinator will confirm with the instructor who is responsible for contacting EPA and will provide shipping information to EPA based on the preferences of the host facility. Usually training materials cannot be delivered to the host facility more than seven days prior to a course beginning. If a course is being provided by the California Air Resources Board (CARB), CARB and its instructors will provide the course materials. Again, the training coordinator may be responsible for providing shipping and delivery instructions. For other course providers, the origin and delivery of materials will be determined by discussions between the training coordinator and instructor.

Final confirmation of responsibilities for providing various needed equipment and availability of course materials will be made about two weeks prior to presentation of the course.

C. Preliminary Coordination with Host Facility.

The host facility for a course may be an agency meeting room, another government facility, or a hotel or convention center. The training coordinator will be responsible for working out arrangements with the host facility for all required course support. Particularly in the case of commercial facilities, this will include arranging a contract which specifies the size of the meeting room, the layout of tables and chairs in the room, any break and refreshment needs, audiovisual support, and other necessary support. A contract with a host facility for meeting room space is usually made several months in advance of a course and may also include arrangements for lodging rooms. The name of the event will be provided to the host facility along with the anticipated number of rooms needed. The host facility will establish a registration cutoff date after which unused lodging rooms will be released back to the host facility for general sales. As the room block expiration date approaches, the training coordinator will confirm the number of lodging rooms with the host facility. One or more separate contracts may be necessary to cover catering and audiovisual needs. These contacts are usually executed slightly later than the lodging and meeting room contract but should usually be completed at least thirty days prior to the beginning of a training course.

In the last week before the course, the training coordinator will confirm with the host facility the number of expected attendees so that proper planning for room layout and

catering can occur. Usually, this information is required no later than three business days before the course begins.

D. Registration of Prospective Attendees.

The training coordinator will register prospective attendees through use of an automated or manual registration system. Communication with approved attendees will occur as soon as possible but in most cases no later than two weeks before the training course begins. Required information will include the following:

1. Student name
2. Agency name
3. Agency mailing address
4. Student phone number
5. Student e-mail address
6. Student job title
 - a. Administrative
 - b. Environmental/technical
 - c. Supervisory/Managerial
7. Student work area
 - a. Ambient monitoring
 - b. Enforcement
 - c. Inspections
 - d. Laboratory
 - e. Outreach
 - f. Permitting
 - g. Planning
 - h. Regulation writing

Attendees will need formal notification of final approval to attend the course for the purpose of finalizing work and travel arrangements to accommodate attendance at the course.

E. Final Preparations.

In the week prior to a training course, all last minute confirmations will be completed. The final course registration list will be prepared from which name tags will be developed. Name tags and sign-in sheets will be provided to the person in charge of on-site registration.

F. On-Site Coordination.

On the first day of the training course and each succeeding day if necessary, the on-site coordinator will make contact with host facility sales and catering staff to ensure that all setups are in order. Lighting, heating and cooling, and sound system settings may be

items of discussion. Students will be requested to sign a student log each day to record their attendance in the course.

G. Course Evaluation and Analysis.

Students will be provided a course evaluation at the end of any course presented. Students will be requested to complete the course evaluation prior to departing from the course on the last day. The instructor or on-site coordinator will collect the evaluations and provide them to Metro 4/SESARM or the agency training coordinator. Either of the latter entities will analyze the evaluation of the course and will use the feedback received to improve future course presentations.

H. Course Certificates.

At the conclusions of a course, the instructor will normally provide a course report either to Metro 4/SESARM or to the host agency. This report will contain attendance records, summaries of pre-test and post-test performance, and evaluation forms. Arrangements will be made between the training coordinator and the instructor as to who is responsible for preparing the certificates. In some cases and especially for APTI courses, EPA may provide the certificates directly to the students. In other cases, the certificates will be mailed by the instructor or Metro 4/SESARM.

IX. TRAINING EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP.

Any initiative is only as effective as the implementation and follow-up. The training coordinator will work with agency management to provide analyses of courses provided and will periodically follow up with agency supervisors and managers to determine whether the training being provided is meeting the overall needs of the agency. Course evaluations, follow-up questionnaires, and personal interviews with key agency staff will be conducted where possible to identify the most effective courses and delivery methods. Adjustments will be made to training plans, course lists, instructors used, and methods of delivery as needs of the agencies change and/or more effective training procedures are identified.

X. TRAINING RECORD MAINTENANCE.

Keeping records of training needs and completed courses is an important facet of a training program. Metro 4/SESARM maintains archives of training courses presented, rosters of students, and courses attended by each on-line registrant. In addition, these files contain statistics on the number of students per course for each work area and job category. This information is available to any member agency upon request.

However, the Metro 4/SESARM information is insufficient in that it does not include course attendance when the courses are not sponsored by Metro 4/SESARM.

Therefore, agencies will maintain additional training records on each employee. These may be paper files or an electronic data base. To the extent possible, agencies will maintain a record of all staff, the target courses and preferred sequence of the courses to be provided, and a notation when each target course is completed.

XI. TRAINING COLLABORATION.

Networking with training counterparts in other local and state agencies is important to the success of individual training efforts. Opportunities exist to share ideas on successful training efforts through Metro 4/SESARM collaboration as well as participating in national training efforts through the Joint Training Committee (JTC) of STAPPA and ALAPCO. Conference calls are periodically held by Metro 4/SESARM and monthly by the JTC. Both Metro 4/SESARM and the JTC hold an annual meeting to exchange ideas and plan for future training. To the extent that agency management, budgetary considerations, and travel restrictions allow, the agency will participate in these collaborative efforts.

In addition, opportunities also arise where two or more agencies can share joint training efforts. At times it may be possible for two or more agencies to jointly sponsor a training course. In other cases, one agency may be able to accommodate one or more staff from another agency in a training course that is being sponsored by that agency. At any time that collaboration will provide access to courses not otherwise available, the agency will attempt to gain such access. When collaboration will deliver courses more efficiently than providing them for a single agency, attempts will be made to work together for the common good of the agencies involve.

XII. TRAINING EFFORT REPORTING.

The training coordinator will make periodic reports to agency management of training activities, successes, deficiencies, and other items of importance and/or concern. This may be accomplished in memoranda, formal training reports, or verbally to agency management in personal meetings or during staff meetings. To the extent that reports of training activities are required by federal grant work plans, the agency will provide informative reports in accordance with the reporting expectations specified in the grant.

XIII. CONCLUSION.

Training is very important to all agencies. To the extent possible, the training coordinator will promote the importance of training, will look for innovative and effective ways to present training, and will contribute to the overall success of the agency. The credibility of an agency is built around sound analysis and decisionmaking. The training program of the agency will do its part towards meeting the expectations placed on it by

the public, by statutory authority and other mandates, and by the management of the agency.

This Regional Training Plan has been reviewed by the member agencies composing Metro 4 and SESARM as well as the EPA Region 4 training coordinator. This Plan has been found to contain the necessary components required by Section 105 grants. It also contains the elements necessary to support adequate staff development within the agencies.

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Date