
Performance Evaluations

1001.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to detail the Blue Ridge Fire District performance evaluation system, which is used to record work performance for both the District and the employee, giving recognition for good work and providing a guide for improvement where needed. The employee performance evaluation report is a gauge in measuring performance and is used for making personnel decisions relating to merit increase, promotion, reassignment, discipline, demotion and termination. The report also provides a guide for mutual work planning and review, and an opportunity to convert general impressions into a more objective history of work performance based on job standards.

1001.2 POLICY

The District evaluates employees in a nondiscriminatory manner based upon job-related factors specific to the employee's position, without regard to actual or perceived race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, pregnancy, genetic information, veteran status, marital status, and any other classification or status protected by law.

1001.3 PROCEDURE

Within one year of appointment to a supervisory position, all supervisors should attend an approved supervisory course that includes training on the completion of performance evaluations.

Each evaluation will cover a specific time and should be based on the employee's performance during that period. Evaluations are based on observed or documented behavior. If a supervisor becomes aware of or witnesses either outstanding or unsatisfactory performance by an employee, the performance should be noted and a conversation between the employee and the supervisor should take place as soon as practicable after the performance is noted. This conversation is to immediately reinforce outstanding behavior, or correct and counsel unsatisfactory behavior. The supervisor should create a documentation of the performance and the follow-up conversation and use this documentation at the next evaluation period.

At the beginning of the rating period, each supervisor should discuss the tasks of the position, standards of performance expected and the evaluation rating criteria with each employee. When a non-probationary employee's job performance falls below the established standards of the job, the supervisor should, as soon as practicable but at least 90 days prior to the end of the annual evaluation period, advise the employee in writing in order to provide an opportunity for the employee to improve performance. The involved employee should be provided the opportunity to initial any such writing and respond in writing within 30 days, if desired. Failure to meet established performance standards is justification for an unsatisfactory rating. Rating factors that are not observed are assumed to be performed at a standard level.

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The performance evaluation report will be completed by the employee's immediate supervisor. Other supervisors directly familiar with the employee's performance during the rating period should be consulted by the immediate supervisor for their input.

1001.4 FULL-TIME PROBATIONARY EMPLOYEES

All personnel will serve a 12-month probationary period before being eligible for certification as permanent employees. Probationary firefighters shall be evaluated daily, weekly and monthly during the probationary period.

Performance evaluation reports shall be completed as defined by the Fire Chief by specific job classification for all other full-time personnel during the probationary period.

1001.5 FULL-TIME PERMANENT STATUS EMPLOYEES

Permanent employees are subject to three types of performance evaluations:

Regular - A performance evaluation report shall be completed once each year by the employee's immediate supervisor on the anniversary of the employee's date of hire, except for employees who have been promoted. In the case of promotion, a performance evaluation report shall be completed on the anniversary of the employee's date of last promotion.

Transfer - If an employee is transferred from one assignment to another in the middle of an evaluation period and less than six months have transpired since the transfer, an evaluation shall be completed by the current supervisor with input from the previous supervisor.

Special - A special evaluation may be completed any time the rater and the rater's supervisor believe one is necessary due to employee performance deficiencies. Generally, the special evaluation will be used to document areas of performance deemed less than standard when follow-up action is planned (e.g., action plan, remedial training, retraining). The evaluation form and associated documentation shall be submitted as one package.

1001.5.1 RATINGS

Outstanding - Performance that is well beyond that expected or required in the standards for the position. It is exceptional performance, definitely superior or extraordinary.

Exceeds standards - Performance that is better than expected of a fully competent employee. It is superior to what is expected or required by the standards for the position but is not of such rare nature to warrant outstanding status.

Meets standards - Performance expected of a fully competent employee and meets the standards required of the position.

Needs improvement - Performance that is less than that expected of a fully competent employee and less than the standards required of the position. A needs improvement rating should be thoroughly discussed with the employee and include a structured plan intended to improve performance, with short-interval interim evaluations.

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Unsatisfactory - Performance that is inadequate or undesirable, intolerable and inferior to the standards required of the position.

Written comments should be used by the rater to document the employee's strengths and weaknesses and make any suggestions for improvement. Any job dimension rating marked unsatisfactory or outstanding should be substantiated in the rater comments section.

1001.6 EVALUATION INTERVIEW

When a supervisor has completed the preliminary evaluation, arrangements shall be made for a private discussion of the evaluation with the employee. The supervisor should discuss the results with the employee and answer any questions the employee may have. If the employee has valid and reasonable protests of any of the ratings, the supervisor may make appropriate changes to the evaluation. Areas needing improvement and goals for reaching the expected level of performance should be identified and discussed. The supervisor should also provide relevant counseling regarding advancement and training opportunities. The supervisor and employee will sign and date the evaluation. Permanent employees may also write comments in the employee comments section of the performance evaluation report.

1001.6.1 DISCRIMINATORY HARASSMENT FORM

At the time of the annual evaluation, the reviewing supervisor shall require the employee to read the district harassment and discrimination policies. Following such a review, the supervisor shall provide the employee a form to be completed and returned by the employee, certifying:

- (a) That the employee understands the harassment and discrimination policies.
- (b) Whether any questions the employee has have been sufficiently addressed.
- (c) That the employee knows how and where to report harassment policy violations.
- (d) Whether the employee has been the subject of, or witness to, any conduct that violates the Discriminatory Harassment Policy and that has not been previously reported.

The completed form should be returned to the supervisor (or other authorized individual if the employee is uncomfortable returning the form to the presenting supervisor) within one week.

The employee's completed form shall be attached to the performance evaluation report. If the employee has expressed any questions or concerns, the receiving supervisor or other authorized individual shall ensure that appropriate follow-up action is taken.

1001.7 EVALUATION REVIEW

After the supervisor finishes the discussion with the employee, the signed performance evaluation report should be forwarded to the rater's supervisor for review.

The second-level supervisor should review the evaluation for fairness, impartiality, uniformity and consistency, and evaluate the first-level supervisor on the quality of the ratings provided to the employee.

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1001.8 RECORDS MANAGEMENT

The original performance evaluation report should be maintained in the employee's personnel file for the tenure of the employee's employment. A copy should be provided to the employee and a copy should be forwarded to the Fire Chief.

Performance evaluation reports will be permanently destroyed in accordance with established records retention schedules.