

HIRE-TO-TRAINED MANUAL

One document, one path: interview → onboarding → day one in the field → trained and signed off.

DOCUMENT NO.	REVISION	EFFECTIVE DATE	OWNER	APPLIES TO
NU-OPS-003	1.0	July 4, 2026	Adam Pelewski, Owner	Every new field hire

PURPOSE AND HOW TO USE

This manual takes a person from a resume to a trained, signed-off crew member who runs their day without help. It is the complete path — if you follow it front to back, nobody walks into chaos, nobody trains by rumor, and nobody is “done training” without a signature that proves it. It works with its two companions: the **Workforce Playbook (NU-OPS-001)** holds the standards, the **Field Recipe Book (NU-OPS-002)** is the daily how-to each role carries after training.

Who uses it: whoever interviews (Owner or Supervisor) runs Part 1. The Office and Supervisor run Part 2. The Supervisor owns Part 3. The named trainer runs Part 4 and signs the last page.

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1.0	Hiring & the interview — screen, interview by role, scorecard, offer
2.0	Onboarding — from the yes to fully filed (Phases A–D)
3.0	Day one in the field — hour by hour, plus the safety essentials
4.0	The training path — week one fundamentals, role tracks, knowledge check, sign-off
—	Trainer’s method, open items, revision history

APPROVAL

PREPARED BY	REVIEWED BY	EFFECTIVE ON SIGNATURE
Adam Pelewski Date: _____	_____ Date: _____	_____ Date: _____

1.0 HIRING & THE INTERVIEW

1.1 — WHAT WE HIRE FOR

Hire for reliability and attitude; train the skill. A machine can be taught — showing up on time every day, working safe, and taking coaching cannot. The type of people we want: **shows up, works safe, owns mistakes, no drama**. Every question below is testing one of those four.

1.2 — THE FUNNEL

STEP	WHAT HAPPENS	WHO	TIMING
Application (Indeed)	Screen for: transport, location/commute, relevant work history, license where the role needs one.	Owner / Office	Within 2 days of applying
Phone screen	10 minutes, the six questions in 1.3. Kill fast if a knockout hits.	Owner / Supervisor	Same week
In-person interview	At the yard. Role questions (1.4), walk the equipment, scorecard filled out (1.6).	Supervisor + Owner	Within a week of screen
Decision	Hire / no hire, decided from the scorecard — not from a gut feel three days later.	Owner	Within 24 hours
Offer	Role, pay, W-2 or 1099 track, start date — confirmed in writing. Hands off to Part 2, Phase A.	Owner / Office	Same day as decision

1.3 — PHONE SCREEN (10 MINUTES)

1. Where do you live, and can you reliably get to our yard by a posted start time that changes by day? *(No dependable transport is a knockout for field roles.)*
2. Walk me through your last two jobs — what did you do, why did you leave?
3. Have you done underground, telecom, or construction work? Which machines or tools?
4. Driver/Operator roles: what license do you hold? DOT medical card? *(Confirm class now, not on day one.)*
5. Any problem passing what our clients require for site access — screenings included? [per screening policy, Decision 2]
6. When can you start, and what pay are you looking for?

Move to in-person if: transport is solid, history hangs together, pay expectation is in range, and they answered straight without excuses.

1.4 — IN-PERSON INTERVIEW: ROLE QUESTIONS

Everyone gets these four first:

1. Tell me about a day on a job when everything went wrong. What did you do?
2. Tell me about a time you got hurt on a job, or almost did. What happened after? *(You are listening for whether they reported it or hid it.)*
3. What does being on time mean to you? *(The answer you want involves being early.)*
4. What made you leave your last crew? *(One bad boss happens. Every boss being bad is a pattern — and the pattern is them.)*

ROLE	ASK
General Laborer	Comfortable with heat, mud, and a shovel all day? Describe potholing / hand-digging around a marked utility — what do the paint colors mean? Ever worked around a drill crew?
Driver	What have you towed and with what truck? Walk me through hooking up a trailer, step by step. <i>(Listen for: chains crossed, breakaway cable, lights test. If those three don't show up, they haven't done it much.)</i> What happens at a DOT stop?
Operator (HDD / Mini-X)	Seat time by machine — makes, sizes, how many years? Typical footage a day in our kind of ground? Describe a bore that went wrong and exactly what you did. <i>(You want: stopped, called it in, didn't bury it.)</i> How do you mix mud for sand vs clay? Walk me through your morning machine check.

Locator	What locating gear have you run? What is a positive response, and what do you do if one utility hasn't answered? What is the tolerance zone? Tell me about a time you stopped a job — and what it cost you to do it.
Supervisor	How many crews have you run at once? A man no-shows at start time — walk me through your next ten minutes. How did you track production on your last job? What did your boss hear from you daily, and what did he never have to ask about?

RED FLAGS — ANY ONE OF THESE IS A REAL CONVERSATION, TWO IS A NO

- Late to the interview without calling ahead. That is their best behavior day.
- Blames every past employer; nothing was ever their fault.
- “You don't really need locates if you're staying shallow.” End the interview politely.
- Wants cash pay or refuses paperwork.
- Can't explain job gaps, or the story shifts when you ask twice.
- No boots, and no plan to have boots.

1.5 — INTERVIEW SCORECARD (PRINT ONE PER CANDIDATE)

CANDIDATE: _____ ROLE: _____ DATE: _____	Y / N	NOTES
Showed up on time, ready		
Work history checks out; no unexplained gaps		
Safety answers sound (reports, doesn't hide; respects locates)		
Coachable attitude; owns a past mistake out loud		
Transport solid; license/med card verified where required		
Physically ready for the role		
Role skills check passed (trailer walk-through, machine check, locate knowledge)		
HIRE? Track: W-2 / 1099 Rate: _____ Start date: _____		Decided by: _____

2.0 ONBOARDING — FROM THE YES TO FULLY FILED

A new hire shows up with four questions: *What is my job? What do I actually do? What do I wear? Who do I report to, and when?* Onboarding answers all four **before day one**. Every step has a named owner and a proof.

2.1 — PHASE A: THE DAY THEY SAY YES

ID	STEP	OWNER	WHEN	PROOF
A1	Confirm the offer in writing: role, pay, start date, W-2 or 1099 track.	Owner / Office	Same day	Signed offer or confirmed text on file
A2	Send the Day One text (template below).	Office	Within 24 hrs	New hire replies confirming
A3	W-2 packet: application, W-4, I-9, direct deposit, screening consent, employment agreement, manual acknowledgment. <i>(1099 track: W-9, subcontract agreement, COI, site-rules acknowledgment.)</i>	Office	Before day 1	Packet returned or set for day one
A4	Screening per policy — minimum drug screen for operators and drivers. [Decision 2 open]	Owner / Office	Before day 1	Results on file before solo work
A5	Internal prep: crew and trainer assigned BY NAME, PPE pulled in their sizes, timekeeping and app access created, added to the crew chat.	Supervisor	Day before	Trainer knows who is coming, and when

Welcome to Nova! You start [DAY, DATE].
Report: [TIME] at [YARD / ADDRESS].
Ask for: [NAME] — [PHONE].
Wear: work boots, long pants, work shirt. We issue your PPE.
Bring: driver's license + one more ID for the I-9, and a voided check or bank info for direct deposit.
Day one: orientation, PPE, meet your crew. Reply YES to confirm.

2.2 — PHASES B–D AT A GLANCE

PHASE	WHAT HAPPENS	PROOF IT HAPPENED
B — Day one	Met by name at the gate; admin orientation; PPE fitted; expectations talk; handed to the named trainer; site orientation on a live job. (Full detail: Part 3.)	PPE issue + acknowledgment signed; day-one checklist signed by trainer
C — Week one	Shadow the trainer daily; run the role's start/midday/close supervised; Crew Fundamentals training (Part 4.1); first sign-offs.	Trainer initials each day; tracker updated
D — First 30 days	All core sign-offs done; duties run unsupervised with proofs landing; 30-day sit-down; explicit decision.	Tracker shows signed off; 30-day review on file; status set: cleared / extend / not a fit

3.0 DAY ONE IN THE FIELD

3.1 — THE SUPERVISOR’S DAY-ONE SCRIPT

1. **At the gate:** meet them by name at the posted start. A new hire never stands in the yard wondering who to talk to.
2. **First hour — admin:** how to clock in (the app is your pay record), where to park, where paperwork lives, PPE issued and fitted, app access shown working on their phone.
3. **The expectations talk, straight and short:** attitude, safety first, no gossip, see something say something, phone policy (no phone operating or driving), the work week and pay cadence. They sign the acknowledgment.
4. **Introductions:** the office, their crew, and their named trainer — “This is [name]. For the next few weeks, he is your answer to every question.”
5. **To a live job with the trainer:** site do’s and don’ts, the morning routine, breaks, how to report or ask for help.

3.2 — THE NEW HIRE’S DAY-ONE RULES

- You shadow only near machines today — no rod handling, no solo potholes, nothing in the drill’s reach until your trainer clears you.
- Stand in the JSA, name a hazard, sign it. You will do this every day you work here.
- Learn the paint before you touch a tool: **red** power · **yellow** gas · **orange** comms · **blue** water · **green** sewer.
- Every question is a good question today. The expensive ones are the ones you didn’t ask.

3.3 — SAFETY ESSENTIALS, TAUGHT DAY ONE

THE SEVEN RULES — KNOW THEM COLD BEFORE WEEK ONE ENDS

- PPE on at all times on site.
- No digging without a valid 811 locate and a positive response from every utility. No locate = no dig.
- JSA brief before work starts, every day, signed.
- Hand-dig to expose any marked utility before machine digging.
- Hit or expose something? Stop and report right away. Never cover a damaged utility. Gas or serious injury: 911 first.
- Report every injury and near-miss the same day — even a band-aid.
- No phone while operating equipment or driving.

Day one is done when: paperwork filed, PPE issued and signed, expectations acknowledged, seven rules walked through, trainer assigned by name, and the new hire knows where and when to be tomorrow (nightly schedule post shown on their phone).

4.0 THE TRAINING PATH

Training runs on the trainer's method: **show them → do it together → watch them solo → sign it off**. Nothing is "trained" until the trainer has watched it done unassisted and signed the sheet. Week one is fundamentals for everyone; weeks two through four are the role track.

4.1 — WEEK ONE: CREW FUNDAMENTALS (EVERYONE)

SKILL 1 — CONNECT & TOW A TRAILER

1. Back the truck so the hitch ball sits directly under the coupler.
2. Open the latch, lower the coupler fully onto the ball, close and lock the latch, insert the pin. *Coupler fully seated before you lock it.*
3. Cross the safety chains under the tongue, hook to the truck frame — never the bumper. *Crossed chains cradle the tongue if it drops.*
4. Clip the breakaway cable to the truck frame — not to a chain.
5. Plug the light connector; route it so it can't drag.
6. Raise and stow the tongue jack; pull the chocks.
7. Test before rolling: brake lights, turn signals, running lights, trailer brakes if equipped. *Every light works or the rig doesn't move.*
8. Check tires and confirm the load is secured.
9. Final walk-around; pull forward a few feet; re-check coupler and chains. *Tongue weight roughly 10–15% of loaded trailer weight.*

SKILL 2 — DAILY PRE-TRIP INSPECTION

1. Tires and wheels: pressure, tread, lug nuts, damage.
2. Lights and signals: headlights, brake, turn, hazards, reverse.
3. Under the truck: fresh leaks — oil, coolant, fuel.
4. Fluids: engine oil, coolant, washer; top off.
5. Glass and mirrors clean and adjusted; wipers work.
6. Horn, seatbelts, brakes feel firm.
7. Trailer plug and trailer lights work.
8. Load secured; nothing loose.
9. Anything wrong gets reported before you drive.

SKILL 3 — SECURE A LOAD

1. Rated straps, chains, and binders only — no frays, no bent hooks. Rope and bungees don't count.
2. Heavy items low and toward the front; secured against forward, backward, and side movement.
3. Edge protectors where straps cross steel; tug every strap by hand.
4. Re-check straps a few miles out — loads settle in the first stretch.
5. Nothing loose in the bed that can become a flying object.

SKILL 4 — TRUCK STANDARD

1. Daily: trash out, floor swept, tools racked in their home spots, dash and glass clear.
2. Weekly (or when dirty): wash the truck, clean lights and Nova markings, sweep the bed, report any new damage.
3. Crew truck below half a tank gets fueled on the way in.

SKILL 5 — DAILY EQUIPMENT CHECKS

1. Fluids: engine oil, hydraulic oil, coolant, fuel/DEF.
2. Look for leaks, damaged hoses, loose fittings; tracks/tires, guards, safety devices in place.
3. Grease per the lube chart in the machine's door pocket; log the hours.

4. Any fault = machine flagged and reported before use. Never run a flagged machine.

SKILL 6 — CONDUCT

1. Uniform and PPE, every job. On time means early.
2. Courteous with customers, inspectors, the public — and no promises, no fault-taking; get your lead.
3. Drug- and alcohol-free; report near-misses same day.
4. You represent Nova on every street you work on.

4.2 — WEEKS TWO TO FOUR: THE ROLE TRACK

ROLE	TRACK (AFTER FUNDAMENTALS)	TAUGHT BY
General Laborer	Locating basics & potholing · bore-crew support · restoration	Crew Lead / Trainer
Driver	DVIR discipline · routes and staging · delivery proof · DOT stop conduct	Supervisor
Operator	Machine check & lube · bore plan reading · mud · rod-by-rod discipline · frac-out response	Lead Operator
Locator	811 tickets & positive response · path walk & crossing sheet · tracking · stop-work authority	Senior Locator / Supervisor

TRADE SKILL — LOCATING & 811 (ALL DIG ROLES LEARN THE BASICS)

1. Valid 811 ticket, not expired, positive response from EVERY utility — before anything digs.
2. Marks on the ground match the plan; discrepancies stop the work.
3. Hand-dig or vacuum to expose any utility inside the tolerance zone [confirm distance per state] before machine digging.
4. Document every exposed utility: depth measured, tape in the photo.
5. Marks missing or unclear — stop and call it in. Never guess.
6. Keep the ticket alive; re-marks requested before it expires.

TRADE SKILL — HDD BORE OPERATION (OPERATORS)

1. Review the bore plan: entry, exit, depth, every crossing.
2. Daily machine check done; rig set stable, level, anchored.
3. Mud mixed for today's soil and tested against the mix chart on the mud system.
4. Every crossing potholed and briefed by the locator; crossing sheet signed before the rig moves.
5. Locator shoots every rod — no signal, no pushing; confirm each rod is logged before the next.
6. Watch mud returns every rod; slowing returns = stop, walk the path, frac-out play.
7. Any contact with anything: stop, don't cover, report. Gas = 911 first.
8. End of shot: countersign the bore log; report footage for the DFR.

TRADE SKILL — CONDUIT & CABLE PLACEMENT

1. Depth and cover per the plan and spec [confirm] ; warning tape per spec.
2. Required separation from other utilities; proper bends — never past the cable's bend radius.
3. Pull tape installed; duct mandrel-tested before cable pulls.
4. Pull with lubricant, within tension limits; leave the slack the plan calls for at handholes and cabinets.
5. Photograph everything before backfill.

TRADE SKILL — FDH CABINET & FIBER

1. Cabinet set per plan, level, secured; grounded and bonded per spec.
2. Fiber routed within bend radius; labeled per the scheme [confirm] .
3. Splice per the assignment sheet; trays organized, slack managed.
4. Test per client acceptance (OTDR / power meter) and record results.

- Photograph the finished build inside and out; update the as-built (write the span on the redline — span letters are not printed on FDH prints).

TRADE SKILL — RESTORATION

- Backfill in lifts, compact to spec — nothing settles later.
- Surface restored to match: asphalt, concrete, or sod per the permit.
- Markers, signs, landscaping replaced; site clean, spoils gone.
- Final photos; restoration noted on the DFR. The yard looks like we were never there.

4.3 — KNOWLEDGE CHECK (PASS = 8 OF 10, SPOKEN OR WRITTEN)

#	QUESTION	LOOKING FOR
1	What has to be true before anything digs?	Valid 811 ticket, positive response from every utility, marks verified
2	Yellow paint? Red? Orange?	Gas / electric / comms
3	Why do safety chains cross, and where does the breakaway cable clip?	Cradle if the tongue drops; truck frame, never a chain
4	You nick a line hand-digging. First two moves?	Stop; never cover it. Gas = 911 first, then crew lead
5	When does today's work get reported, and what happens if it isn't?	Same day; not reported = not billed
6	Who can stop a bore over a locate question?	The locator — and nobody overrules him on safety
7	Morning machine check finds a hydraulic leak. What do you do?	Tag it, photo it, report it; never run a flagged machine
8	A homeowner asks you to bury their downspout "while you're here."	Friendly no; flag to crew lead; off-plan work is unpaid and uncovered
9	Where do you find tomorrow's start time and yard?	The nightly schedule post in the crew chat
10	Name the five things that go to the Owner. Everything else stops where?	Injury past first aid, strike with damage, job shut down, legal threat, spend over \$500 — everything else stops at crew lead / supervisor

4.4 — COMPETENCY SIGN-OFF (THE LAST PAGE — KEEP IN THE EMPLOYEE FILE)

SKILL	TRAINED (DATE)	TRAINER	SOLO PASS (Y/N)	INITIALS
Daily routine & conduct				
Pre-trip inspection				
Connect & tow a trailer				
Load securement				
Truck standard				
Daily equipment checks				
JSA & locate verification				
Daily Field Report / app entry				
Role track skills (list): _____				
Knowledge check (8/10)				

30-day review held: _____ Decision: CLEARED TO WORK / EXTEND TRAINING / NOT A FIT Employee: _____
Supervisor: _____ Owner: _____

TRAINER’S METHOD, OPEN ITEMS & REVISION HISTORY

THE TRAINER’S METHOD (ONE PARAGRAPH, NO EXCEPTIONS)

Show them. Do it together. Watch them solo. Sign it off. One skill at a time, on real work, never more than two new skills a day. If they can’t do it alone, it isn’t trained — run it again tomorrow, and there is no shame in a second run. The signature means you would bet a gas line on them doing it right without you. Don’t sign until that’s true.

OPEN ITEMS

#	ITEM	OWNER
1	Screening policy decision (drug screen minimum for operators/drivers) — blocks step A4.	Adam
2	Name the timekeeping app and the Nova (Softr) app once deployed; write them into 2.1/A5 and 3.1.	Adam
3	Confirm tolerance-zone distance per state; write into 4.2.	Adam
4	Crew Lead chapter (Recipe Book) and Crew Lead role track here.	Adam + next build

REV	DATE	CHANGE
1.0	July 4, 2026	Initial issue: interview funnel and scorecard, onboarding phases, day-one script, week-one fundamentals, role tracks, knowledge check, competency sign-off.