

HANDBOOK
FOR THE EVALUATION OF
SUPPORT TEAM PERSONNEL

M.S.A.D. #59

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PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

OVERALL PURPOSE

To improve performance of employees.

SPECIFIC PURPOSES

1. To identify employee strengths and weaknesses in each area on the evaluation report.
2. To open avenues for discussion of job performance between managers and employees.
3. To provide an opportunity for managers to commend, as well as give recommendations to employees.
4. To encourage the ongoing formal and informal evaluation of employees.
5. To provide an opportunity for employees to respond to evaluation by their supervisors.

EVALUATION

A. Both parties agree that evaluation is an ongoing process, which indicates to the employee how his/her past performance has been evaluated by his/her supervisor. The intent of the parties in negotiating this language was that there "be no surprises". In fairness to the employee and in recognizing that improved performance is your objective, it is important to share your concerns with affected employees as incidents occur and not wait until the annual evaluation to let the employee know he/she needs to improve.

B. All employees shall be formally evaluated at least once annually. This annual evaluation shall occur no later than April 15, on a standard form developed by the Board. Rating categories shall be limited to "Satisfactory, Satisfactory with Recommendations, Unsatisfactory and Not Applicable". Only one annual evaluation is placed in an employee's file in the Personnel Department even though some managers choose to evaluate more often than once a year.

C. The formal evaluation shall serve as a basis of discussion for recording satisfactory performance by an employee or where an employee's performance is unsatisfactory. Unsatisfactory performance shall be documented. In cases where work problems are clearly related to inability to do the job, use of the evaluation report (including, perhaps, midyear or even quarterly evaluations) is an excellent way to record strengths and weaknesses. In cases which are conduct related, it is more appropriate to take disciplinary action. The important word in this section is discussion for good performers and for those who need improvement.

D. The employee shall receive, in a confidential manner, a completed copy of his/her formal evaluation. The supervisor and the employee shall sign and date the completed form following the evaluation conference. The employee's signature shall not necessarily imply agreement with the evaluation, but acknowledge receipt. The employee will have the right to discuss the evaluation with the supervisor. An important part of the evaluation conference is giving the employee an opportunity to respond to the evaluation. Even for employees with satisfactory evaluations, it is important to discuss their ongoing performance and progress during this time.

E. If the employee is unavailable for signature, the form shall be sent by certified mail to his/her last known address on file. Do not tear the form apart and distribute copies until both you and the employee have signed the form. A qualifier has been printed on the evaluation form to make it more clear to the employee that his/her signature does not necessarily imply agreement. The employee's signature at the time of an evaluation conference does not waive his/her right to respond. This should be pointed out to the employees who may hesitate to sign the form. It should also be noted that you may not legally place the completed evaluation report in an employee's file unless he/she has signed it or you have other proof that he/she has been given a copy of the report.

F. The employee shall have ten (10) duty days to respond in writing to the report and said response shall be a part of the evaluation report. Any response the employee makes within the timelines must be copied so the response can be attached to each copy of the evaluation report.

G. If matters arise which may result in an unsatisfactory rating in any area on the evaluation report, such matters will be discussed with the employee in the evaluation conference. Said meeting shall include specific recommendations for improvement along with a reasonable time for completion prior to the conference in Section D.

This section is one of the most critical of all the provisions in the evaluation article. For that reason, more detailed explanations are made, as follows:

1. It is not totally clear whether or not a "satisfactory with recommendations" constitutes a less than satisfactory or unsatisfactory rating or whether it falls within the general area of satisfactory. It would seem appropriate, however, that the "no surprises" rule should apply, and the very wording of the term "satisfactory with recommendations" should imply that the manager has recommendations to share with the employee. With that in mind, it also seems appropriate that these matters would have been called to the employee's attention at an earlier time.
2. The requirement for a "formal meeting" means that you must meet with the employee in a more than casual exchange, such as visiting in a hallway, for example. Since it is also necessary to ensure privacy, the best place is usually in your office. Even for those employees who spend most of their workday in the field (example, maintenance) there is usually an opportunity to meet with an employee first thing in the morning or prior to his/her leaving for the day.
3. The "meeting" often has been construed as a "pre-evaluation conference" held just a few weeks before the evaluation report is completed, for the purpose of letting an employee know what ratings he/she will receive. This is not appropriate. What is expected is that you share concerns/complaints/problems with affected employees at an early time. Do not spend months collecting documentation before you begin sharing it with an employee. For example, if a problem occurred in October and was documented but not discussed, and the same thing reoccurred in January and again in February, a meeting on April 1 (two weeks before the evaluation is due) is a late approach at best. Issues should be dealt with as they occur, if they are important enough to be included on the evaluation.
4. The "reasonable time for completion" depends upon the issue. Some

problems

can be corrected immediately (such as, "...Beginning tomorrow morning, you are to open mail first, before you start the filling".); others will take time (such as, "The next quarterly report is to be sent in at least three days before it is due".)

5. See page 8 for examples of recommendations.

6. There is no requirement that you must schedule any of these meetings ahead of time with employees or that you must notify the employee that you wish to have a meeting. You may simply call the employee in to talk. These meetings are not to be used for purposes of imposing discipline.

7. Since this meeting is not an evaluation conference, you do not need to discuss each area on the form. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss only problem areas.

8. Just because you have had a meeting with an employee, it does not mean that you must give him/her a less than satisfactory evaluation. In some cases a problem was relatively temporary and was sufficiently corrected by the employee, so the manager does not feel it necessary to record such on the annual evaluation. Later on when you complete the annual evaluation, however, you may not give a less than satisfactory rating if you have not met with the employee on the matter.

There are four different ratings on the form, three of which deal with a level of performance. These range from satisfactory to needs improvement. The following explanation has been designed to help you focus on use of the appropriate rating for a given area.

It is anticipated that employees who perform their jobs, and do them reasonably well, will receive a satisfaction rating. The satisfactory rating basically covers performance at standard or above. Good employees generally should receive satisfactory performance ratings. Excellent performance can be documented in writing on the form or on an attached memorandum as well as checking the exemplary column.

Satisfactory with recommendations (S/R) is to be used for an employee whose work is near standard, perhaps hovering between standard and slightly below. Your rating of a satisfactory with recommendations tells the employee that by following your recommendations he/she should be able to improve his/her performance. Satisfactory with recommendations ratings are not job threatening at the time they are given.

If you rate an employee satisfactory with recommendations, it stands to reason that you will also have some ideas/suggestions to help the employee improve. Two important points regarding your recommendations are that they should be specific (clear and succinct), and that they should be stated in such a manner so the employee is responsible for the solution to his/her performance problem. The chart on page 8 lists several problem areas along with sample verbiage on what is and is not appropriate in terms of recommendations.

If an employee's performance fails to a point where significant and immediate improvement is necessary - where continued failure to make improvement may result in a job in jeopardy - then an "unsatisfactory" is in order. Again, recommendations are crucial.

The not applicable should not be used except in unusual situations. For example, II, B, Cooperation, might be difficult to rate for a security guard who works alone on a night shift, and therefore seldom comes into contact with coworkers and managers in his/her daily work relationships.

Mixed ratings - In many cases, the areas on the evaluation form are independent enough of one another so an employee could receive a good rating in one area and a poor rating in another. Attention should be paid to those which might overlap, however, for example, it might be difficult to justify an unsatisfactory in "cooperation" and a satisfactory in "teamwork skills," since uncooperative behaviors do not promote morale. Or, satisfactory in "dependability" and a satisfactory with recommendations in "work standards" could appear to be somewhat contradictory, based on the definition of those two areas. Such contradictions might not be supportable if challenged.

USE OF THE EVALUATION FORM -COMPETENCIES

The competency areas on the new evaluation form are generally self-explanatory. However, the following list might help clarify these areas further and also help suggest phraseology for giving specific recommendations when needed.

1. PERFORMANCE

A. Knowledge/Skills

- Recognizes the job that Deeds to be done
- Uses resources (people, equipment and supplies) to get the job done
- Thinks in a logical manner, uses sound reasoning
- Knows how to operate machinery, equipment which is part of the job
- Can access needed information
- Understands all phases of the job

B. Work Standards

- Sets standards for himself/herself
- Is efficient
- Is attentive to detail
- Makes minimal errors
- Meets volume (workload) requirements

C. Dependability

- Meets deadlines
- Follows a job through to completion
- Is reliable

D. Initiative

- Is a self starter
- Is willing to pitch in
- Shows confidence
- Is not afraid to make decisions

E. Adaptability

- Can perform under stress
- Demonstrates emotional stability
- Maintains required energy levels
- Is able to prioritize work
- Uses common sense

II. INTERPERSONAL

A. Communication

- Is able to verbally express himself/herself effectively

- Is able to express ideas in writing, if required by the job
- Uses good grammatical form, verbally and/or in writing
- Understands directions
- Follows instructions

B. Cooperation

- Is sensitive to the needs of others
- Is willing to help others
- Is congenial

C. Teamwork Skills

- Is motivated to do a good job
- Influences others in a positive manner
- Is committed to the job
- Is conscientious

PERSONAL

A. Attendance

- Makes an effort to accrue leave time, for later use if necessary
- Is absent (sick/personal leave) only when necessary
- Considers departmental needs in scheduling leave

B. Punctuality

- Starts a job promptly
- Does not waste time
- Limits lunch and breaks to designated times

C. Safety

- Uses equipment properly
- Practices preventive maintenance
- Respects equipment tolerances
- Does not waste materials/supplies due to misuse or abuse

D. Appearance

- Is clean, neat
- Is well groomed
- Exercises good hygiene habits

HOW TO GIVE SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

It is important that recommendations for less than satisfactory performance be given to employees, which recommendations should not be vague and general, but rather should be

clear and concise. The following chart will serve as a useful sample of what would not be appropriate, followed by a more appropriate statement of a recommendation.

Area Of Less Than Satisfactory Performance	Sample Problem Statement	Less Acceptable (vague) Recommendation	More Acceptable (specific) Recommendation
Dependability	Is not able to perform routine assignments without supervision	Learn to work independently, Manage your time better.	When completing a job, check order to be sure all items have been completed. Review what you have done with the school principal before leaving the site.
Adaptability	Does not work well under pressure	Learn to adapt to pressure.	Prioritize your work. Finish one job before starting another, when possible. Take a mid-shift break even if you are behind in your work.
Communication	Does not listen when receiving directions on how to do a job.	Pay attention when directions are being given.	Take notes on verbal directions and ask questions if you do not understand.
Attendance	Does not follow appropriate leave procedures.	Follow leave procedures correctly.	Review page four of the department handbook. Be sure, to call in before 7 a.m. if you are going to be absent.
Safety	Does not take reasonable safety precautions when mixing solvents.	Be more careful.	Read directions on label before proceeding. Clean containers thoroughly before reusing them.

MISCELLANEOUS QUESTIONS/ANSWERS ON EVALUATION

Some additional points regarding the evaluation process for classified personnel should be made. They have been put into question/answer form for clarity.

1. What role, if any, do support employees play in the evaluation of other support employees?

Support employees are not to evaluate one another, and under no circumstances should another support employee be part of a support employee's evaluation conference. That does not mean, however, that a manager cannot receive input from a support employee, which information might assist the manager in completing the evaluation. This is particularly important for positions such as custodial crew leader, and any other position which implies a group leader. In many cases the lead employee will be able to share information with the manager which the manager can then observe for himself. This is preferable, if possible.

2. How is a new employee evaluated?

If an employee has worked in a department for such a short period of time that the manager cannot make an accurate evaluation, this information should be noted on the evaluation form. A general rule of thumb is that an employee should have worked in a particular department for at least six weeks (one-half the length of the probationary period). It would be a good idea to evaluate these new employees at a later time during the fiscal year, if there was not sufficient time spent in the job at the time of the regular evaluation. This would particularly apply to those employees hired between March 1 and June 30 of any given fiscal year.

3. If matters of concern are formally discussed with an employee early in the year and improvement is made, how is this reflected on the evaluation?

Whether or not the earlier matter of concern is reflected on the evaluation is to some extent a matter of choice on the part of the manager. Factors that should be considered in this regard are how long a time prior evaluation the concern occurred, how serious the matter was, and over what time period the matter remained problematic. Care should be taken by a manager in dealing with employees who make significant improvement during the short time preceding evaluation in order that their evaluation might be satisfactory. If this occurs, there is no prohibition against a manager conducting a subsequent evaluation, reflecting a drop in performance.

4. Is the evaluation report an average for the year or a statement of current performance?

Again, this is at the discretion of the manager. Generally it is an average for the year slightly weighted in favor of recent performance levels.

5. How does a manager ensure compliance with his recommendations?

The evaluation form does not include space for follow-up on whether an employee has improved his/her performance and/or carried out the supervisor's recommendations. The manager is expected to conduct his/her own follow-up in this regard and document it in some manner other than on the evaluation form itself.

6. Is there a tie-in between evaluation and discipline?

Several areas on the evaluation report are conduct-related, such as safety (example, refuses to wear goggles), attendance (example, does not call in absences until after starting time), or cooperation (example, is argumentative with fellow workers). Often an appropriate way of dealing with these problems is to issue an oral and/or written reprimand. In some cases even more severe discipline might be in order. If an employee has been disciplined in an area which is also on the evaluation report, it is not expected that the evaluation will reflect satisfactory or excellent performance in this area. That does not mean that the evaluation instrument is to be used as a disciplinary tool.

7. How does one define the often used term "excessive absenteeism?"

There is no precise answer to this in terms of a number of days in a given time, nor is the legitimacy of an absence necessarily a factor. (High rates of absenteeism due to verified illness can be job threatening.) Factors that should be considered are the length of each absence, whether or not there is a pattern (such as Mondays or Fridays), reasons given for absences, and over what period of time the increased absences have taken place. Time taken off for annual leave should not be counted, particularly since the supervisor has discretion in the scheduling of it.

Two examples might help clarify this issue:

Employee "A" has been employed a year and a half, in a 10 month position. So far this year she has been absent 34 days - six weeks for minor surgery in November (19 days of which were without pay), one day when her son was ill at the time of the semester break and two days last week because she had the flu. In addition, the manager approved a personal leave day she had requested on February 16.

Employee "B", in a 12-month position, has been with the system for 11 years and as of the beginning of this year, had 92 accrued sick leave days. So far this year he has been absent 18 days, all with pay, due to frequent bouts with colds and flu. No absence has lasted for more than two days, and 11 of them were for single days. Absent days included seven Mondays and four Fridays.

It would be difficult to label the first case as excessive absenteeism, while in the second case the excessiveness is clear-cut. This is true even though Employee "A" did not have accrued leave and was out almost twice as many days as Employee B.

Insert Evaluation form for Support Staff