

## **Soil and Water Conservation District Operational Reviews**

*Building strong districts through good business practices, risk management and partner collaboration.*

The Soil and Water Conservation Commission (SWCC) has encouraged the Department of Agriculture (ODA) to increase the level of technical assistance and risk management consultation to Oregon's 45 Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs). In a collaborative effort that includes the Oregon Association of Conservation Districts (OACD) and the Oregon Conservation Employees Association Network (OCEAN), ODA will implement a new process of annual SWCD operational reviews in 2006. This review process will build on previous trainings and support the concepts in the [Oregon Soil and Water Conservation District Guidebook](#).

The objective of this process is to minimize risk and potential liability to directors, employees, boards and ODA while helping districts improve accountability and comply with laws and rules. Operational reviews will provide training, mentoring and consultation to expand district capacity and improve operations. The process will also identify future training needs, provide tools for improved performance, and recognize exceptional district accomplishments. The findings will guide future program enhancement recommendations.

Throughout the review cycle, ODA is committed to providing necessary follow-up with districts, making applicable tools and templates more readily available, and sharing successful district models.

The elements selected as initial focal points for this annual process are:

- Board operations
- Financial management
- Personnel management
- Risk management, insurance and bonding
- Public meetings and records
- Public contracting
- Records management
- Planning
- Customer Service

Among the tools available online to help districts prepare are a [self-assessment worksheet](#).

For more information or to schedule an operational review, contact:

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