

ADOPTED: FEBRUARY 1, 2013

REVISED:

A. EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

1. Purpose - Communication. Employee performance reviews are an essential communication process between the employee and the immediate supervisor. Such reviews provide information relating to merit, identify areas of training needs, target the strengths and weaknesses of the employee's work performance, and measure the relationship between goals and objectives and the individual employee's job performance. The purpose of evaluations is to let employees know how well they are performing their job and whether they have performance problems. It also serves as a basis of personnel decisions -- merit increases, promotion and termination.
2. Goal - Form Desirable Behaviors. The goal of the employee performance review process is to establish a pattern of expected work performance and habits. The review process gives employees and supervisors an opportunity to measure, review and establish goals, reward or acknowledge good performance, create incentives, and to detect and correct improper behavior or activity and/or substandard work performance.
3. Review Process. Performance reviews shall be completed at least annually and in accordance with the guidelines and instructions set forth below. Employees and supervisors are required to sign the completed performance review forms. All performance reviews will be reviewed by the employee and placed in the employee's personnel file. Employees will be provided with a copy of performance reviews.
4. Employees Affected. All regular employees of the District will be evaluated under this policy. The Fire Chief shall be evaluated by the Board Members based upon the consensus of the Board, using a written performance evaluation.
5. Regular Review. All employees will be evaluated at least annually, first quarter of the year.
6. Probationary Review. Probationary employees will participate in goal-setting interview/reviews as often as appropriate and will be evaluated in at least two performance progress reviews before being transitioned to regular employee status.
7. Pay and Probation Recommendations. A recommendation for a merit or step increase and/or extension of probation, or passing probation to regular employee status, or termination shall be set forth in a performance evaluation as appropriate.
8. Supplemental Evaluation. A supplemental performance evaluation may be submitted on any occasion deemed appropriate by a supervisor.

B. THE EVALUATION PROCESS

Meaningful performance assessments require both the supervisor and the employee's evaluation of the employee's performance.

1. The Supervisor. The employee's immediate supervisor is responsible for timely completion of the official evaluation report. In cases where the immediate supervisor does not have ample opportunities to judge the employee's performance, the lead worker (or others in a position to observe performance) should be consulted in completing the evaluation. The form should be completed initially in pencil, and after discussion with the employee and the reviewer (if needed), the final evaluation will be typed or neatly written in ink.
2. The Employee Self-Evaluation. The employee shall complete the form for self-evaluation prior to formally discussing past performance with the supervisor. Employees should be notified in writing in advance that an interview is planned. Employees will actively participate in the performance review interview and will be given advance notice of the review date.
3. Common Errors to Avoid in Evaluating an Employee. No matter how well designed, a performance appraisal program can fail if the supervisors doing the appraisal are not adequately trained and informed. The following guidelines describe some frequent errors to avoid.
 - a. Avoid rating most employees at the high end of the scale. Experience shows that "excellent" and "very good" rating is used more frequently than competent or adequate. This is too often a reflection of supervisor's lack of confidence in the supervisor's own ability than the employee's performance. A rating of "competent" or "adequate" is not adverse and can generate suggestions for improvement needed to merit a higher rating. Descriptions of excellence should be reserved for those whose performance is truly superior.
 - b. Avoid the "Halo Effect." Raters tend to rate an individual consistently high, average, or low on all factors based on an overall impression. A dependable, conscientious employee does not necessarily produce high quality work. Consider each factor separately and indicate strong and weak points. Don't hesitate to use the entire scale in your ratings. If the evaluations are to provide meaningful information, they must take advantage of the entire scale.
 - c. Avoid labels. Describe exact behavior. For example, telling an employee of a "bad attitude" does not offer an alternative for improvement or provide the employee with understandable examples of the behavior.
4. Evaluation Form. File on the server.

C. PREPARING FOR AND CONDUCTING THE PERFORMANCE REVIEW

1. Briefly Review General Background Information. The more you know about an employee, the easier it is for you to understand and discuss work performance and behavior. Some time prior to the appraisal discussion, you should review the employee's past history, work experience, education, and previous performance appraisals.

2. Arrange for the Interview. Set a time and place for the discussion and avoid postponement. Arrange for appropriate privacy and time for the discussion. It is important to prevent interruption if at all possible. A private office or conference room creates a setting in which you and the employee can communicate effectively.

Notify the employee several days beforehand, so that the employee has enough time to prepare for the performance review. One good method of having the employee prepare is to require that the employee evaluate himself. Ask the employee to fill out an appraisal form for discussion and comparison with yours during the interview.

3. Conduct the Interview. Approach evaluations as a helper, not a judge. Too often performance appraisal discussions are viewed as a time when the supervisor is the "judge". This is a difficult role which often prevents positive discussion. This is a time when you and the employee can look at job performance and find and discuss ways to improve it.

"Rating" performance involves judgments. However, in the discussion you should focus on specific ways to improve performance, in the role of a helpful teacher.

4. Structure and Format of the Evaluation. The interview should have some structure to it, varying with individual circumstances.
 - a. Create a relaxed climate by indicating overall satisfaction and honest appreciation of job performance.
 - b. Outline the purpose and objectives of the review. Explain the benefits of positive two-way communications about performance -- a clear idea of how the employee is doing and potential steps to improve performance.
 - c. Follow a comfortable sequence during the discussion, for example:
 - Past performance -- on each relevant job performance factor;
 - Major strong points and weak points needing greater effort;
 - Specify developmental steps to be taken to improve performance; and
 - Goals and the role of the District.
 - d. Encourage the employee to participate. The more an employee discusses performance, the better the review. Listen and gather information. Active listening is very important.
 - Use open-ended questions (who, what, when, why and how) which encourage discussion rather than simple "yes/no" responses;
 - Tell the employee you are receiving information, not judging; and
 - Use restatement or reflection. This is a clarification process and feeds back what you are hearing to the employee.

- Discuss areas of good performance first. This is easier if you have required the employee to appraise performance as preparation for the review.
- a. Focus on areas of performance the employee identifies as not fully satisfactory. Determine what corrective action should be taken, and by whom. Collaborate on the action steps. Do you agree on areas of strengths and weaknesses? The more the employee participates in the plans for improvement, the greater will be the commitment to those plans. Offer useable criticism tactfully and constructively in the context of a discussion of strengths.
- b. Use specific and realistic improvement targets. Don't try to eliminate all areas of weakness in one session. Concentrate on the most important ones. A development plan with two or three steps is often accomplished. One with eight or nine may cause the employee to give up.
- c. Discuss personal goals and interest.
- d. Close the discussion by summarizing what has been covered and reviewing the specific steps to be taken by supervisors and the employee. If appropriate, set a follow-up date to discuss progress towards performance improvement.
- e. Follow-Up. During the review, specific steps to improve performance were identified. If action needs to be taken by you, take it.

If specific training has been recommended, it is important that it be undertaken. If parts of the job description have become obsolete, it should be rewritten.