



Employee Performance Supervisor's Guidebook

For Conducting Employee Performance Reviews

City of Johnson City
Human Resources Department



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At-Will Statement

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No COJC representative other than the City Manager, or appointee may modify at-will status and/or provide any special arrangement concerning terms or conditions of employment in an individual case or generally and any such modification must be in a signed written form.



Introduction

Careful planning and implementation of an employee performance review system is a fundamental element to insure that personnel are effective.

Supervisors should continually evaluate employees on an informal and daily basis. When assignments are given, the supervisor decides which employee will perform best on that assignment based on knowledge, skills, and personal factors. By developing this performance review process, we are formalizing these daily judgments made by the supervisor.

Because human judgment is part of every review process, the process must be as completely objective as possible. The usefulness of the performance review rating process depends almost entirely upon the understanding, impartiality, and objectivity with which you make your ratings. Performance rating is one of the most important responsibilities of your supervisory position. It is a basic tool of supervision. It should be used to help your employees improve their job performance.

The care and skill used by you in rating your employees is a measure of your ability to direct the work of employees. Employee performance ratings, made in an informed and conscientious manner, can be valuable to both you and your employees alike. Through the periodic review of an employee's work performance you gain a better understanding of the individual's value and capacity. You can more effectively develop and train employees to make the best use of their respective abilities, and you can recognize meritorious service as well as assist less than satisfactory employees.

From an employee's standpoint, the review is important because it points out specifically how well they are progressing in their job and performing the work assigned to them. It should also stimulate morale and interest since it formally recognizes efficient service and points out unsatisfactory service.

This guide is designed to give you a working understanding of the Employee Performance Review Process. Before rating an employee, you should be thoroughly familiar with the principles and procedures outlined on the following page.



General Provisions

Definition - A performance review is a periodic review of an employee's performance of assigned duties and responsibilities. This rating is made by the employee's immediate supervisor and generally reviewed by the Division Head or next higher supervisor. The review is then forwarded to the Department Head for review and comment, thereafter returned to the original evaluator. A time is scheduled with the employee to discuss job performance and expectations. The employee should be provided with a signed copy of the form. Finally, the original is forwarded to the HR department.

Objectives – The specific objectives of the performance review program are: to improve the overall quality of services; to motivate and guide employees toward greater self-development and improved performance by discussing significant strengths and areas needing improvement in a positive constructive manner; to provide a uniform means for supervisors to make merit pay determinations based upon their assessment of employee performance in relation to performance standards; to provide a means for evaluating employee suitability for continuation of employment beyond the introductory period and for job transfer and promotions; to identify training needs; to provide substantiating data for use as a guide to record employee progress.

General Guidelines - The requirements of the employee's position and not comparisons with other individual employees will constitute the standards of performance and the basis upon which supervisors will rate the efficiency of each employee under their authority. The standards of performance against which observed performance is compared shall be the performance, which may be expected of a fully qualified, competent, and acceptable employee after a reasonable period of training.

Job Descriptions - The department head and the supervisor are responsible for setting and reviewing the essential functions and duties of the position with all employees. Additional goals and objectives developed by the supervisor and the employee may be included for the purpose of performance review.

The employee job description is a major factor in the employee review process. It is important that employees and supervisors evaluate the job descriptions annually. The employee and supervisor shall sign off on the job description. The supervisor will provide the employee a copy and the original shall be sent to Human Resources.

Any suggested changes or corrections will be made by Human Resources only.

Responsibility for Performance Reviews

- **Employee**
Each employee has a personal responsibility to be completely knowledgeable of his/her job duties and requirements. By the use of the job description, and with assistance of the supervisor, the employee should be able to describe what duties should be performed, how



they should be done and what level of performance is expected. Ideally, this will be accomplished by discussion of job duties with the immediate supervisor and development of a list of specific satisfactory performance standards for the position. Employees shall sign their performance review as evidence they have reviewed, not agreed with, the review.

- **Immediate Supervisor**

The employee's supervisor will be the evaluator and will be responsible for the daily review of his/her employee's job performance, holding periodic review sessions with each employee to discuss job performance, completing the performance review in an accurate and timely manner, and setting objective job standards for measuring employee productivity.

- **Department Head**

The department head is the "evaluator's" supervisor and has the responsibility of: reviewing the review for accuracy and objectivity; and providing constructive comments for the employee to review. The department head should not change the supervisor's or 'evaluator's' overall rating.

Frequency of Performance Reviews

1. **Introductory** – Prepared prior to the completion of the introductory period for new hires and promotional appointments. They should be received in the Human Resources Department on or before the appropriate date.
 - Evaluate new hires and promoted employees at month 3 and 6.
 - Evaluate civil service employees at month 6, 9, and 12.
2. **Annual** – Review of an employee's performance on an annual basis. The review period is generally from March 31 of the previous year until April 30 of the following year. The due date of submittals will be determined annually.
3. **Special Circumstances** – The intent is to evaluate employees not later than twelve months from the previous review date. There may be times that a supervisor feels it necessary to conduct an off-cycle review. Supervisors should discuss this with Human Resources before doing so.

Types of Reviews

Introductory Period

The introductory period review is completed by the supervisor to provide recommendations regarding whether the introductory employee should continue to be a member of the City's working team.



The introductory review is recorded on the review form. All new employees are currently on an introductory period of at least six months. Civil Service employees are on an introductory period of at least 12 months.

During this initial period of employment, it is vital that the employee and the supervisor have an opportunity to discuss and agree on job standards, goals, and objectives so that each has a clear understanding of the job to be performed.

The supervisor shall make a decision about introductory employee's continued employment by indicating so on the review form. The purpose of the introductory review can best be described by the following objectives:

- To orient the new employee to his/her job position as to responsibilities, job location, and supervisory expectations.
- To develop a rapport between the new employee and the supervisor through constructive communication.
- To assist in planning for the best utilization of the new employee's capabilities.
- To provide an opportunity for each employee to discuss job concerns and interests with his/her supervisor.
- To assemble substantiating data for use as a guide for purposes of identifying needed training and determination of continued employment.

Annual Reviews

Supervisors are responsible for conducting thorough, impartial and timely performance reviews with employees who report directly to them. Performance reviews are functions of "rating" employees on the basis of their performance in the job position in relation to the performance standards.

The performance review should not be used to compare or "rank" the performance of one employee against other employee's performance. The performance review and the review forms are intended to assist supervisors in recording their assessments of the specific employee's performance, according to the job description and any goals and objectives that are set. It is also a tool communicate the review with employees.

Reviews of employee performance and job descriptions for non-introductory period employees will be completed annually. This review date is initially the employee's date of hire anniversary.

Special Reviews

A supervisor may evaluate an employee's performance at times other than the above when deemed necessary, or appropriate by supervisors. Such as in instances of unusual improvement or



achievement, or decline in work performance. Supervisors should discuss the reason for an off-cycle review prior to completing the review. Special reviews will not take be a substitute for the annual (city-wide) performance reviews.

Performance Rating Form

Currently, there are six (6) sections that make up the employee performance review form. Each section will be scored 1-3 (described below). There is also an area provided that allows for the documentation of the employee and supervisor discussing and reviewing goals and objectives from the previous review period, and develop and agree on new goals and objectives for the upcoming year.

SECTION 1: *Conformance to Policies, Procedures, and Regulations* - Knowledgeable and observant of policies and procedures. Exercises good judgement in performance of job duties, use, and care of equipment and supplies. Has not received any disciplinary action in relation to violation(s) of City policy.

SECTION 2: *Initiative and Dependability* - Anticipates and makes decisions to assist supervisor in preparing for unexpected activities. Assists co-workers without being asked. Demonstrates reliability under normal and ever-changing circumstances. Shows initiative to identify problems or needed tasks and works to solve or carry out without being asked. Has a good attendance record and is punctual.

SECTION 3: *Quality and Quantity of Work* - Approaches his/her work in a skillful manner, per job requirements. Completes job assignments with expected supervision. Identifies and uses methods to increase job productivity and efficiency. Follows proper procedures for each job to ensure reliability and validity of assigned tasks. Is prompt and consistent with work achieved. Meets workload requirements on schedule. Demonstrates ability to meet deadlines for daily work and long-term projects, per job requirements. Work is accurate, neat, thorough and with minimal error, per job requirements.

SECTION 4: *Knowledge and Attitude toward Job* - Understands the basic principles and theories of his/her job. Acquires, understands, and applies administrative, technical and professional information and skills when available, per job requirements. Always considers City's best interests. Demonstrates loyalty to the City through words and actions. Displays a positive attitude as demonstrated by his/her words and actions. Employee is proficient with the equipment and tools supplied to complete their job. Supports management decisions as demonstrated by his/her actions. Supports organizational goals.

SECTION 5: *Safety Consciousness* - Follows all safety instructions and guidelines. Ensures equipment, supplies and tools are used and stored properly. Follows departmental preventative maintenance and service practices. Operates and maintains equipment and facility/work resources



with efficiency and care. Organizes vehicle or work area at the end of each day without being asked. Reports safety hazards and makes suggestions to ensure a safe working environment. Wears personal protection equipment when needed, per job requirements. Works safely and encourages co-workers to do the same, per job requirements.

SECTION 6: Interpersonal Relationships - Works well with co-workers and supervisors. Helps others and responds to their requests in a timely, accurate, and complete manner. Is courteous and respectful when dealing with the public. Listens attentively before responding when communicating with others. Verbally communicates in a clear and professional manner. Displays patience and control when confronted with stressful situations.

Comments/Narrative Sections

Employees need narrative feedback. Comments are critical to show employees why they received the rating for that particular factor, and how to improve their performance during the next review period to earn a higher rating on that factor. Complete documentation of work behavior is needed to help the supervisor maintain objectivity and make the review less subjective. Attaching additional documents is also encouraged.

Each section includes space for comment and/or justification for the score received. This is an important section and must be completed in full. Narrative explanations are required for each factor area, and specific performance examples are required for all ratings of Exceeds Expectations or Needs Improvement. There is also space for employee and other signatory's comments as well as a section for overall comments.

Rating Scale

There are currently three (3) rating levels. The levels and description of actions that warrant the rating are below.

3 = EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS: Employee consistently demonstrates competency that is superior to the job expectation. Employee is considered outstanding among his/her peers and is a positive role model. Work results and behavior are exceptional and valuable to the organization.

2 = FULFILLS JOB REQUIREMENTS: Employee consistently fulfills, meets and occasionally exceeds this job factor expectation. Employee is respected among his/her peers. Performance at this level provides a valuable contribution.

1 = NEEDS IMPROVEMENT: Employee consistently fails to meet this job factor expectation.

Overall Score of 1.5 or below and Performance Improvement Plans (PIP)

An employee receiving an overall score of 1.5 or below will be placed on a six month probation. No promotions or pay increases will be approved until the probationary period is exhausted and the employee receives a recommendation from the Supervisor. Any pay increases will be effective on



the next payroll cycle following the probationary period end date. There will be no retro-active pay increases allowed.

Additionally, a job Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) form is required, and shall be completed and reviewed with the employee by the supervisor on third and sixth month of probation. A copy of the PIP as well as a recommendation from the Supervisor shall be sent to HR in order to end the probationary period.

A Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) is designed to facilitate constructive discussion between an employee and their supervisor and to clarify the exact work performance requiring improvement.

It should be used anytime when it becomes necessary to help an employee improve their performance.

The supervisor, with input from the affected employee, develops an improvement plan; the purpose of the goals outlined is to help the employee to attain the desired level of performance. However, when it has been determined that the employee's performance is unsatisfactory and immediate remedial action has not been effective, and is unlikely to improve, the department head should confer with the Director of Human Resources to discuss continued employment of the individual. Involuntary termination of the employee initiated by the city requires prior approval by the department head, Director of Human Resources, and City Manager.

Establishing Goals and Objectives

All employees should have specific goals and objectives to work toward. Goals and objectives help align employees with the City's mission. They also help employees see how their contributions fit into the big picture and the value they bring to the City.

A goal is a short statement of the desired outcome to be accomplished over a long time frame, usually more than 1 year. It is a broad statement that focuses on the desired results and does not describe the methods used to get the intended outcome.

Goals direct and guide employee efforts, motivate employee performance, and improve performance review and strategic planning.

Objectives are specific, actionable targets that need to be achieved within a smaller time frame, such as a year or less, to reach a certain goal. Objectives describe the actions, activities, and measurable steps involved in achieving a goal.

Without the right goals and objectives, performance and engagement suffers. Below are 4 steps to goal setting.



1. Include employees in the goal setting process.

Employee goals shouldn't be set top-down. Instead, make goal setting a collaborative effort to get buy-in on employee goals from employees and supervisors.

Supervisors have a good bird's-eye view of team and overall priorities, which can help them identify useful performance benchmarks for their team. However, it's important to bring employees into the conversation and include them in the goal-setting process.

When employees participate in setting goals for themselves, they are more likely to be invested in their performance from the beginning and are more accountable to the results.

2. Set targeted goals for continuous improvement.

If you don't know where you're going, it will be difficult to set meaningful goals. What is the ultimate objective, team vision, or employee development plan? How can your employee's goals help them get there?

Once you've set goals/objectives together, make sure to check in regularly on their progress. Goal conversations aren't a one-and-done task. They should be part of a continuous growth cycle.

3. Use the SMART method.

S.M.A.R.T. goals should be:

Specific: The more specific and focused your goals, the clearer your target. Goals should answer who, what, where, and why.

Measurable: If you can't measure progress, how will you know if you're meeting your goal? Help employees set goals that are measurable, with clear metrics and milestones for tracking progress and defining success.

Attainable: It's good to aim high, but make sure your employees are also realistic in their goals. Do they have the tools and resources to make it happen? Is the timeframe realistic? Reaching for unattainable goals is a great way to discourage and disengage employees when they fail to meet their goals. So make sure they set goals that stretch them without breaking them.

Relevant: Goals should align with broader team and overall objectives. Help employees understand those priorities so they can focus on goals that make sense for them and make sense for the City.

Time-bound: Goals without a deadline kill performance. Time constraints help drive performance because they create a sense of urgency. However, too much time can slow performance. And too little time can lead to burnout from overworking or giving up on the goal altogether. Help your employees set fair and realistic timeframes for achieving their goals.

4. Adapt goals in real-time.

Priorities change, team dynamics or functions shift, and sometimes goals that were initially set aren't applicable. Change is normal and inevitable. Adapt with those changes and



update the goals and objectives in real-time to remain relevant and effective.

Job Standards and Feedback

It is important to provide measurable and realistic job performance standards so that the employee will know what is expected of him/her. Furthermore, it is essential for employees to receive information about how well they are doing in their attempts to meet their job standards. The more specific the feedback, the more valuable it will be in terms of reinforcing good performance or improving unsatisfactory performance. Equally important is that by telling employees what behaviors they will be evaluated on, the supervisor should communicate the important job aspects. The uses for providing specific feedback are:

A. Promotion

Although past performance reviews need not be used as the exclusive basis for promotion, the results of the past reviews should definitely be considered as part of the promotional process. While outstanding performance in one position is not a guarantee of success in a more responsible position, consistently good or above average performance is an indicator of possible future efforts of the employee. In addition, promotion can serve as a method of reward for superior performance.

B. Documentation of Disciplinary Actions

No employee working for the City of Johnson City should be terminated or demoted as a result of performance failure, but rather for failure to respond to planned positive action to help the employee improve. It is the supervisors' responsibility to recognize substandard performance, inform the employee of the discrepancy and the consequences and work with the employee to arrive at an acceptable solution. All these steps should be documented and the actions taken by the supervisor to correct it.

C. Identification of Training Needs

The performance review system, particularly the section dealing with the setting of future job standards and action plans, are helpful in identifying certain training needs or special talents of the employee. This information can be very useful in developing training programs for particular departments or the organization as a whole.

D. Improvement In The Quality of Supervision

The most important aspect of the Johnson City performance review system is that it requires the supervisor to sit down with his/her employees on a regular basis and objectively discuss their job performance and abilities. Although performance review is not the solution to all supervision problems, it does require that the supervisor devote some careful thought to the abilities, interests, and work performance of each individual he/she supervises. Additionally, the objective standards of the review form require the supervisor to consider aspects of the individual's performance that might have otherwise been



E. Recognition or Positive Reinforcement

Recognition or positive reinforcement of a desired behavior encourages its continuance. Supervisors should use recognition or positive reinforcement when an employee meets or goes beyond performance expectations. Positive reinforcement can consist of praise, verbal encouragement, showing appreciation for effort, and employee acknowledgement. When supervisors successfully use recognition or positive reinforcement the results can be increased employee productivity, improved morale of an individual or department, improved sense of employee self-worth, and improved sense of contribution to the division, department, and organization.

Procedures

1. Human Resources will announce the review period and due date to all supervisors with review responsibilities.
2. The supervisor should review the prior year's review (if applicable) and other pertinent documented information and speak with the employee about developing goals and objectives for the next year.
3. The supervisor will prepare the performance review and discuss with the employee on or before the scheduled review date and if applicable, discuss any pay increase or deferral of increase. Supervisor should encourage the employee to enter comments on the review affording sufficient time to develop his/her comments.
4. Supervisor will review the completed form with their next immediate supervisor and department head, then forward to Human Resources.
5. Department of Human Resources reviews the review and proposed pay change to determine that the planned increase is consistent with wage and salary administration policy guidelines.
6. The employee and Human Resources will receive the completed signed form, job description and action form (if applicable).

Merit Pay

A fundamental feature of any merit pay plan is an established budgeted amount for pay for performance and merit increases. Every year the merit pay plan is in effect, the budget process must consist of two key activities: determining the size of the budget; and allocating funds to the department within the City.

- Determining Budget Size - The recommendation for the amount of merit increases will be addressed during the annual fiscal budget year process. Typically, salary increase amounts will be established each budget year based on the following factors:
- Actual or anticipated organizational financial results.
- Cost of living and/or inflation.
- Competitive factors such as retention rates and recruiting success or difficulty; and



- Cost of labor and the competitive position of the City's pay within the marketplace.

Budget Allocation - Funds for merit adjustments are distributed to departments and divisions of the City as a percentage of "eligible payroll" which is defined as the aggregate base salaries of all employees who are eligible to participate in the merit pay plan. For this purpose, "eligible payroll" refers to full-time and part-time employees not on either a new hire or promotional probation.

Merit increase funding levels are recommended by the Budget Manager, Human Resources Director, Assistant City Manager and the City Manager and approved by the City Commission during the fiscal year budget process.

Merit Increases - The City has adopted a compensation system which is based on the premise that those who perform at a higher level should be rewarded with higher pay. All eligible employees' performance is evaluated every year. An employee who receives a 1.6 – 3.0 overall rating is eligible for, but not entitled to, a pay increase.

A merit increase recommendation will not be accepted if that would cause the employees pay to exceed the maximum of the pay grade for the classification. Instead of a pay increase, merit would be received as a bonus, awarded as an annualized one time lump sum payment and the employee's rate of pay remains unchanged.

Preparation Tips for Conducting Performance Reviews

To enhance fairness and reduce error in observation, when preparing a performance review, the following considerations should be kept in mind:

- When doing the review, consider the entire review period. Try to enumerate high points and low points over the period. Look for areas of consistent behavior over the time period.
- Rate only what you have observed with notations as to the extent of the observation.
- The review should be based on job performance, not personality. Focus on observable behavior and how it relates to performance on the job.
- Do not over identify or over sympathize with the employee and allow friendship to influence ratings. Never play favorites.
- Recognize the "halo effect" i.e., when an evaluator allows his/her overall, general impression to influence his/her judgment on each separate job standards. An employee should not be rated at the same level on all of the rating factors.
- Consider how the employee is performing in relation to what is expected. Evaluate the employee's performance, not the importance of the job.
- Avoid errors of leniency and central tendency. Leniency occurs when most ratings pile up at the high end when they should be spread throughout the entire rating scale. Central tendency occurs when the evaluator rates all or most job standards in the middle of the performance range.



- It is human nature to dislike saying unfavorable things about employees; therefore, some supervisors tend to rate all their employees excellent. The two unfortunate effects of overrating employees are that the overrating misleads others that review his/her reviews, and the better, more productive employees suffer because one cannot distinguish the truly outstanding worker.
- Accuracy of recall over the review period can be improved when the supervisor keeps a continuing written record of incidents of performance he/she has specifically observed and discussed with the employee.
- Recognize that some employees will never achieve a top rating, regardless of the length of service.

Conducting the Interview

It is very important to understand that the performance review interview should be designed to review the program and development of the employee and to explain to him/her what is expected in terms of work performance. At the same time, keep in mind that first line managers and supervisors will conduct the review interview, not a psychologist or skilled counselor. Remember, the interview should not be an in-depth psychological study, but a simple discussion between employee and supervisor about the employee's work performance. The following are a few tips in conducting an interview:

The interview should be a private 1:1 meeting, scheduled at a time that is mutually agreeable to both parties. Enough time should be allowed for the interview so that the employee does not feel rushed.

1. The employee should be given complete attention during the interview.
2. The interview should be scheduled to allow freedom from interruption.
3. Be positive in the interview. Almost every employee has some strengths or good work characteristics that can be used as a starting point in the interview.
4. The evaluator should have a clear understanding that the subject of the review is the employee's work performance and not his/her personality. The discussion should be job centered.
5. Avoid "surprises" in the form of negative comments of which the employee has not been previously advised in the on-going day-to-day process of supervision.
6. Communicate honest warmth and understanding. Develop a relationship of mutual trust, confidence, and respect.
7. Ask questions and listen. Allow the employee to express his/her reactions to the review. You may discover some underlying causes to lack of performance.
8. Ask the employee for suggestions of performance goals and standards and how his/her performance can improve.
9. Don't show anger or hostility, regardless of the remarks that are made by the employee. Try to maintain your objectivity.



10. Allow the employee his/her respect. Nothing is gained by proving him/her wrong or by being unduly hard-nosed.
11. Work with the employee to develop a plan of positive action.
12. End the interview on a relaxed and positive note.
13. Allow a couple of days following the interview for the employee to submit any comments he/she may have concerning the review.

Appeals Procedure

Since the performance review report has a potential to influence many of the personnel decisions that affect a city employee, the following should be considered as the appeal procedure for the employee if he/she disagrees with the report. (Civil Service employees should refer to Article 26 of the Civil Service Manual).

FIRST LEVEL OF REVIEW

In addition to the comments section on the performance review form, the employee may appeal the review by presenting a written statement of the appeal to his/her immediate supervisor. The supervisor shall render his/her decision and comments to the appeal in writing and return it to the employee within five (5) working days after receipt of the appeal. If the employee does not agree with the supervisor's decision, or if the supervisor fails to provide a resolution to the appeal outlined above, the employee may present the appeal in writing to the supervisor's immediate supervisor. Failure of the employee to take further action within five (5) days after the written decision of his/her supervisor, or within ten (10) days if no decision is rendered, will constitute a withdrawal of the appeal.

FURTHER LEVEL OF REVIEW

The supervisor receiving the appeal shall review it, render his/her decision and comments in writing, and return them to the employee within five (5) working days after receiving the appeal. If the employee does not agree with the decision, or if no answer has been received within five (5) working days after the supervisor receives the appeal, the employee may present the appeal to the department head. Failure of the employee to take further action within five (5) working days after receipt of the written decision of the supervisor, or if within ten (10) days no decision is rendered will constitute withdrawal of the appeal.

DEPARTMENT REVIEW

The department head receiving the appeal shall review it and discuss the appeal with the employee and render his/her decision and comments in writing and return them to the employee within five (5) working days after receiving the appeal. If the employee does not agree with the decision reached, or if the department head fails to provide resolution of the appeal as outlined above,



he/she may present the appeal to the City Manager. Failure of the employee to take further action within five (5) working days after receipt of the decision of the department head, or within ten (10) working days if no decision is rendered constitutes a withdrawal of the appeal.

CITY MANAGER

The City Manager, upon receiving the appeal, shall discuss the appeal with the employee. The City Manager shall render his/her decision and comments in writing and return them to the employee within five (5) working days after receiving the appeal. The decision of the City Manager shall be final.



You may access this document on the City's server in Public Folders, under Human Resources by clicking on the file named Performance Evaluation Manual, or on Insite under "Forms and Guides"

Please contact Human Resources if you have any questions regarding this manual or need any assistance with the performance process.

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