



## **Passing the Torch: Supporting New Air Monitoring Staff**

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California Air Resources Board

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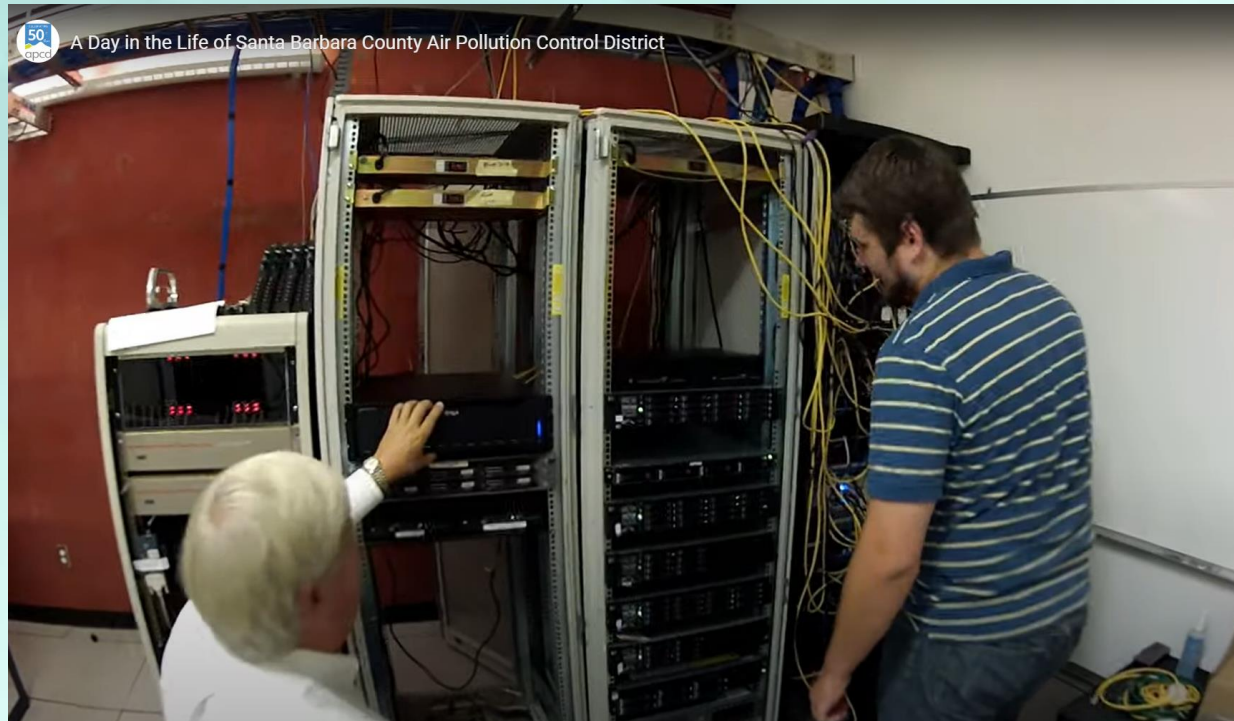
# Let's make it an LED torch!

Staying on-brand.



# Objective

- To foster a sense of community by allowing staff to feel heard and valued at all stages of their air monitoring careers



# Agenda

- New Staff Challenges
- Veteran Staff Perspectives
- Supporting New Staff: Training Plans and Beyond

# **New Staff Challenges**



# New Staff Challenges

## **Michelle Kaiser** **Air Quality Compliance** **Inspector**

Monterey Bay APCD

- ~1 year prior experience as station operator







# New Staff Challenges

## **Brian Marquardt** Air Pollution Control Specialist

Tehama County APCD

- ~1.5 years experience as station operator







# Common new staff challenges

- Institutional knowledge seems inaccessible
- Guides and “cheat sheets” are missing
- Mentors often seem unavailable
- Regulations are difficult to comprehend
- Access to job-related information feels inefficient

# A quick poll...

Think about being a new staff member.

**Which of these resonates with you the most?**

- A. Institutional knowledge seems inaccessible
- B. Guides and “cheat sheets” are missing
- C. Mentors often seem unavailable
- D. Regulations are difficult to comprehend
- E. Access to job-related information feels inefficient
- F. All of the above!



# **Veteran Staff Perspectives**

# Veteran Staff Perspectives



## **Amanda James** Senior Air Quality Instrument Specialist

South Coast AQMD

- 9 years experience in air monitoring
- 6 years as station operator



Amanda James SCAQMD



# Veteran Staff Perspectives

Strategies to try when facing challenges:

- Daily diary
- Station calendars
- Notebook to hold information from trainings, conversations, etc.
- Detailed weekly plan (checklist format)

## Veteran staff perspectives on:

- Institutional knowledge seems inaccessible
- Guides and “cheat sheets” are missing
- Mentors are often not available
- Regulations are difficult to comprehend
- Access to job-related information feels inefficient

**What would you say to new staff?**

Discuss with your neighbors for ~2 minutes.

**Discussion time:**

# Training Plans and Beyond



# Training Plans



## **Amanda James** **Senior Air Quality Instrument Specialist**

South Coast AQMD

- 9 years experience
- 6 years as station operator



Amanda James SCAQMD

# Training Plans

- Goal:** a level playing field for staff with regards to knowledge and skill
- Robust training plans are designed “from the ground up”
  - Presence of diverse backgrounds is an asset

# Beyond Training Plans

- Mentorship
- Networking Opportunities
- Growth Mindset



# Mentorship



*Image courtesy of Santa Barbara County APCD.*

**Veteran staff and management can help personalize learning by:**

- Being available to address spontaneous questions
- Sharing their own experiences
- Offering guidance on how to handle challenges
- Providing informal feedback on performance

# Networking Opportunities

**Veteran staff and management can foster inclusivity by:**

Offering **meetups** and **social events** help new staff feel more connected to their organization and to other staff.



# Growth Mindset



**Veteran staff and management can help newer staff build confidence by offering:**

- Specific positive comments on their performance (formal and informal)
- Constructive criticism that includes a clear path to improvement
- General encouragement



**Thank you!**  
**Questions?**

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