

Daily Logs; provide useful documentation of your time and activities.

by Douglas R. Smorol,
Circuit Rider II



Have you ever struggled to remember your location or activities on any given day or time period? Have you forgotten the details of a relatively unimportant conversation that for some reason or other suddenly became very important? These types of situations become more frequent with age and, of course, the degree of responsibility and accountability your position requires. As operators, your daily duties at the water plant are recorded on your Water System Operations Report. These reports can give you important information as to what was happening with your system at any given day of the week or month. We use them frequently to track down water loss and disinfection problems. Keeping a daily log can also help you keep accurate records of your daily activities with all the other facets of your jobs.

One of the requirements of my Circuit Rider position is keeping a daily log of my activities. To accomplish this, the NRWA (National Rural Water Association) has created a unique computer log program that records a variety of information such as program hours, contacts, travel, etc. This allows us to keep a fairly accurate record of where we were, whom we were with, and what we were doing on any given day of the month. For operators, DPW workers, and supervisors a paper version of this daily log can be a very helpful tool. I like to keep my written log in a Daily Minder. It is broken down to each day of the month, and each day is broken down into 15-minute intervals by the hour. For municipal workers a monthly desk blotter works great. You can set aside a few minutes at the end of the day and make brief notes about work that was done or needs to be done. Sometimes it can be a big help to make a notation about talking to a customer or resident that has a particular problem or comment.

Most of us rely heavily on memory to remember specific dates, times, and appointments. As we all know, this is not always the best method. There are also a variety of electronic devices nowadays to help us with scheduling and appointments. These also require a bit of discipline. Palm devices, cell phones, and computers all have some type of memo or scheduling capability. For managers and supervisory positions, these accurate daily records can become very useful for tracking employees time and daily

activities. Incidents, accidents, and conversations can be noted, or recorded, for future reference. You may find that initially you are not disciplined enough to keep your log frequently or accurately. Keep at it and eventually it will become second nature. Like I mentioned earlier, that last few minutes of the day, or the first few minutes of the day, is a good time to jot down something in your log. Eventually you will become more comfortable with this as a daily routine and I am sure that you will find these logs very helpful. My old colleague, John Hraska, got me started on these logs long ago.

I have a logbook from each year I have been at NYRWA and I sometimes go back through them to find contact information, phone numbers, etc. I have also come across records kept by operators from years past and it is very interesting to read about their daily activities and specific projects they thought were worth noting. So keep that daily log and keep it accurately.

You will find this to be a valuable resource, especially when your memory begins to get a little fuzzy as mine has over the years. ●