



How to Speak Maintenance

Everyone in multifamily should learn to speak maintenance!

Article 5 | Focus on Training – Part 2

To best accommodate the various skill levels and learning styles of all team members, it's important for leadership to offer different learning solutions, such as hands-on training, step-by-step guides or participatory learning, which has the highest knowledge retention. However, simply creating a well-rounded training program may not be enough.

There are many barriers teams may see when trying to implement maintenance trainings. A few common barriers and solutions include:

- ⊗ Lack of interest – offer hands-on and interactive training opportunities, such as team games or challenges
- ⊗ Lack of resources – many supply companies and manufacturers offer training and tutorial videos online (visit www.taaef.org/training for more information)
- ⊗ Lack of attention – provide quiet, distraction-free environments for training, as well as all the tools and technology that employees will need to complete their training programs
- ⊗ Lack of support – identify peers who can serve as mentors and subject matter experts, offering their knowledge and helping others

One of the most significant barriers to training is due to a lack of information sharing. When the staff are knowledgeable about common maintenance issues, they can better address resident needs, increasing satisfaction and reducing maintenance tasks. Additionally, people can learn new skills and potentially advance in their careers.

For leadership, it's important to recognize that just as people learn in different ways, they will lead differently too. People may go about completing a task in different ways, which is ok; however, leaders should strive to clearly communicate expectations for performance and results, while empowering their team members.

Training programs shouldn't only cover technical skills or maintenance-related topics. Because the maintenance team is typically working first-hand with residents, they need to be well-versed in soft skills. Similarly, the office staff should be familiar with common technical issues so they can help troubleshoot and field resident requests more efficiently.

- Soft skill training topics may include budgeting, time management and prioritization.
- Maintenance teams should receive training to help them better interact with residents. Topics may include conflict resolution, communication skills, ethical situations, and effective delegation.

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Key Takeaways:

- Developing a strong training program is not enough. It must be effectively rolled out and implemented.
- The most common barriers to training programs include a lack of interest, lack of resource, lack of attention and lack of support.
- To combat barriers, leadership must support these programs by offering a variety of learning opportunities, utilizing available resources, providing quality environments and tools, and serving as subject matter experts.
- Leaders should empower team members to participate in trainings, while also clearly outlining expectations and performance results.
- No individual should be the only team member to know a specific process or how to do something. Information must be shared between and within departments.
- Both office and maintenance teams will benefit from training related to technical and soft skills.

“How to Speak Maintenance” is a monthly series that focuses on teaching property managers and office staff how to better understand and appreciate the work and the value of the maintenance teams, eliminate conflict points that come up, and provide better customer service for our residents.

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