



## Setting SMART Goals

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**Learning Objective:** The student shall learn how to set goals using the Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely (SMART) method.

One of the most important roles of the fire service leader is setting goals for the organization. The goals may be administrative for the department's daily business or operational at the scene of an emergency. To get active participation from participants and reach the established goals, the leader needs to assure that they are valid and obtainable. If the goals are not well defined, the people charged with reaching them will not know what actions are needed to attain them.

A simple method to ensure that you are setting good goals is to use the Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely (SMART) method.

If the goal is SMART, it stands a much better chance of being achieved.

- **Specific**—define the expected end result clearly. What are you going to achieve and what should it look like when it is completed?
- **Measurable**—incorporate short-term or small measurements along the way that can gauge progress toward the end goal. Mark progress along the way.
- **Attainable**—ensure that the end goal can be achieved. Getting commitment to an unachievable goal will be difficult and could doom the project to failure before it begins.
- **Realistic**—define appropriate expectations and assign the required resources. Do not overload resources with unrealistic workloads.
- **Timely**—set deadlines for the goal. Clearly state a point in time when the goal should be met. Establishing an end point on your goal will give you a clear target for which to strive.

Applying the SMART system to your goal planning will help to ensure that your intended results will be achieved.

**S = Specific**

**M = Measurable**

**A = Attainable**

**R = Realistic**

**T = Timely**