

## NIAGARA FALLS POLICE DEPARTMENT General Order

<b>DATE:</b> 11/05/2013	<b>SUBJECT:</b>  Performance Evaluations: Sworn Personnel	<b>NUMBER:</b> 120.00
<b>RESCINDS:</b> 09/13/2013	Appendix A; Training Manual	<b>NUMBER OF PAGES:</b> 25 (Including Appendix A)

### I. Purpose:

- A. To evaluate and monitor the performance of personnel; promote common understanding of individual needs, work objectives and standards of acceptable performance.
- B. To provide subordinates with feedback as to how well the supervisor feels the subordinate is meeting expectations, suggest specific course of action the subordinate can take in order to meet or exceed expectations, identify training needs, provide supervisors with feedback as to how they can help subordinates in their personal growth and development, set objectives for future performance, and provide a tool that should be used when selecting employees for advancement or promotion.

### II. Policy:

- A. It is the policy of the Niagara Falls Police Department to evaluate the performance of all sworn and non-sworn police personnel on a formal, annual basis. There will be a separate policy to govern non-sworn employee performance evaluations.

### III. Procedural Guidelines:

- A. Performance Evaluations:
  - 1. All full-time sworn employees, except the Superintendent of Police, must be evaluated and counseled during the first two weeks of each November using the Niagara Falls Police Department Evaluation Form. The rating will be based exclusively on the previous year. Probationary employees will be evaluated every three months as covered by the Field Training Officer Program.

B. Evaluators:

1. The evaluation will be completed by the employee's immediate supervisor. For employees who have been supervised by more than one supervisor during a reporting period, the designated rating supervisor should confer with the other supervisor(s) in preparing the evaluation form. The names of those supervisors who have been consulted should be noted on the Evaluation Form.

C. Form Instructions:

1. A Manual for Performance Evaluation shall be provided to all supervisors for use in appraising performance of Niagara Falls Police Department personnel.
2. This manual includes instructions on the proper application of the Performance Evaluation and should be read in its entirety before appraising the performance of subordinate personnel.

D. Evaluation Scale:

1. The rating system defined in this policy and in the manual, shall be used to compare the performance of the employee being rated against the performance criteria listed for each factor.

E. Review of Evaluations:

1. All Performance Evaluations will be reviewed and signed by the rater's supervisor to assure fairness and objectivity of the rating and validity of the process.
2. All Performance Evaluation Forms shall be forwarded to the Deputy Superintendent of Police/Operations prior to the final review with the employee, which shall include counseling and feedback from the employee, when offered.

F. All personnel being evaluated will be requested to sign the completed Performance Evaluation indicating that it has been read.

1. This signature indicates only that the employee has read the report and does not imply agreement or disagreement with the content.
2. If the employee refuses to sign the form, the rater should document that and record the reason(s), if given.

- G. On the last page of the Performance Evaluation Form, space is provided for written comments by the employee. Employees should be encouraged to give feedback in this area. Obviously positive feedback is desirable, however employees, including probationary personnel, not satisfied with their evaluation may request an additional review by the next level supervisor in the chain of evaluators up to the Office of the Superintendent of Police.
- H. Conferences:
  - 1. All performance evaluations shall be accompanied by a personal discussion and conference between the supervisor and the employee being rated.
  - 2. The results of the performance evaluation just completed and the goals and levels of performance expected for the next evaluation period shall be discussed and communicated to the employee at this time.
  - 3. During this conference, employees shall be provided the opportunity to discuss career related matters such as advancement, specialized assignments, and training options.

#### IV. Evaluation Categories

##### A. Professionalism

- 1. Professional Demeanor:
  - a. Maintains business-like conduct and appearance as required.
  - b. Conveys a favorable image of the Department.
- 2. Physical Condition:
  - a. Maintains a level of health and physical fitness appropriate for the demands of policing.
- 3. Uniform Condition:
  - a. Uniforms cleaned and pressed; boots/shoes shined.
- 4. Equipment:
  - a. All required NFPD equipment in good operating condition.

5. Attitude Toward Policing:
  - a. Employee maintains a positive attitude towards all areas of policing and related assignments; demonstrates a consistent, dependable work effort and a positive work attitude.
  - b. Participates in additional details and specialty units.
6. Relationships with Citizens:
  - a. Employee deals well with the public overall, striving to present a favorable image of the Department as well demonstrate a caring and courteous demeanor.
7. Relationships with Colleagues:
  - a. Effective and cohesive team player.
  - b. Cooperates and fosters positive attitudes and working relationships.
  - c. Willingly assists co-workers towards individual and mutual goals.
  - d. Shares knowledge and information.
  - e. Accepts or is open to input from others.
8. Relationships with Supervisors:
  - a. Readily accepts assignments from superiors.
  - b. Promptly and accurately follows orders.
  - c. Accepts and responds to corrective action/training.
9. Relationships with Ethnic Groups Other than Own:
  - a. Employee shows ability and desire to interact with members of ethnic groups different from his/her own.
  - b. Shows cultural understanding and is able to provide service to all ethnicities consistent with the mission of the Niagara Falls Police Department.
10. Professional Development:

- a. Identifies and takes advantage of professional development opportunities; for example, cross-training, specialized training, job-related continuing education, attends all required in-service training modules etc.
- b. Results are consistent with development goals.

11. Proactively Patrols Beat or Zone:

- a. More than just responding to radios calls.
- b. Engages citizens in order to identify quality of life issues as well as crime;
- c. Establishes relationships with members of the community and identifies their needs.

12. Initiative:

- a. Attitude reflects high energy level.
- b. Tackles tough assignments.
- c. Strives for personal improvement and success.
- d. Seeks out new assignments, additional responsibilities and/or challenges.
- e. Strives for self-responsibility.
- f. Uses or suggests new methods or procedures to improve efficiency.

B. Work Analysis:

1. Knowledge of Laws/Ordinances:

- a. Routinely demonstrates a working knowledge of laws and ordinances and enforces them accordingly.

2. Knowledge of Rules & Regulations/Policies:

- a. Routinely demonstrates a working knowledge of Departmental Rules and Regulations and Policies and abides by them.

3. Knowledge Regarding Dept. Equipment:
  - a. Can effectively use assigned/necessary equipment; ie. MDT's, police car/portable radio, computers etc.
4. Conversant with Dept. Forms and Reports:
  - a. Is aware of all Departmental reports and forms and uses them appropriately.
5. Reports Completed per NFPD Policy:
  - a. All reports are completed as per the appropriate policy in regards to time, incident type and content; ie. Use of Force, Domestic Violence.
6. Reports are Neat, Legible & Accurate:
  - a. Reports can easily be read and demonstrate accuracy, neatness, thoroughness and attention to detail.
7. Tactics Used in Accordance with Training:
  - a. Defensive tactics used in the performance of duty are done so within policy and training received.
8. Properly Restrains & Transports Prisoners:
  - a. All prisoners are restrained within Department policy using Department approved restraints.
  - b. All required protocols for transporting juveniles and member of the opposite sex are followed as required.
9. Sick Time Usage:
  - a. Sick time is used with the Rules and Regulations taking into account any long term illness.
  - b. Sick time usage should also be compared to the shift average.
10. Driving Methods:
  - a. Follows New York State Laws in the operation of police equipment;

- b. Operates at high speed safely and when appropriate;
- c. No at fault motor vehicle accidents during the period being reviewed.

11. Use of Force:

- a. Follows State & Federal Laws as well as Dept. Policy.
- b. Applies force in a manner that affords citizens their Civil and Constitutional rights and stays within guidelines set forth by Department training and policies.

12. Uses only NFPD Authorized Weapons:

- a. All weapons carried are authorized by NFPD policy.

13. Gets Proper Medical Attention for Arrestees:

- a. Examines all arrestees for injuries, takes complaints of injuries, unseen or seen, and ensures arrestee receives all necessary medical treatment.

14. Properly Reports/Investigates Use of Force:

- a. For non-supervisors, as soon as possible following a use of force, notifies immediate supervisor.
- b. Completes NFPD Use of Force report for all uses of force.
- c. For supervisors, promptly responds to uses of force and investigates them thoroughly.

C. Skills

1. Communication Skills:

- a. Presents information in verbal and/or written form that is clear, accurate and effective.
- b. Communicates positively and productively with co-workers at all levels, general public and/or inmate population.
- c. Conveys a favorable image of the Department.

- d. Written reports are articulated in a clear, complete, concise and correct manner.
  - 2. Applies Community Oriented Policing and Problem Oriented Policing Strategies:
    - a. Recognizes and responds successfully to problem situations.
    - b. Identifies / evaluates issues, reaches sound conclusions, generates alternatives, understands consequences.
    - c. Makes accurate and timely decisions.
    - d. Effectively communicates results.
    - e. Attends to details.
  - 3. Phones, Radio and Computer Used Properly:
    - a. Uses Department phones, radio and computers properly, professionally and only for Department business.
- D. Management and Supervision:
- 1. Leadership:
    - a. Guides others to work toward common objectives, commands respect and develops cooperation and teamwork.
    - b. Accepts responsibility for compliance with Agency's policies and procedures.
  - 2. Employee Development:
    - a. Sets performance goals; applies positive reinforcement and discipline in a timely, accurate, fair and consistent manner.
    - b. Effective at coaching, mentoring and development planning.
  - 3. Delegation:
    - a. Entrusts employees with responsibilities and authority, and creates accountability for results.
    - b. Provides clear and motivating direction for work assignments.



4. Rating:
  - a. This category is part of the evaluation only for supervisors who rate or evaluate other employees.
  - b. Here they are evaluated on adherence to guidelines established elsewhere in this policy section, how much effort, how much documentation and how they communicate the evaluation to the employee.
5. Planning:
  - a. Identifies desired outcomes and develops long- and short-range steps for accomplishing them.
  - b. Monitors progress toward desired outcome and adjusts plans as required.
6. Utilization of Resources:
  - a. Effectively utilizes time and financial, organizational and human resources skills to achieve desired outcomes.
  - b. Understands and evaluates reciprocal impact of actions and resources.

E. Risk Assessment System:

1. Supervisor Explained the RAS:
  - a. The rater will go over the Risk Assessment System Policy with the employee being rated in order to ensure understanding of the goals and objectives of said policy.
2. Supervisor Reviewed All Officer Uses of Force for the Calendar Year:
  - a. The Rater will obtain data regarding the officer's use of force incidents from the Office of Professional Standards and review same in order to determine any potential patterns.
  - b. Further, the rater will discuss the data with the subordinate in order to further train on the Department's Use of Force Policies.
  - c. Any deficiencies should be discussed during the conference.

3. Supervisor Review All Officer's Internal and External Complaints:
  - a. The rater will obtain the data regarding any and all internal/external complaints against the officer regardless of finding.
  - b. This information should be discussed during the conference and should include alternative actions the officer may have taken that would have avoided the complaint in order to reduce the number of complaints the officer receives in coming years.
4. Supervisor Reviewed All At Fault Motor Vehicle Accidents:
  - a. The rater should obtain this data from the Traffic Captain along with associated reports.
  - b. As above, the rater should discuss this with the officer during the conference adding suggestions on ways to avoid accidents and ensuring vehicle operation fall within department guidelines and policies.
5. Supervisor Reviewed All EEO Complaints (Sexual Harassment, discrimination and or hostile work environment):
  - a. The rater should determine, through the Office of Professional Standards if the officer has any complaints that fall into this category.
  - b. They will discuss any and all of these types of complaints with the officer, reinforcing the Department's stance and policies in these matters.
  - c. The rater should also ensure that officer is aware of the seriousness of these types of complaints and again discuss measures that can be taken to avoid them altogether.
6. Supervisor Reviewed All Other RMS Indicators:
  - a. The rater should obtain any and all information regarding any other indicators, such as single event items, the officer may have had during the year from the Office of Professional Standards.

- b. If any exist, the rater should discuss them with the officer in an effort to ensure they do not occur in future years.

7. Outside Norms on Any Category:

- a. The rater should determine if the officer is outside the statistical norm in any or all of the above categories.
- b. The most effective way to do so would be to compare the officer to other officers working the same assignment and/or the same time of day.
- c. If the officer is determined to be outside said norms, the rater should explain which categories as well as how the officer falls outside the norms, in the notes section.

F. Goals and Objectives:

- 1. The rater will obtain a copy of the officer's prior year evaluation. If one is not kept on the shift level, a copy can be obtained from the Personnel Officer.
- 2. The goals and objectives from the prior year will be listed on the current form in order to see if these goals and objectives were met. If they were not an explanation shall be documented.
- 3. Based on this information and the rest of the evaluation, goals and objectives for the coming year will be discussed and listed in this section.
- 4. The supervisor should keep notes for him/herself in order to check on the officer's performance in this area at various time throughout the year.

V. Rating Criteria Defined:

- A. The first page of the evaluation form provides a list of ratings as it relates to the performance dimensions and the goals/objectives. The five ratings are as follows:

- 1. Superior:
  - a. Superior performance is not the norm. It is truly outstanding or exceptional, on a consistent basis; performance that greatly exceeds expectations.

- b. Superior performers require little or no supervision. If you have given out what seems like a large number of superior ratings to your employees, you should examine whether you can truly justify those ratings. If they are truly deserved, then you should not hesitate to give them. However, if they have suddenly become the "norm", your usage of them is too generous.

2. Exemplary:

- a. Exemplary performance occurs in the population more often than does superior.
- b. Exemplary performance exceeds standards, but not necessarily all the time, as might be expected with superior performance.
- c. The exemplary performer may frequently accept additional responsibility or perform his/her job duties in a manner which is above that which is typically expected.
- d. Exemplary performers usually are more productive and produce higher quality work than others do, and they require only minimal supervision.

3. Competent:

- a. An employee who is performing at the competent level is doing no more or no less than that which is expected and which are described underneath the performance dimension headings on the evaluation form.
- b. A competent performer gets the job done as required in a satisfactory manner.
- c. Normal supervision is required of a competent performer. It should be noted that "competent" is a good, acceptable rating.

4. Needs Improvement:

- a. A rating of needs improvement on a performance dimension is warranted when the employee has demonstrated some fairly significant deficiencies.

- b. An employee at this level may fulfill some of the required responsibilities, but has difficulty completing tasks on time or correcting/learning from past mistakes.
- c. Prioritizing may be a problem, or the employee may lack the necessary training required to perform at an acceptable, competent level.
- d. More than the usual amount of supervision is required for an employee at this level.

5. Unsatisfactory:

- a. A rating of unsatisfactory on a performance dimension indicates critically poor performance in most aspects of the dimension, or perhaps in one or two aspects that are so important that they have a drastic effect.
- b. Employees at this level do not fulfill the basic requirements spelled out in their job descriptions.
- c. They may require an exceptional amount of supervisory time.
- d. Co-workers may be affected by the unsatisfactory performer's deficiencies.
- e. An unsatisfactory performer may also be characterized by an unwillingness to learn from mistakes, accept change, or learn new skills.

VI. Performance Evaluation Form:

- A. The Form may be used to document effective or superior performance, positive work skills, ineffective or unsatisfactory performance or minor infractions of Department rules, regulations and policies.
- B. In documenting unsatisfactory performance, the supervisor should define actions to be taken to improve performance as well as set a time frame for said improvement.

VII. Completed Forms:

- A. The original annual Performance Evaluation Form will be forwarded through the chain of command to the Office of the Superintendent of Police.

1. The form will be kept in the employee's personnel file for the entire term of their employment.
2. A copy of the completed Performance Evaluation Form will be provided to the subject employee.
3. A copy of the completed Performance Evaluation Form will be kept by the employee's Shift/Division Commander.
  - a. Upon transfer of the employee to another division, the Performance Evaluation Form will be transferred to the employee's new Shift/Division Commander.

## Appendix A

Niagara Falls Police Department

Supervisor Evaluation Guide

### I. INTRODUCTION

As a supervisor, you make informal and unconscious judgments about your employees every day. Most likely, these are quick, automatic reactions. When it's time to formally evaluate your employees, however, greater care must be exercised. A fair, uniform system of appraising an employee's ability and performance is absolutely necessary.

The purpose of this manual is to describe and explain how to use the Niagara Falls Police Department's performance evaluation system. The manual provides the guidelines, rules, and information necessary to successfully prepare and conduct employee performance appraisals.

This manual is intended not only for new supervisors who have perhaps never evaluated the performance of others, but also for seasoned supervisors who, from time to time, need to refresh and expand upon their knowledge of the Department's performance appraisal system.

#### A. WHY SHOULD WE DO PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS?

Preparing performance evaluations is hard work, but it is vital to the successful operation of our organization. Performance evaluations need to be written and conducted for a variety of reasons, the most important of which follow:

- \* To provide employees with feedback about their performance. Feedback can motivate employees and serve as an incentive toward improved performance. It encourages appropriate behaviors, and discourages inappropriate ones.
- \* To identify an employee's strengths and weaknesses and develop his or her job potential or possible career path.
- \* To assess the effectiveness of training efforts; to identify employees who need or qualify for further training, and to determine overall training needs.
- \* To develop a fair and legally defensible basis for determining promotions, disciplinary action and termination, and to protect the Department in cases of grievances and/or litigation by providing a written record which will stand up in court.
- \* To help you reach the departmental goals and objectives by maximizing your employees' contributions to the department's efforts.
- \* To maximize the department's contributions toward the achievement of the City's mission.

#### B. THE ROLE OF THE EVALUATOR

Just as you, as a supervisor, have certain expectations of your employees, your employees expect something from you as well; a fair, timely, and thorough performance evaluation. To help you and your employees achieve the best results from the performance evaluation system, here are six key points that you, as an evaluator, should keep in mind:

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\* Be Fair and Objective:

This means appraising the work that was done, not the personal characteristics of the employee. Performance appraisals are no place for personal feelings or biases about an individual's personality traits. As a supervisor, you must strive to remember that your job is to evaluate the work performed by the employee. Your job is not to judge an individual's personality or character.

\* Be Honest:

After all is said and done, most employees appreciate candor. They like to know where they stand. Although the truth may hurt at times, it must be told in order to avoid future complaints such as "they never told me I was doing badly" or "I didn't know my assignment was in jeopardy". Sugarcoating the reality about someone's performance, although tempting, only comes back to haunt both you and your employee.

\* Use Accurate Documentation:

It is very important for you to have collected and maintained documentation regarding the performance of your employees throughout the year. Good documentation can aid you in many ways. When performance problems are committed to writing, they are less likely to be ignored. Furthermore, good documentation will be helpful (and necessary) when considering an employee for promotion, transfer, discipline, etc. With accurate documentation, you will have a written record to which you can refer when making such decisions, instead of trying to rely solely on memory. Lastly, accurate documentation is essential in matters involving litigation.

\* Be Consistent:

Ten years of above average evaluations for an employee followed by one bad review is suspicious. If, after good evaluations, a less positive review is truly warranted, make certain your less favorable ratings are well documented and supported. Explain, using specific examples, exactly what went wrong and how it should be corrected. It is also important to be consistent across all employees under your supervision. This does not mean giving all employees the same ratings. It means using a consistent, standard approach to preparing and discussing performance evaluations for all those you supervise.

\* Follow Department Policy and Procedures:

It is important that all evaluators follow the same procedures and rules when completing performance evaluations. No matter what happens before, during, or after the appraisal process, you should comply with the system in place at all times because deviations from it can be viewed as a reflection of bias or discrimination. Keep in mind; too, that you should never promise an employee something you cannot deliver in accordance with the system in place.

\* Set Goals:

As will be discussed later in this manual, goal setting is a vital part of performance management. Many employees are goal-oriented. They understand that the successful achievement of goals and objectives will positively affect the outcome of the evaluations. This also positively affects the productivity and effectiveness of your department or area of responsibility.



## **II. THE DEPARTMENTS PERFORMANCE EVALUATION PROCESS**

The Departments evaluations will be completed annually on or around the first two weeks of November.

### **A. PROBATIONARY EVALUATIONS:**

Probationary employees will be evaluated every three months as covered by the Field Training Officer Program

### **B. ANNUAL EVALUATION PROCESS:**

1) An evaluation is not considered to be "complete" unless all of the following are done:

- \* The evaluation form has been filled out by the supervisor in its entirety.
- \* New goals and objectives for the upcoming performance year are written down on the form.
- \* The employee and supervisors have held a face-to-face discussion regarding the performance evaluation, and have resolved issues of conflict that may have occurred during the discussion.
- \* The employee has been given a photocopy of his/her completed performance evaluation. The supervisor should also keep a copy for him/herself for reference throughout the year.
- \* All required signatures are on the evaluation form. This includes the signatures of the employee, the immediate supervisor who wrote the evaluation, and the Chief of Police.
- \* The original, signed evaluation form is returned to the Chief of Police.

2) Please note that during the course of preparing performance evaluations for employees under their supervision, supervisors are encouraged to contact the Chief of Police or his designee should they need technical assistance or guidance, or have questions.

3) Evaluation Forms will be available on the Department's server via the "L-Drive". Also note that if you would like to receive blank performance evaluation forms on paper, this option is available. Contact the Administrative Captain.

## **III. OVERVIEW OF THE DEPARTMENTS PERFORMANCE EVALUATION FORMS**

The Department uses a basic performance evaluation form that covers both non-supervisor and supervisor positions.

### **A. PARTS OF THE EVALUATION FORM:**

1) Top of Page:

The supervisor should fill in the employee's name, title, and assignment in the appropriate space provided. The date of the review period must be provided on the form. The first page also includes a description of the five point rating scale that is used to evaluate the performance dimensions of the evaluation. This will be discussed in more detail.

## 2) Professionalism

The performance dimensions are basic elements or categories of performance on which all employees are evaluated. They are used to evaluate employee demeanor, appearance and attitudes

Next to each professionalism dimension description/explanation is a five point rating scale box in which the supervisor checks the appropriate box reflecting the rating he or she is assigning to the dimension.

## 3) Work Analysis

The work analysis dimensions are core elements or categories of performance on which all employees are evaluated. They are used to evaluate basic employee abilities. They include such things as knowledge of laws and policies, report usage and completeness, sick time usage and driving methods.

## 4) Use of Force

The use of force dimensions are elements or categories of performance on which all employees are evaluated. They are used to gauge the appropriate and necessity of the employees uses of force. This section is critical in ensuring the Department attains the goals of both it and the community.

## 5) Skills

The skills dimensions are elements or categories of performance on which all employees are evaluated. They are used to gauge effectiveness of the employees communications, both written and verbal as well as problem solving skills so important to modern policing and the success of the Niagara Falls Police Department.

## 6) Management and Supervision

The management and Supervision dimensions are elements or categories of performance on which only employees in supervisory positions are evaluated. These include categories which are extra performance dimensions that deal specifically with supervision and management related skills and abilities.

## 7) Supervisory Suggestions and Time Frame for Improvement

This section is for the rater to set goals for improvement and further development of the employee being rated. This section will help the employee gain a better understanding of their strengths and weaknesses while providing positive feedback for his or her improvement.

## 8) Early Warning System

The early warning system section ensures that the rater and the employee review all aspects of the employee's performance in the areas categorized in the early warning system. For a list of these categories, please refer to the EWS policy. Regardless of the number of incidents the employee has that fall into EWS, the counseling portion of the evaluation process will include a

review of the purpose behind the early warning system. The subject matter and results of this portion of the counseling session should be recorded in the notes section provided.

#### 9) List Departmental Weapons Officer Certified to Carry/Use

In this section the supervisor will list all special weapons that the employee is authorized to carry. This does not include the basics such as service weapon, baton, and chemical spray. It does however include AR-15, Electronic Control Weapon, and Pepper Ball etc.

#### 10) Training Attended During This Year

This section does not include in-service training required by all department personnel. It shall include any training attended by the employee whether obtained by the employee or provided by the Department. This section will also allow for a quick snapshot into the employee's desire to improve and advance within the Department.

#### 11) Awards Commendations Received During the Year

Self-explanatory.

#### 12) Additional Comments

This section should be used for any portion of the Evaluation Form where more explanation is required/needed. The appropriate category should be listed before the narrative for reference purposes. Space is provided for you should you need more room to make additional comments regarding the performance dimensions, or should you wish to make some overall comments pertaining to the employee's performance.

#### 13) Signatures Section

This section includes signature line for each of the following individuals: the employee, the immediate supervisor, and the Chief of Police. Obviously in some cases, the immediate supervisor and Chief of Police may be the same individual.

Comments are not necessarily required on this page, but signatures are. An employee who disagrees with the contents of his/her evaluation or who feels the evaluation is unfair should be reminded that signing the evaluation only means that the employee received it. It does not mean that the employee agrees or disagrees with it. The employee may use the comments section to indicate feelings of agreement or disagreement with the evaluation.

Should an employee absolutely refuse to sign the evaluation form, this refusal to sign should be noted on the form by the supervisor.

## **IV. NUTS & BOLTS OF WRITING A PERFORMANCE EVALUATION**

Now that you understand the Departments performance evaluation process and the basic elements contained on the evaluation forms, you may be wondering how you actually sit down and write the evaluation, which includes assigning ratings, providing written documentation to justify the ratings, setting goals and objectives.

### **A. DOCUMENTING PERFORMANCE THROUGHOUT THE YEAR:**

Despite your best intentions, it will be difficult for you to write a performance evaluation if you have kept no performance related documentation or notes throughout the evaluation year. Trying to recall significant events that have happened, either positive or negative, in the past twelve months the night before the evaluation is due will be extremely frustrating. It is important to keep in mind that performance management is an ongoing process that takes place throughout the year. It is not a one-time event.

One way to make your job of evaluating performance easier and more accurate is for you to keep a performance log on each employee. The log is used to record significant performance related events and issues that occurred throughout the year. Some examples of things you might record on the log could include any of the following:

- \* Consistently good or bad performance
- \* A description of a single performance related event that exceeded or fell below standards.
- \* Notably improved performance
- \* Performance which needs improvement
- \* A brief summary of any performance related discussion held throughout the year with the employee.

Keeping performance logs will increase the validity of your evaluations and will aid you in trying to explain to your employees why you may have rated their performance the way in which you did, because you will have specific documentation and examples to which you can refer if challenged.

## B. ASSIGNING RATINGS TO THE PERFORMANCE DIMENSIONS:

After filling out the cover page of an evaluation, your next logical step is to begin to assign ratings, using the five point rating scale, to each of the performance dimensions. There is no particular order in which you must do this. You may have a clear picture in mind of how you wish to rate certain dimensions and so you may choose to do those first. Others may require more effort or research on your part before you can assign a rating. You should also look at the employee's evaluation from the previous year to refresh yourself with the ratings you assigned then, and to determine whether improvement or deficiencies have occurred since then.

If you believe your employee's performance in a dimension is either Superior or Unsatisfactory, it will be important for you to explain why in the comments section, or provide specific examples of job performance that either exceeded or fell short of competent. Simply checking a box is not enough.

Comments that justify the ratings given become crucial when a performance dimension is rated below competent. As a supervisor, you owe your employee an explanation of why you feel the performance was not up to par, and what the employee needs to do in order to improve performance. To simply assume that your employee understands why you consider certain types of performance to be less than competent is unfair to both your employee and you. Also, without justification and documentation of ratings, your evaluations will not be legally defensible.

Be sure to keep in mind the following points when deciding which rating to assign to a performance dimension:

- \* Consider the employee's performance on the dimension for the entire year.
- \* Rate each dimension independently of each other.
- \* Do not let something that happened in a prior evaluation year inadvertently affect your judgment on the evaluation you are currently working on.

Lastly, please note that if a particular dimension has no application whatsoever to a particular employee, you should check the "NA" box, indicating that the dimension is not applicable to that employee's job duties

#### C. PERFORMANCE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

Your first step is to review the goals and objectives you set with your employees at the beginning of the performance year, about twelve months ago. You can easily do this because you have kept a copy of all your employees' evaluations.

Next, assign a rating, using the five point rating scale, to each of the performance goals and objectives. Circle the appropriate rating from the scale provided. You will need to consider the following issues when assigning a rating to each goal:

- \* Was the goal actually accomplished?
- \* How well was the goal accomplished? Was quality an issue, or was it simply a "did it" or "didn't do it" issue?
- \* Was the goal accomplished by the deadline you and your employee agreed to?
- \* If the goal was not accomplished, why? Was it the fault of the employee or was the goal unrealistic or simply not achievable due to lack of resources, time, or opportunity?

If a goal was not accomplished because your employee either had no opportunity or lacked the available time and/or resources to accomplish it, you should "throw out" this goal from the evaluation. In other words, do not rate it. Simply make a notation in that section that you are deleting the goal. Chances are it was unrealistic or impractical to begin with. Your employee cannot be faulted for failing to achieve a goal over which he or she had no control.

After you have completed evaluating the goals that were set twelve months ago, set new goals and objectives for the coming year. This is the time in which you and your employees will attempt to mutually agree upon a set of goals and objectives, measurement standards, and time frames for completion for the new performance year.

Although this may best be left for the actual evaluation meeting you will hold with your employee, you should at least have a few ideas in mind. Your employee will probably also have some ideas in mind. It is up to the two of you to determine how many goals to include and which ones to set. (Keep in mind that setting no goals at all is unacceptable)

Some goals, however, may be subject to discussion or mutual agreement between you and your employee. For example, situations in which poor performance, such as a dismal attendance record, or failure to obey City procedures or policies, absolutely must improve need to be stated to the employee in non-negotiable terms. This is necessary so that the employee

is absolutely certain that in order for the employment relationship to continue, these goals must be met and improvement must occur in these areas. Fortunately, most goals will not require taking this type of action.

Following are some guidelines to keep in mind when setting goals and objectives. In general, they should be:

- \* Clear & Concise: This means the goal is capable of being clearly expressed in written words so there is no misunderstanding over it.
- \* Achievable: The goal must be "do-able" with the resources available to the employee (time, funds, equipment, tools, the employee's current skill level, etc.)
- \* Believable: The employee must believe that he/she is capable of achieving the goal.
- \* Measurable in time and space: As the evaluator, you must be able to "see" or determine if or when the goal has definitely been accomplished. Always include specific deadlines or target dates at the time you set goals, and write these dates down on the evaluation form. They can always be revised later on if need be.
- \* Controllable: The achievement of the goal must be possible within the confines of the employee's authority and control.
- \* Stated with no alternative: Although the best goals are mutually developed between employee and supervisor, mandatory goals as mentioned earlier are not negotiable. Avoid allowing your employees to make demands of you such as "I'll accomplish this goal if you do this..."
- \* Beneficial to the employee and the organization: Before setting a goal, ask yourself whether its accomplishment is really worthwhile or if it is a time waster. The primary goals you set with your employees should be things that really need to be accomplished in order to improve efficiency, productivity, expertise, customer service, etc.

#### D. UNDERSTANDING THE RATING SCALE:

You now understand what to keep in mind when assigning ratings to performance dimensions and performance goals, but what does each rating really mean?

The first page of the evaluation form provides a definition of each rating as it relates to the performance dimensions and the goals/objectives. The five ratings are as follows: Superior, Exemplary, Competent, Needs Improvement, and Unsatisfactory. Although you may find the definitions on the cover page sufficient for understanding the ratings, following is some additional information that may be helpful to you when assigning ratings to performance dimensions:

- \* Superior: Superior performance is not the norm. It is truly outstanding or exceptional, on a consistent basis; performance that greatly exceeds expectations. Superior performers require little or no supervision. If you have given out what seems like a large number of superior ratings to your employees, you should examine whether you can truly justify those ratings. If they are truly deserved, then you should not hesitate to give them. However, if they have suddenly become the "norm", your usage of them is too generous.
- \* Exemplary: Exemplary performance occurs in the population more often than does superior.

Exemplary performance exceeds standards, but not necessarily all the time, as might be expected with superior performance. The exemplary performer may frequently accept additional responsibility or perform his/her job duties in a manner which is above that which is typically expected. Exemplary performers usually are more productive and produce higher quality work than others do, and they require only minimal supervision.

\* **Competent:** An employee who is performing at the competent level is doing no more no less than that which is expected and which is described underneath the performance dimension headings on the evaluation form. A competent performer gets the job done as required in a satisfactory manner. Normal supervision is required of a competent performer. It should be noted that "competent" is a good, acceptable rating.

\* **Needs Improvement:** A rating of needs improvement on a performance dimension is warranted when the employee has demonstrated some fairly significant deficiencies. An employee at this level may fulfill some of the required responsibilities, but has difficulty completing tasks on time or correcting/learning from past mistakes. Prioritizing may be a problem, or the employee may lack the necessary training required to perform at an acceptable, competent level. More than the usual amount of supervision and "hand-holding" is required for an employee at this level.

\* **Unsatisfactory:** A rating of unsatisfactory on a performance dimension indicates critically poor performance in most aspects of the dimension, or perhaps in one or two aspects that are so important that they have a drastic effect. Employees at this level do not fulfill the basic requirements spelled out in their job descriptions. They may require an exceptional amount of supervisory time. Co-workers may be affected by the unsatisfactory performer's deficiencies. An unsatisfactory performer may also be characterized by an unwillingness to learn from mistakes, accept change, or learn new skills. The unsatisfactory performer's job is clearly in jeopardy.

There are some common rating errors or pitfalls that may tempt you when you are assigning ratings. Be on guard against the following:

\* **The "Halo" Effect:** This occurs when you mistakenly allow one spectacular or dismal event that occurred during the year to skew an entire evaluation. Remember to take into consideration everything that happened during the year.

\* **The "Recency" Effect:** This happens when you allow only events that happened very recently in the performance year (and are therefore fresh in your memory) to skew the evaluation. Oftentimes, this is a result of not having kept adequate notes and documentation throughout the entire performance year.

\* **The "Central Tendency" Effect:** Otherwise known as taking the easy way out, this happens when you "play it safe" and evaluate all of your employees about the same (usually "competent") because you do not want to create waves amongst them, or because you have not collected enough documentation or performance related data to prepare accurate evaluations. Committing an error of central tendency is not only unfair to your employees, but also to you because you will have failed to encourage and motivate your best employees and to identify/correct problems with those who need improvement.

## **V. CONDUCTING A PERFORMANCE EVALUATION DISCUSSION**

Conducting a performance evaluation discussion has historically been an event dreaded by

both supervisor and employee alike.

What is the key to conducting a successful evaluation discussion? There is no magic formula, but the following guidelines can be extremely helpful to you. You may wish to use them as a model for how to structure a performance evaluation discussion. (Keep in mind, however, that you will need to be flexible depending upon each individual employee. Your discussion with some employees may not need to be as rigid as described below.)

#### A. STEPS AND TIME FRAMES:

Try breaking down the performance evaluation discussion into the following parts:

##### STEP: % OF TIME SPENT

- 1) Establish rapport with employee: 5-10%
- 2) Describe employee's performance: 25-30%
- 3) Discuss and resolve differences of Opinion; problem solving: 25-30%
- 4) Set goals and objectives for New Year: 25-30%
- 5) Closing: 5-10%

#### B. TIPS FOR EACH STEP OF THE MEETING:

##### 1) Tips for Step 1: Establishing Rapport:

\* Make the meeting and the employee important by:

Using a private place  
Holding all calls  
Refusing interruptions  
Allowing plenty of time (one hour recommended)  
Shutting the door

\* Show personal interest by:

Opening with small talk to establish comfort level  
Using an informal, but business-like setting, such as a table in a conference room, instead of "the boss's office"  
Actively listening

##### 2) Tips for Step 2: Describing Performance:

\* Start by describing positive aspects and significant accomplishments of the employee's performance. Describe negative performance aspects after you have accentuated the positive.

\* Use feedback, not criticism:

Feedback objectively describes behavior that occurred, and provides information so that the employee can judge what was good or bad for him/herself. Criticism is judgmental, implying good or bad; it creates defensiveness and it is negative in tone.

Examples:

Criticism: "You don't seem to be able to turn in your use of force reports on time."



Feedback: "I've noted that several of your use of force reports were turned in past the deadline we had established. Can you tell me why this is happening?"

Criticism: "Your public relations skills are lacking. You need to improve them."

Feedback: "As you know, I received a few complaints from citizens about your treatment toward them this year. Do you have any ideas on how you can eliminate or reduce these complaints?"

### 3) Tips for Step 3: Discussing and Resolving Differences of Opinion:

- \* Ask questions to solicit and clarify your employee's opinion.
- \* Hear your employee out; do not interrupt when he/she is speaking.
- \* Be open to the possibility that your employee may present new information to which you were not aware of, which may require you to change a rating.
- \* Avoid arguing with and/or cross-examining your employee.
- \* Do not harp on deficiencies and shortcomings; move the discussion toward finding solutions and preventing future problems.
- \* Come up with several solutions to problems together; let your employee pick one, assuming you are in agreement with it. Allowing your employee to pick the specific solution reinforces his/her commitment to it.
- \* Indicate your willingness to revisit problematic issues at a later date if needed.

### 4) Tips for Step 4: Set Goals and Objectives for the New Year:

- \* Please see section IV (C) of this manual for tips on goal setting.

### 5) Tips for Step 5: Closing:

- \* Make sure goals and objectives for the new year are written down (if finalized and agreed upon) and that the evaluation has been signed by both you and the employee.
- \* Try to end your discussion on a positive note; summarize and emphasize areas of agreement.
- \* Suggest another interview a few days later if needed to resolve remaining issues, finalize goals and objectives, etc.
- \* Reassure your employee of your interest in his/her progress and your appreciation for the work he/she has accomplished.
- \* Be sure to give your employee a photocopy of his/her evaluation.