

Employee Performance Management

I. PURPOSE

This directive establishes Federal Protective Service (FPS) policy, responsibilities and requirements for the Employee Performance Management Program. The Employee Performance Management Program supports achievement of the FPS mission by promoting and sustaining an inclusive high-performing organizational culture comprised of a diverse, results-oriented, high-performing workforce. It differentiates between multiple levels of employee performance that link individual, team, unit, and supervisor accomplishments to the FPS mission by balancing achievement of performance goals and the successful demonstration of core competencies.

II. SCOPE

- A. This directive applies to all FPS employees except those categories that are listed in Appendix A of FPS Instruction Manual 15.4.4.1-01, "*Employee Performance Management Program*" (Attachment A), who may be covered by other policies or procedures.

III. AUTHORITIES/REFERENCES

- A. The DHS Performance Appraisal System approved by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) on February 17, 2010.
- B. DHS Directive 255-09, "*Employee Performance Management*," August 2, 2016.
- C. DHS Instruction 255-09-001, "*Employee Performance Management*," August 4, 2016.

IV. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Acceptable Performance:** Performance that successfully meets performance standard(s) assigned in each critical element (i.e., goals and competencies).
- B. **Appraisal:** The process under which employee performance is reviewed and evaluated.
- C. **Appraisal Cycle:** The 12-month time period (October 1 through September 30) established by the Department for reviewing and rating employee performance. Written requests for waivers to the Department's formal cycle of October 1 through September 30 are approved by the Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO).
- D. **Core Competencies:** The specific measurable and/or observable knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviors, and other characteristics required by a position that have been

validated, which apply broadly to all or many occupations within the Department. Each core competency is a critical element.

1. **Specific Core Competencies:** There are five Specific Core Competencies established and validated for all employees and two additional competencies for managers and supervisors that Rating Officials use in appraising performance. Demonstration of these Core Competencies accounts for 40 percent of the employee's annual Rating of Record (with the remaining 60 percent derived from performance on Goals). Specific Core Competencies are:
 - Technical Proficiency
 - Customer Service (except positions in the General Schedule (GS) 1811 series)
 - Teamwork/Cooperation
 - Communication
 - Representing the Agency
 - Assigning, Monitoring, and Evaluating Work (Managers and Supervisors only)
 - Leadership (Managers and Supervisors only)
 2. **Core Competency Performance Standards:** The pre-established, Department-wide core competency performance standards are based on occupational type and level of work and are described on the performance plan at the Achieved Expectations and Achieved Excellence levels for each competency. Rating Officials use these performance standards when evaluating employee performance on these competencies.
- E. **Critical Element:** A work assignment or responsibility of such importance that unacceptable performance on the element (goal or competency) results in a determination that an employee's overall performance is unacceptable. The performance goals and core competencies established under this Program are all critical elements.
- F. **Element Rating Level:** The performance rating level that describes an employee's performance on each critical element (goal and competency) during the appraisal period. FPS utilizes a rating design for describing employee performance on critical elements (i.e., performance goals and core competencies):
- Achieved Excellence (Overall Score 4.50 – 5.00): The employee performed as described by the "Achieved Excellence" standard.
 - Exceeded Expectations (Overall Score 3.50 – 4.49): The employee performed at a level between the "Achieved Excellence" and "Achieved Expectations" standards.
 - Achieved Expectations (Overall Score 3.00 – 3.49): The employee performed as described by the "Achieved Expectations" standard.
 - Unacceptable: The employee performed below the "Achieved Expectations" standard; corrective action is required.
- G. **Individual Performance Goals:** Specific goals assigned to an employee by the Rating

Official that describe specific results that are to be achieved. A minimum of one goal is assigned to an employee; however, three to five goals are encouraged. Each performance goal is a critical element.

- H. **Interim Rating:** A narrative description of an employee's performance as measured against the performance expectations set forth in a performance plan or statement of performance expectations, with a rating assigned for each goal and competency, but no summary (overall) rating entered as a final or summary 'Rating-of-Record' into the National Finance Center (NFC) payroll system.
- I. **Minimum Rating Period:** The 90-day period in which an employee performs under an approved performance plan before receiving a Rating of Record or Interim Rating.
- J. **Performance:** Accomplishment of work assignments or responsibilities as contained in the employee's performance plan.
- K. **Performance Expectations:** The critical elements (performance goals and core competencies) and associated performance standards documented in an employee's Performance Plan.
- L. **Performance Plan:** All the written or otherwise recorded, critical performance elements (competencies and goals) that set forth expected performance. A plan includes all critical elements and their performance standards. A plan is implemented once the Rating Official gains approval from the Reviewing Official, and the Rating Official and the employee have discussed and signed the performance plan in the appropriate locations.
- M. **Performance Standard:** The management-approved expression of the performance threshold(s), requirement(s), or expectation(s) at a particular level of performance for the associated goal or competency. A performance standard may include, but is not limited to descriptions of quality, quantity, timeliness, and manner of performance. Performance standards under the Program are required to be described at the "Achieved Excellence" and "Achieved Expectations" levels of performance.
- N. **Progress Review:** Communicating with the employee about performance compared to the performance goal standards and the core competency standards identified in the employee's performance plan. A formal documented discussion between the employee and Rating Official about the employee's actual performance compared to the performance standards in the employee's performance plan. One mandatory mid-cycle progress review is required during the employee's appraisal period documented by signatures in the appropriate locations in the employee's performance plan.
- O. **Rating Official:** The employee's first-level supervisor, who prepares the employee's performance plan with input from the employee, conducts progress reviews, prepares any Interim Ratings, and the final or summary Rating of Record.
- P. **Rating of Record:** The performance rating prepared at the end of an appraisal period for performance of agency-assigned duties over the entire period and the assignment of a summary rating level based on the established Agency-wide rating pattern.

- Q. **Reviewing Official:** The employee's second-level supervisor, who reviews and approves the performance plan and the rating of record after conclusion of the appraisal cycle.
- R. **Self-Assessment:** An employee's written assessment of his or her performance of assigned duties and responsibilities as measured against the goal performance standards and the competency standards in the employee's performance plan.
- S. **Summary Rating Level:** The performance rating level that describes an employee's overall performance during the appraisal period, referred to as the final or summary Rating of Record, which is a weighted calculation derived from the employee's performance on both the performance goals and core competencies in his or her performance plan. The Program establishes a rating design for describing employee overall performance during the appraisal period.
- T. **Unacceptable Performance:** The failure of an employee to meet established performance standards in one or more Critical Elements (goal or competency) established in the employee's formally implemented performance plan.

V. RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. The **FPS Director** shall identify, develop, and communicate FPS-wide goals and priorities for cascading into executive, manager, supervisor, and employee work plans.
- B. The **Deputy Director, Resource Management (DD RM):**
 - 1. Implements the Employee Performance Management Program for FPS;
 - 2. In consultation with the Training and Professional Development Directorate, develop and ensures that appropriate training on the FPS-wide Employee Performance Management Program is provided to executives, managers, supervisors, and employees;
 - 3. Reviews employee evaluation results and other data regarding implementation of the Employee Performance Management Program for compliance with the policies, procedures, and requirements of the program to determine the need for improvements, additional training, and/or issuance of additional guidance; and
 - 4. Ensures FPS-wide rating evaluation consistency.
- C. The **Deputy Director, Training and Professional Development (DD TPD)** ensures that appropriate training on the FPS-wide Employee Performance Management Program is provided to executives, managers, supervisors, and employees.
- D. The **Workforce Planning Division (WPD) Director and the WPD Staff** provides direction, advice and guidance to executives, managers, supervisors, and employees on the policies, procedures, and requirements of the Employee Performance Management Program.

- E. The **Management, Inspection, and Accountability Division (MIAD)** assists WPD with providing internal assessment and evaluation (i.e., internal audits and self-inspection programs) of the Employee Performance Management Program to ensure it complies with all relevant laws, regulations, and OPM and DHS policy.
- F. **Rating Officials** (an employee's immediate supervisor):
1. Keep employees informed of the goals, plans, and activities of the employee's work unit and larger organizational offices;
 2. Discuss with employees how the competencies apply to their specific duties, responsibilities, and expected level of performance;
 3. Provide employees with performance plans, signed and dated, within 30 days of the beginning of the appraisal period or the employee's entrance into a new position;
 4. Monitor employee performance during the appraisal period and provide feedback through on-going communication with employees about their performance;
 5. Inform employees about performance deficiencies on a timely basis and assist them to improve; and take appropriate action when performance does not meet the "Successful" standard;
 6. Conduct and document at least one formal progress review at the midpoint of the appraisal period and additional reviews as necessary;
 7. Evaluate employee's performance within 30 days of the end of the appraisal period; and
 8. Meet with employees to discuss performance ratings and developmental needs; and provide employees with their signed and dated copy of the performance plan within 30 days of the end of the appraisal period.
- G. **Employees:**
1. Have a clear understanding of the competencies as applied to their specific duties, responsibilities, and expected levels of performance and request clarification if necessary;
 2. Manage their performance to meet expectations and bring to their rating official's attention any circumstances that adversely affect the achievement of expectations;
 3. Communicate with, and seek feedback from, the rating official about performance throughout the appraisal period;
 4. Improve those aspects of performance identified as needing improvement;

5. Assist in identifying training needs to enhance performance; and
6. Conduct an optional self-assessment to provide input on accomplishments.

VI. POLICY AND REQUIREMENTS

- A. **Performance Management** is an essential ingredient to achieving and sustaining a high-performance culture. It includes three phases: performance planning, monitoring performance, and performance appraisal. Attachment A to this directive contains the FPS Employee Performance Management Instruction Manual. Refer to this manual for additional instructions on implementation of this program.
- B. **Performance Planning**
 1. Within 30 days of the beginning of the appraisal period, or the employee's entrance into a new position, the rating official and the employee will meet to discuss and clarify how the core competencies specifically apply to the employee in his/her work unit.
 2. At the meeting the rating official should ensure that the employee understands performance expectations as they relate to specific tasks and related timelines.
 3. The employee and the rating official will sign and date the employee's performance plan. The employee's signature indicates that the performance plan has been discussed with the employee. Employees have the right to not sign their performance plan. In this event, the rating official can annotate that the employee elected not to sign.
 4. The rating official will provide a copy of the signed performance plan to the employee.
 5. The Initial Performance Plan Acknowledgement must occur no later than November 1.
- C. **Monitoring Performance**
 1. The 12-month time period (October 1 through September 30) is the established reviewing and rating period for employee performance.
 2. Rating officials will monitor employees' performance throughout the appraisal period; provide positive feedback; and provide feedback about performance deficiencies, as needed.
 3. There are three mandatory progress review periods within the performance cycle:
 - Initial Performance Plan Acknowledgement – No later than November 1
 - Mid-Cycle Progress Review – No later than May 1

- Performance Appraisal Close-out – No later than October 30
4. At a minimum, rating officials must conduct a formal progress review with employees at the midpoint of the appraisal period to discuss the employee's progress toward meeting performance expectations and any performance improvement or developmental needs.
 5. At the conclusion of each progress review, the rating official and employee must sign and date the performance plan to document that the mandatory progress review occurred. Employees have the right to not sign their performance plan. In this event, the rating official can annotate that the employee elected not to sign.
 6. Written ratings are not assigned at this time.
 7. If deficiencies in performance are identified, their cause should be investigated by the rating official because most deficiencies can be corrected through informal interactions throughout the rating period and be documented in writing by the rating official. When such interventions are unsuccessful, the Rating Official should consult with an employee and labor relations specialist for advice and guidance.

D. Performance Appraisal

1. On an annual basis, rating officials must formally review performance, evaluate, and provide each of their employees with an annual proficiency rating, unless:
 - a. An employee has not worked under a performance plan for at least 90 days. In this case, the appraisal period will be extended to ensure work is performed under a performance plan for 90 days before an annual rating of record is issued.
 - b. If an employee's extended absence (e.g., long-term training such as FLETC or extended leave) does not permit the minimum 90-day time period for review, no rating will be assigned. On the appraisal form or in a memo for the record, document the reason for the extended absence and indicate that a rating cannot be assigned since employee failed to work under a plan for the minimal 90 days.
2. Within 30 days before the end of the rating period, rating officials will meet with each employee to discuss his/her performance in the various competencies, work accomplishments, and the employee's self-assessment, if completed.
3. Rating Officials submit proposed ratings to Reviewing Officials for approval before discussing and issuing to employees.
4. The employee and the rating official will sign and date the final rating. The employee's signature signifies receipt of the final rating. A copy of the rating will be given to the employee and the rating official will retain the original. Employees

have the right to not sign their performance plan. In this event, the rating official can annotate that the employee elected not to sign.

5. The performance appraisal close-out must occur no later than October 30.

E. Records Management

1. Performance management records include Employee Performance Plans, Summary Ratings of Record, and any supporting documents.
2. Employee Performance Records will be maintained by the rating official for each employee under his/her supervision and in accordance with 5 CFR 293.404 and 293.405. The official copies of employee plans shall be retained for four years.
3. The information in the Employee Performance Records should be safeguarded and maintained in accordance with the Privacy Act.
4. Records and associated information are safeguarded and to be released only for purposes permitted by the Privacy Act. DHS officials with a 'need to know' such as the Office of General Counsel, or component Employee and Labor Relations staff.

F. Program Evaluation

The FPS Employee Performance Management Program is evaluated internally by WPD, in coordination with the Performance, Quality & Compliance (PQ&C) Division, on an annual basis to ensure it complies with all relevant laws, regulations, and OPM and DHS policy.

VIII. ATTACHMENT

- A. FPS Instruction Manual 15.4.4.1-01, "Employee Performance Management Program."

IX. QUESTIONS

Address any questions or concerns regarding this directive to the Directives Manager, at FSPolicy@fps.dhs.gov.



L. Eric Patterson
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June 25, 2020

Date