

MOTOR GRADER OPERATORS AND THE PUBLIC



Whether you are a private contractor or a county or township employee, you are the public face of your agency. How you greet the public and respond to the public reflects on your employer and may have an impact on taxpayer perceptions.

Do's...

- Smile and wave. Your demeanor creates a first impression. Do you want taxpayers to think their government is cheerful and responsive? Or glum and uninterested?
- Pull over if necessary. Make room for traffic, wide loads, farm equipment, etc. A little inconvenience on your part goes a long way toward building/maintaining goodwill with the public.
- Ask your supervisor to create a County Contact Card. The card could include contact information for the county engineer, the roads supervisor, planning and zoning, county commissioners, county assessor's office, conservation office and utilities. When citizens approach you with questions, use the card to refer them to appropriate staff or offices.
- Listen respectfully. If a citizen approaches you with a comment or question. Listen attentively. Assure them that you will pass their comment or question along to the appropriate person or department – then do it!
- Share only the facts.
- Be professional. If you disagree with a policy or position, take it up with your supervisor, not a citizen.
- Immediately report damage to roads, culverts, signs and bridges. It may not be your job, but you could save a life, prevent an injury or help your employer avoid a lawsuit.

Don'ts...

- Don't take questions or complaints personally. You are a symbol of the organization, much like the referee in a sporting event – comments are almost never about you personally.
- If you don't know the answer, don't try to give one. Don't guess or speculate. Pass the question to someone who can address it.
- Don't share your personal opinion and don't argue.

Adapted from: Local Roads Maintenance Workers' Manual. Center for Transportation Research and Education, Iowa State University, Ames, IA. 2006