

## **A SUPERVISOR'S GUIDE TO THE STAFF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL PROCESS: CLASSIFIED STAFF/CONFIDENTIAL/MANAGEMENT/SUPERVISOR (CMS)**

The purpose of the Classified Staff/Confidential/Management/Supervisor performance appraisal is many folds. Specifically, it is required by the contract, which provides that records be maintained on the individual efficiency of the employee. In addition, if used properly, the performance appraisal program can be one of the best tools a supervisor can use in increasing the productivity and efficiency of the employee.

One of the most important supervisory responsibilities is to evaluate your staff accurately. It should be your accurate appraisal of the employee's performance. The performance appraisal provides the basis for determining whether the employee passes probation and attains permanent status. If the need arises, it can provide the basis for disciplinary actions or dismissals. Performance appraisal evaluations also let the employee know how he/she is doing. If the rating is positive, it gives the deserved recognition. If the rating is negative, it should be substantiated in writing along with a plan for improvement. Performance appraisals provide a permanent written record of performance. The performance appraisal can also serve to improve employee-supervisor communications and may be used as a supervisory tool, which will help supervisors evaluate their recruiting and training techniques.

### **Definition of Performance Appraisal**

A performance appraisal, for the purpose of this program, is defined as a periodic evaluation of an employee's performance of assigned duties and responsibilities.

### **Basis for the Appraisal**

The employee should be rated based primarily on the requirements of the position, and not on a comparison of other employees. The basis for appraisal evaluation is defined as the performance, which may be expected of a qualified, competent and acceptable employee after a reasonable period of training.

### **When Performance Appraisals are Required**

Performance appraisals for classified staff should be conducted by the supervisor at three (3), six (6), and nine (9) month intervals during the probationary period. Upon attainment of permanent status, yearly evaluations are required thereafter.

Performance appraisals for Confidential/Management/Supervisor staff should be conducted by the supervisor at three (3), six (6), nine (9) month intervals during the probationary period. Upon attainment of permanent status, 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> year annual appraisal and/or biennial appraisals thereafter.

Performance feedback may be submitted at any time to appraise employees of changes in their performance or to make exceptional performance a matter of record. (Please refer the FRISK manual as a tool for fundamentals for evaluators). The employee's immediate supervisor completes the evaluation form.

### **Evaluating the Probationary Employee**

The probationary, or working test period, is the final and most important stage in the selection process of quality employees. By the end of the probationary period, supervisors should have complete confidence that the probationary employee being evaluated fully meets or exceeds District performance standards in every important factor if he/she is to be recommended for permanent status. It should be noted that probationary employees may be released at any time during their first year of service, normally without appeal, if in the judgment of the administration the rejection is in the best interest of the District. Should the supervisor have a question in his/her mind as to the general fitness of the probationary employee for the position, he/she should seriously consider the consequences of burdening the department and the District with an employee who may be a liability rather than an asset. The supervisor should also consider the possibility that it would be a disservice to the employee to retain him/her in a position for which that person is poorly suited or altogether unsuited, thus directing him/her away from seeking a more productive and rewarding type of employment. If the employee is unsatisfactory and the performance is clearly documented, it is best to initiate any notice of rejection after the six-month evaluation. This action presumes that the employee has received two evaluations. It should be kept in mind that before probationary or permanent employees can be properly released for reasons of unsatisfactory performance, there must be documented evidence of a specific nature. Performance appraisals are intended to provide a written record of specified deficiencies during and/or at the close of the rating period in which the deficiencies were observed. Employee deficiencies affecting job performance, which

are not recorded on a Performance appraisal, cannot properly be used as a basis for rejection or termination. Title 5 of the California Administrative Code specifies that written notice of rejection for permanent status must be given not less than 30 days prior to the date the probationary period ends. Therefore, the final performance appraisal must be completed and submitted to Human Resources prior to the end of the probationary period in order for the written notice to be delivered in accordance with the law.

### **General Instructions for Rating**

1. Familiarize yourself with the contents of the appraisal form and review the employee's job description.
2. Use a process of objective reasoning, eliminating as much as possible personal prejudice, bias, or favoritism. For example, do not allow your own personal likes or dislikes of certain mannerisms or aspects of personal appearance blind you to the more important measures of competency or effectiveness.
3. Consider each factor separately; considering only the particular position, you are covering. Don't assume that excellence in one factor implies excellence in all factors. Observe and analyze the employee's performance objectively in terms of each factor listed on the rating form.
4. Base your judgment on demonstrated performance - not on anticipated performance. The appraisal is to be based on what *has* happened, not what *might* happen.
5. Evaluate on the experience of the entire rating period - it is better not to consider only single accomplishments or failures or the most recent performance.  
On the other hand, single instances of faulty or brilliant performance should not be ignored. They should be considered in context with the *total* performance for the period.
6. Seniority is not part of a performance rating. Although length of time in a position should affect performance, it may not. Only as the employee improves in proportion to time spent in a position should it be considered as a part of performance rating.

### **Interpretation of Appraisal Terminology**

Each area that is evaluated can be rated as either Excellent, Above Standard, Standard, Improvement needed or Unsatisfactory. In order to guide you in evaluating employees, and to see to it that all employees are rated in accordance with the same standard, the following descriptions are provided:

1. Excellent - Genuine outstanding performance is all you can possibly expect for the area described. It is performance that conspicuously stands out. It is *performance that is uncommon*.
2. Above Standard - Above standard performance is performance that exceeds the requirements of the job. It is performance *above that which you would expect* of a fully competent person in this position.
3. Standard - Is that which you can reasonably expect of a competent person. It is performance that is *satisfactory*.
4. Improvement Needed - This is performance that is below what can be reasonably expected of an employee after a reasonable period of time and training. It is *unsatisfactory* performance.
5. Unsatisfactory - Inadequate performance is performance that leads one to consider an employee a liability rather than an asset. This rating is to be used when an employee *clearly fails* to meet the minimum requirements of the area being appraised.
6. Not Applicable (N/A) Column – Applies to the Confidential/Management/Supervisor Performance Appraisal form only.

### **Hints on how to Proceed**

1. Schedule an appointment and allow sufficient time. Select a time when you and the employee are not under great pressure.
2. Provide for privacy with an absolute minimum of interruptions. If this is the employee's first evaluation interview, anticipate curiosity, tension, or anxiety and be prepared to minimize these elements.
3. Review the employee's job description.
4. Decide what you want to accomplish in the session and have clearly in mind the performance criteria used, your reasons for giving the specific rating and what improvement is needed or possible.
5. Consider the employee's point of view. Anticipate what his/her reaction to the discussion might be. Remember each employee is different and each will react differently in the appraisal session.
6. Be in a good frame of mind. If you are angry or upset, delay the session to a more appropriate time.
7. Have necessary forms or factual information ready to present at the proper time. Having to search for such information during the session is distracting.

## **The Evaluation Appraisal Interview**

The discussion of the completed appraisal form is the crux of the whole evaluation process. It is here that the supervisor is faced with various reactions from the employee. Most employees are doing a satisfactory job and are happy to know where they stand and how they can improve. However, dealing with employees who are not doing a good job or who are skeptical of the ratings is more difficult. Here are some guides the supervisor may use in the evaluation interview.

1. Discuss the employee's strengths first, covering each point in detail. This helps start the interview off in a positive mode. Remember that the aim is to encourage or sustain high quality performance, not to reprimand the employee. Compliment the employee without going overboard. Failure to recognize good performance may leave a "what's the use" attitude. However, overdoing it will raise questions about your sincerity and your supervisory ability.
2. While building upon the employee's strengths, do not fail to discuss his/her weaknesses or failures and how that person can prevent or curtail them in the future. Here, introduce your suggestions for a specific improvement program. Give the employee an expected date of improvement - i.e. 30 days, 60 days etc.. Make criticism constructive. If you point out a weakness, be prepared to offer means of correcting it.
3. Clarify the reasons why the ratings were given, citing specific examples of performance. Deal with facts, not generalities. If you can't cite specific examples, you can't include it in the evaluation.
4. Be sure the employee knows what is expected of him/her. Occasionally, when the employee is not doing what you expect, he/she may be confused and actually think he/she is performing as expected.
5. Ask questions and listen! Allow the employee to express reactions to the evaluation. You may discover underlying causes for marginal performance.
6. Don't interrupt, but don't let irrelevant topics drag out the discussion.
7. Ask the employee for suggestions on how his/her performance can be improved. Use this opportunity to guide the employee in improving his/her future job performance.
8. Keep the appraisal job-centered. Avoid discussion of personality short-comings unless they adversely affect department operations or the employee's job performance.
9. Try not to show anger or hostility, regardless of the remarks the employee may make. Try to maintain your objectivity.
10. If the employee gets angry - listen. Don't expect to convince him/her of anything while he/she is angry.
11. Allow the employee his/her self-respect. You don't gain much, if anything, by proving him/her wrong or by being sarcastic, overbearing, or unduly hard-nosed.
12. Always reassure the employee of your interest in his/her progress, and indicate willingness to take up the discussion again at any time. However, close the interview when whatever points you intended to cover have been made clear and are mutually understood.
13. If the employee refuses to sign the performance report, note that fact on the form and initial it. You may point out to the employee that signing the performance report only indicates that he/she has seen the report and not that he/she agrees with the contents of the report.
14. The unit member may, within ten (10) working days, respond in writing to an evaluation with which the unit member or CMS staff is not in agreement. This response shall be attached to the evaluation.

## **Appraisal Pitfalls**

Distorted appraisals may result if the appraiser does not consider the following possibilities for error.

1. **The Carry Over Effect** - This is a tendency to rate an employee either too high or too low in several areas because he/she is already rated high or low in another area.
2. **Consistent Leniency** - When an appraiser tends to go easy on employees because they believe in being generous toward their fellow man. They rate almost everyone high in almost everything.
3. **Consistent Severity** - When an appraiser tends to be too hard on employees. The appraiser believes in upholding extremely high standards and feel that few can reach the standard.
4. **Central Tendency** - This is a tendency to *not* evaluate the employee accurately for fear that the employee will disagree or become upset. As a result, the appraiser rates employee right down the middle.
5. **Prejudice** - This occurs when strong personal feelings influence the appraiser's judgment.
6. **Comparing Employees** - This is a tendency to compare employees with each other rather than with the job description.