

CAREERS IN CORRUGATED: MAINTENANCE SUPERVISOR

Executive summary:

The Maintenance Supervisor keeps the corrugated plant running smoothly, coordinating maintenance and repair of a wide variety of production or processing machines to ensure maximum equipment efficiencies with minimal downtime. Core functions include checking, setting up and operating various types of production tools and equipment prior to approving for production use. Constant monitoring of equipment operations and troubleshooting are all part of a typical day in the box plant.

“If you like challenges and you like different things being thrown at you all the time, the corrugated industry’s right for you!”

Ed Jump, Maintenance Supervisor, San Leandro, CA box plant.

Maintenance Supervisor responsibilities within the box plant:

- Oversee all repairs and troubleshooting of equipment failures
- Monitor to make certain that safety features on equipment are used properly
- Communicate with production staff to maintain efficiency of operations
- Establish schedules/ perform preventive machine maintenance
- Conduct weekly production/ safety meeting with department personnel
- Recommend equipment upgrades, improvements and/ or new purchases
- Provide reports to General Manager concerning any equipment-related issues that may interfere with plant operations
- Monitor warranties/ service contracts and notify personnel of impending expiration dates
- Conduct selective monthly inventory of parts and supplies, and compare with computerized inventory
- May oversee contract maintenance/ installation work by outside suppliers
- Order parts and supplies and oversee barcode scanning of parts inventory

Supervisory Responsibilities:

- Directly supervise all department employees
- Establish and sustain high morale throughout the department by showing fairness, consistency and an interest in employee problems; maintain confidentiality
- May perform training functions
- Plan, assign work in department
- Conflict resolution
- Address quality issues; handle complaints

Maintenance Supervisor skill sets:

- Strong problem-solving skills; common sense to carry out instructions
- Language skills – ability to read and understand manuals, instructions, safety rules; ability to write clear reports
- Strong math skills; reading tape measures, gauges; ability to figure percentages, volumes, rates
- Technical/ mechanical ability: understanding equipment design and capabilities
- Understanding of cost issues and how they affect operations
- Ability to understand and adopt quality standards
- Leadership skills; ability to supervise and teach others

“This business makes you mature as a person because it’s very demanding and there are some long hours that go with the job”

Alex Rayes, Maintenance Supervisor, San Leandro, CA box plant

Maintenance Supervisor education/ experience:

- High school diploma or equivalent
- Demonstrated leadership ability
- Four years’ corrugated plant maintenance experience

Preferred candidates have:

- College or related technical school degree
- Five or more years experience in a corrugated manufacturing plant
- Knowledge of electronics, mechanical systems, hydraulics and pneumatics

Computer skills preferred:

- Basic programs for data entry, word processing

Skills needed for advancement include:

- Excellent interpersonal/ leadership abilities
- Knowledge of corrugated manufacturing processes
- Excellent communications skills with variety of staff
- Ability to work effectively under pressure

“To work in a small corrugated box plant like this, you need to be able to do a little bit of electrical; you need to be able to do mechanical work; you need to get out and relate to the people in the plant, because in the maintenance department, you have to deal with everybody in the building”

Keith Schmidt, Maintenance Supervisor, Monee, IL box plant