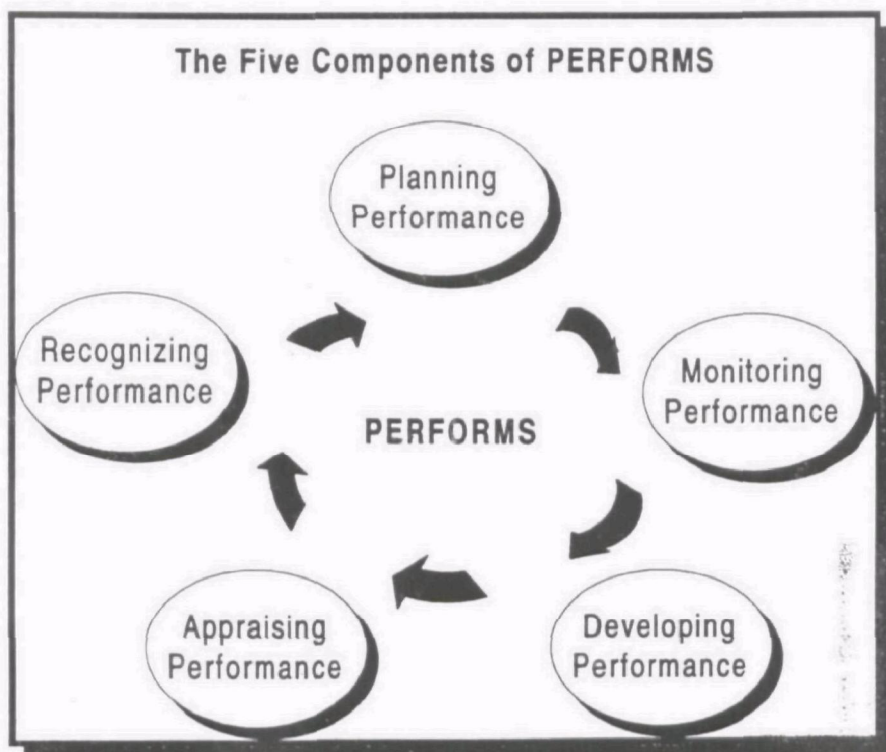




PERFORMS

Self-Study Guide for EPA Headquarters Employees



**PERFORMS Self-Study Guide
For EPA Headquarters Employees**

PERFORMS Self-Study Guide for EPA Headquarters Employees

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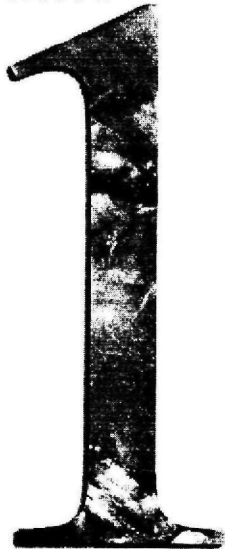
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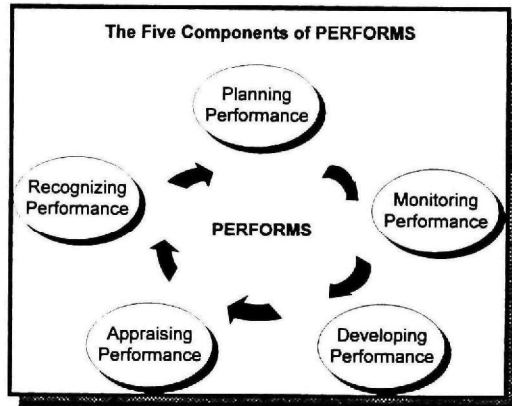
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Module



What is PERFORMS?



Module Overview

In this module, you will review EPA's performance management system, PERFORMS, and its critical components and features. You'll learn the expectations and roles for employees and supervisors when implementing this performance management system.

**Module
Objectives**

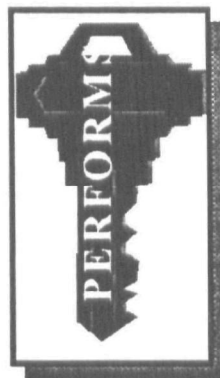
After reviewing this module, you should be able to:

- List the key features of PERFORMS.
 - Identify the five components of PERFORMS.
 - Identify how performance expectations have changed under PERFORMS.
 - Identify who implements PERFORMS, including the roles assigned to supervisors.
-

Unit

1a

Key Features of PERFORMS



Unit Overview

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on June 1, 1998 implemented a new performance management system, PERFORMS. In this unit, you'll learn more about the key features of PERFORMS.

Key Features of PERFORMS

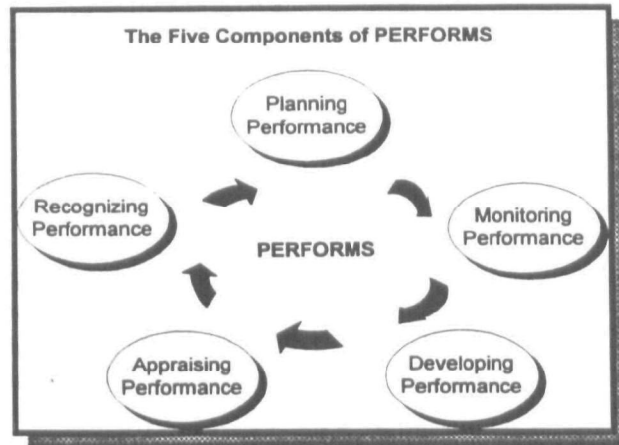


On June 1, 1998, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) implemented a new performance management system—PERFORMS (Performance Planning, Employee Rating, Feedback, Opportunity, and Recognition Management System). The goal of this new system was to streamline and simplify the performance management process. PERFORMS was designed in association with the unions and was negotiated with AFGE and NTEU representatives. PERFORMS:

- Is an *Agency-wide* performance system for all EPA employees.
- Has an annual appraisal period from *January 1 to December 31*, which shifts the administrative workload of appraisals from the busy end-of-fiscal-year period.
- Consists of a performance summary rating with *two levels*. The simplified rating changes emphasis from appraising performance to the other components of PERFORMS.
- Discontinues the link between cash performance awards and ratings of record. This encourages feedback and rewards to be distributed year-round rather than only during an appraisal. PERFORMS is intended to reinforce excellence in a timely manner.
- Encourages continuous feedback.
- Mandates at least one mid-year feedback discussion and employee development discussion. The mid-year feedback discussion is a progress review that compares actual performance with the standards developed in the Performance Plan. This allows the employee time to adjust performance before his/her performance appraisal.

Unit

The Five Components of PERFORMS

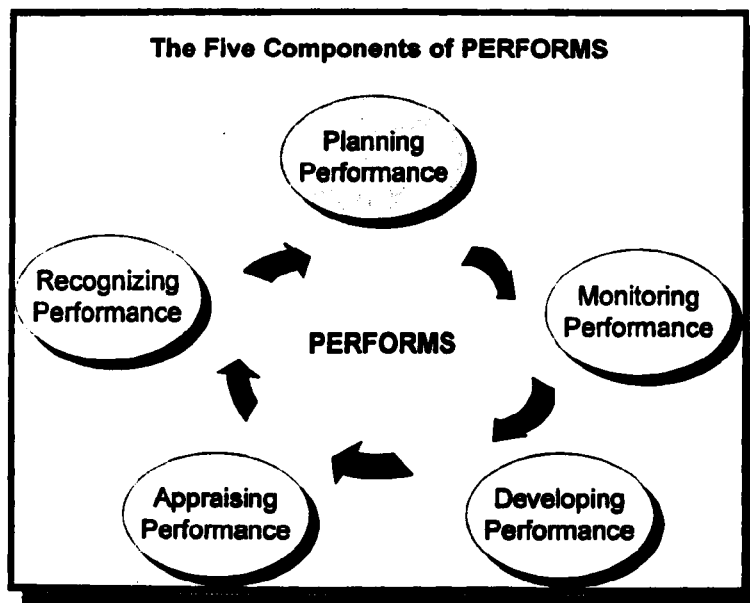


Unit Overview

PERFORMS breaks down performance management into five components. Completion of these components is critical to the success of PERFORMS. In this unit you'll learn more about the five components of PERFORMS.

The Five Components of PERFORMS

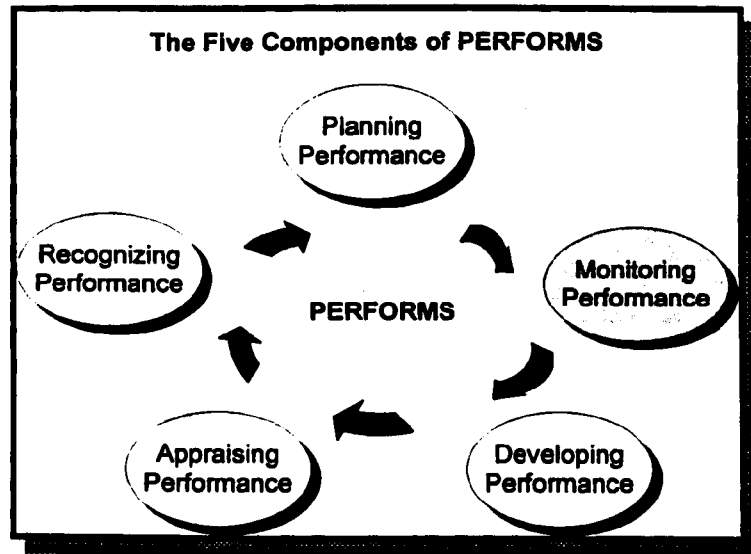
PERFORMS consists of five components.



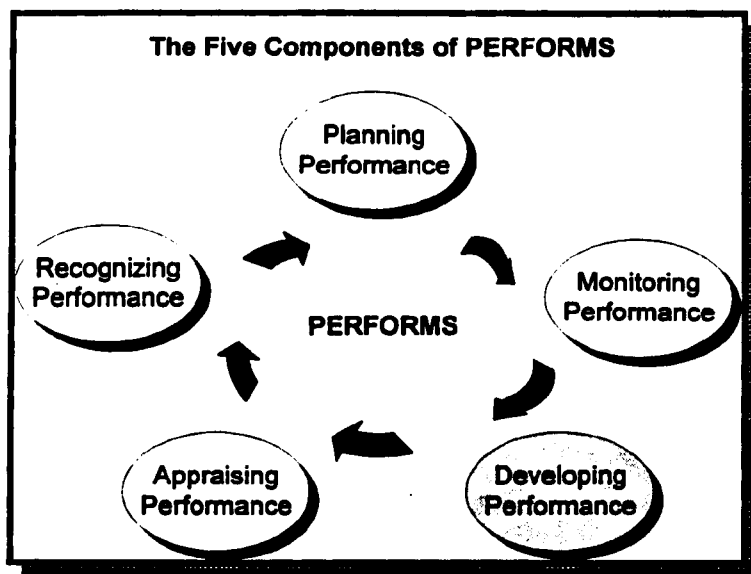
Planning Performance

The first component of PERFORMS is Planning Performance. During this stage, you will develop clear objectives and expectations for your Performance Plan. Your supervisor will review these objectives and expectations with you.

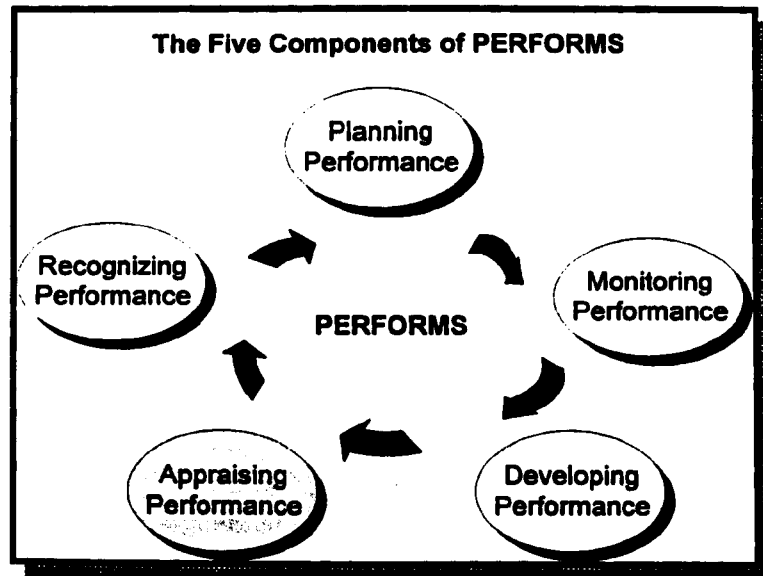
**Monitoring
Performance**



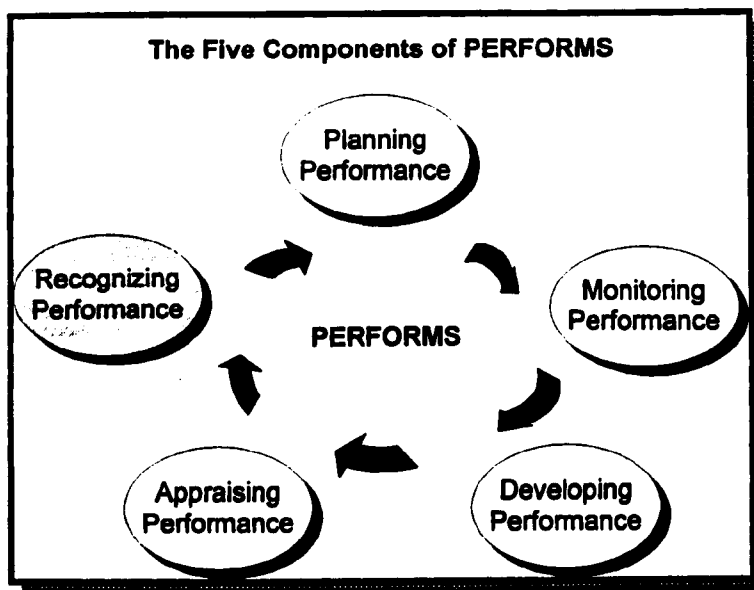
The second component of PERFORMS is Monitoring Performance. In this stage, you and your supervisor will monitor your performance against standards established in your Performance Plan.

**Developing
Performance**

The third component of PERFORMS, Developing Performance, involves helping employees to improve job performance and to develop their skills. You may conduct self-assessments and create an Individual Development Plan (IDP) to identify developmental needs and career objectives. Your supervisor will review with you the various performance development tools: on-the-job training, coaching, mentoring, and developmental assignments that may be used to further enhance your work performance.

**Appraising
Performance**

The fourth component of PERFORMS is Appraising Performance. In this stage, you will be invited to provide a written or oral self-assessment of your performance to your supervisor. Your supervisor will assess your actual performance accomplishments against a set of standards and assign an overall rating. Your supervisor will assess your actual performance accomplishments against the agreed upon standards in your Performance Plan.

**Recognizing
Performance**

The fifth component of PERFORMS is Recognizing Performance. Throughout the year you will have the opportunity to give and receive recognition for accomplishments. Your supervisor will nominate and reward employees who have demonstrated exceptional performance. If you are not a supervisor, you will also be able to nominate deserving peers for awards.

Unit

1c

Performance Expectations Under PERFORMS



Unit Overview

In order to achieve success under PERFORMS, EPA employees and supervisors must have a clear understanding of the expectations set forth under PERFORMS. In this unit, you'll learn more about what those expectations are.

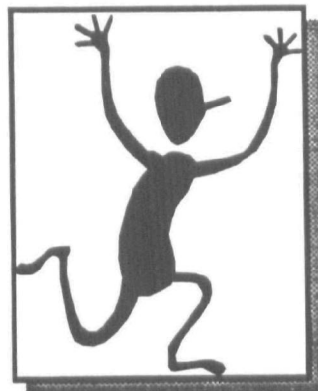
**Performance
Expectations
Under
PERFORMS**

Under PERFORMS, performance expectations have not changed. PERFORMS builds upon the premise that you and your supervisor will work together towards the goal of exceptional performance. In so doing, supervisors are encouraged to support you with a variety of performance development tools such as: coaching, feedback, and recognition in an effort to enhance your performance.

Star performers will be recognized as soon as possible following their exceptional accomplishments.

Unit

Who Implements PERFORMS?

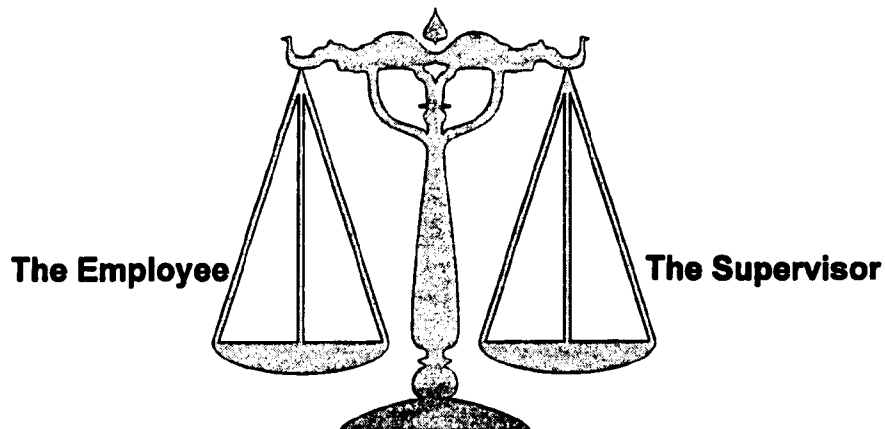


Unit Overview

In implementing PERFORMS, a number of roles and responsibilities can be defined for both you and your supervisor for each component of the PERFORMS process.

Who Implements PERFORMS?

PERFORMS Implementation



You and your supervisor are responsible for implementing PERFORMS. During each component of the PERFORMS process, you and supervisor must work together. Unless someone else is assigned by management, your supervisor will work with you on your performance.

Sometimes a person other than the Supervisor of Record may interact with you about your performance. The Supervisor of Record could assign the Designated Rater role to a team leader.

For a complete breakdown of the roles, responsibilities, and duties for both you and your supervisor during the PERFORMS process, please see the Responsibility Matrix on page 15.

Note to supervisor: If you plan to assign the Designated Rater role to a Team Leader, you should be aware that these duties need to be reflected in the Team Leader's position description. You may want to consult with OHROS.

Responsibilities Under PERFORMS

The table below gives an overview of your responsibilities and your supervisor's responsibilities for each component of the PERFORMS process.

Component	Your Responsibilities	Your Supervisor's Responsibilities
Planning Performance	Collaborate with your supervisor to develop performance elements and standards for the Performance Plan.	Develop/review elements and standards in the Performance Plan and discuss them with employee.
Monitoring Performance	Monitor your own performance based on the Performance Plan.	Monitor employee performance against standards.
Developing Performance	Prepare an Individual Development Plan (IDP) to identify developmental needs and career objectives, if you so desire or as supervisor assigns.	Identify developmental needs and provide the employee with on-the-job training, coaching, mentoring, and developmental assignments to further enhance work performance.
Appraising Performance	Provide a written or oral self-assessment of your performance if you so desire. Sign performance appraisal cover sheet after the performance appraisal has been completed.	Assess the employee's actual performance accomplishments against elements and standards that are written in the Performance Plan. Conduct performance appraisal with employee communicating this information by the end of January. Sign performance appraisal cover sheet after the appraisal discussion has been completed.
Recognizing Performance	Nominate peer(s) for awards, if you are not a supervisor.	Nominate and reward employees who have demonstrated exceptional performance.

Check Point

Here's a chance to check your understanding of the unit material.



1. Match each of the items with its corresponding description.

- | | | |
|----------------------|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| A. Planning Phase | ___ | 1. Provide a written or oral self-assessment to your supervisor |
| B. Developing Phase | ___ | 2. Acknowledge employee accomplishments |
| C. Monitoring Phase | ___ | 3. Monitor your performance against your Performance Plan |
| D. Appraising Phase | ___ | 4. Develop clear performance elements and standards |
| E. Recognition Phase | ___ | 5. Prepare an Individual Development Plan (IDP) |

2. For the following PERFORMS tasks, place an "E" on those that are Employee's Responsibilities, "S" on Supervisor's Responsibilities, and a "T" for Responsibilities that require the employee and supervisor to work together:

- ___ Develop performance elements and standards
- ___ Develop Individual Development Plan (IDP)
- ___ Conduct performance appraisal
- ___ Nominate employees for awards

**Additional
References &
Resources**

PERFORMS Training, Unit 1
PERFORMS HQ Supplemental Guidance

Answer Sheet for Check Point

1. Match each of the items with its corresponding description.

- | | | |
|----------------------|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| A. Planning Phase | <u>4</u> | 1. Provide a written or oral self-assessment to your supervisor |
| B. Developing Phase | <u>5</u> | 2. Acknowledge employee accomplishments |
| C. Monitoring Phase | <u>3</u> | 3. Monitor your performance against your Performance Plan |
| D. Appraising Phase | <u>1</u> | 4. Develop clear performance elements and standards |
| E. Recognition Phase | <u>2</u> | 5. Prepare an Individual Development Plan (IDP) |

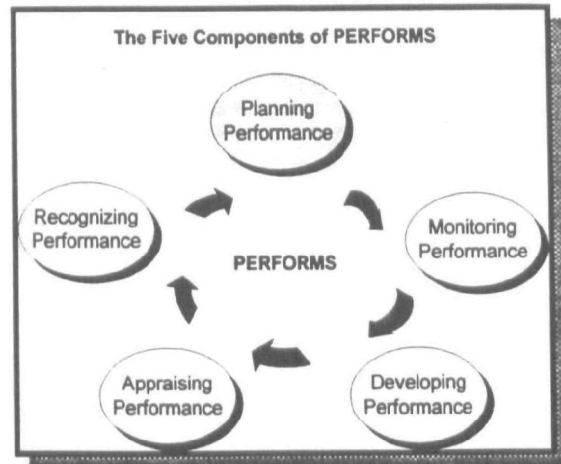
2. Place an "E" on Employee's Responsibilities, "S" on Supervisor's Responsibilities, and a "T" for Responsibilities that require the employee and supervisor to work together.

- S, T Develop performance elements for standards
- E, T Develop Individual Development Plan (IDP)
- S, E Conduct performance appraisal
- S, E Nominate employees for awards

Module



Planning Performance



Module Overview

An essential component of PERFORMS is planning your performance for the upcoming year.

In this module, you will learn about the procedures for developing, reviewing, communicating, and maintaining a Performance Plan.

You'll also have the opportunity to write elements and standards for a sample Performance Plan. Then you'll be ready to refine your own Performance Plan.

**Module
Objectives**

After reviewing this module, you should be able to:

- Identify EPA's organizational goals.
 - Given a job description and functional statement for a position or your own Performance Plan, write elements for the Performance Plan.
 - Identify the procedures for developing, reviewing, communicating, and maintaining a Performance Plan.
-

Unit



EPA's Organizational Goals



Unit Overview

EPA has a hierarchy of goals that should link to your individual responsibilities.

In this unit, you will learn how these organizational goals and objectives relate to your responsibilities and, ultimately, to your Performance Plan.

**About
EPA's
Goals**

The EPA Strategic Plan outlines ten strategic, long-term goals. These organizational goals provide the overarching framework for the direction of all work within the Agency.

The organizational goals are important to you because they can drive your individual efforts. They can help you focus your work priorities so you can work with a sense of strategic direction.

Organizational goals may also help you focus your own job expectations as well as provide a basis for discussion about job performance and how it can further the goals of the organization.

**What Are
EPA's
Goals?**

Let's begin by reviewing EPA's organizational goals as outlined in the September 1997 EPA Strategic Plan. The organizational goals are the compass by which the organization measures its direction.

EPA's organizational goals are:

1. Clean air
2. Clean and safe water
3. Safe food
4. Prevent pollution and reducing risk in communities, homes, workplaces and ecosystems
5. Better waste management, restoration of contaminated waste sites, and emergency response
6. Reduce global and cross-border environmental risks
7. Expand Americans' right to know about their environment

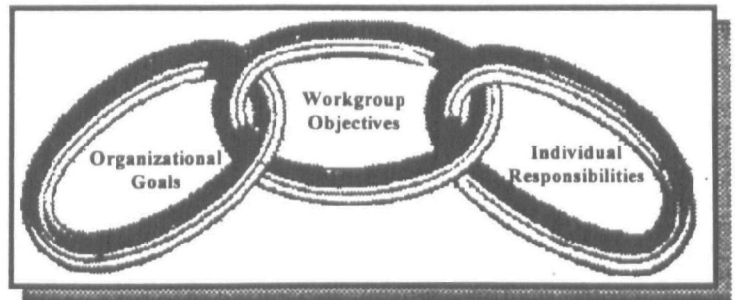
8. Provide sound science, improved understanding of environmental risk, and greater innovation to address environmental problems
9. Provide a credible deterrent to pollution and greater compliance with the law
10. Provide effective management

**Additional
References
&
Resources**

- The EPA Strategic Plan can be found on the Internet at:
<http://www.epa.gov/octopage/plantoc.htm>
-

Unit

Linking Organizational Goals to Individual Goals



Unit Overview

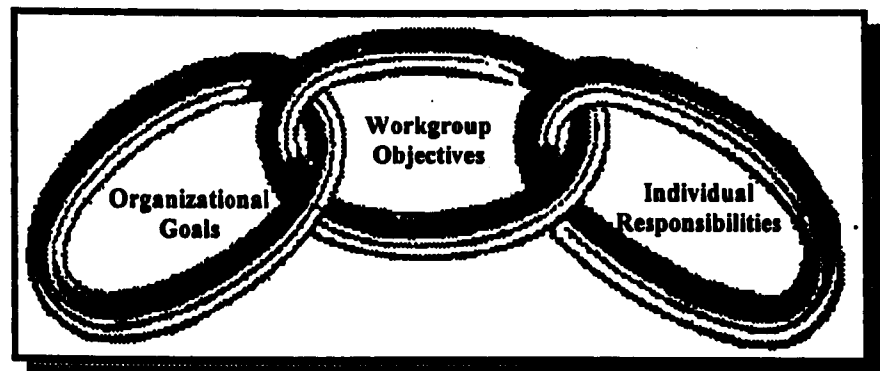
Now that you've spent a moment reviewing EPA's organizational goals, you are ready to learn how to link EPA's organizational goals to your workgroup objectives and, ultimately, to your individual responsibilities.

A Systematic Approach

Linking organizational goals to individual responsibilities helps everyone at EPA work toward the same direction. The organizational goals represent the broad direction EPA plans to move toward. Refer to the *EPA Strategic Plan* for more about EPA's strategic direction.

First, organizational goals are linked to the performance objectives of the workgroup. Linking organizational goals to workgroup objectives is primarily the responsibility of the supervisor. Sometimes, however, supervisors involve the workgroup in determining the workgroup objectives.

The next link in the chain is to connect the performance goals for the workgroup (eg., department, office, or unit) to general responsibilities for each member of the workgroup. The supervisor and employee work together to determine the responsibilities for each member.



Focus Your Priorities

You may well ask, “Where do I begin?” Before you begin, it often helps to focus your priorities by:

- ▶ Referring to documentation and
- ▶ Conducting information-gathering activities

Useful documentation may include:

- ▶ Mission statements,
- ▶ Functional statements, and
- ▶ Project plans
- ▶ Position descriptions

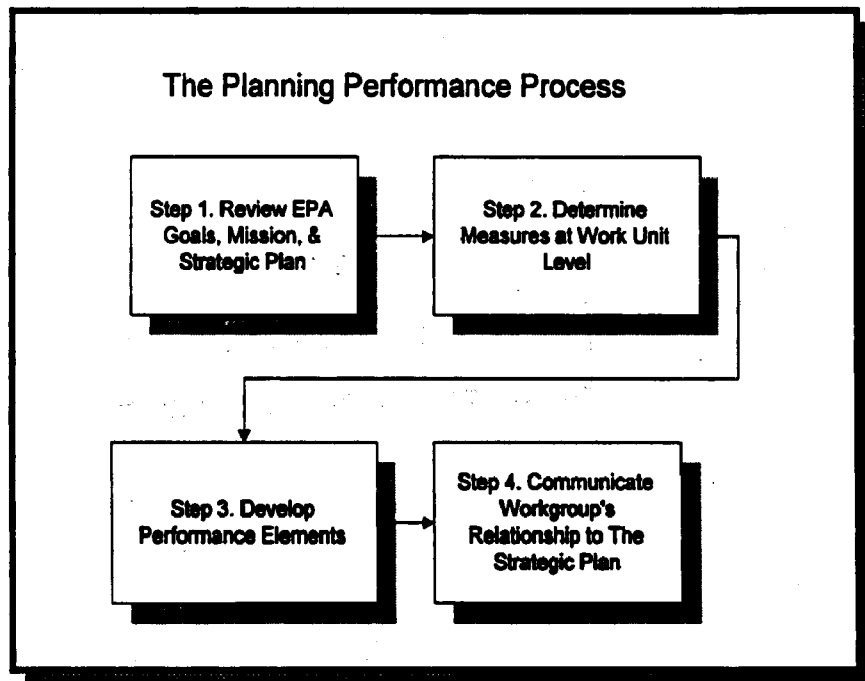
You can also conduct activities to gather additional information about the results of your workgroup, such as:

- ▶ Customer service, or
 - ▶ Quality management
-

The Process

Once you've gathered all the material and information you need, you are ready to begin the process of connecting organizational goals with your individual responsibilities.

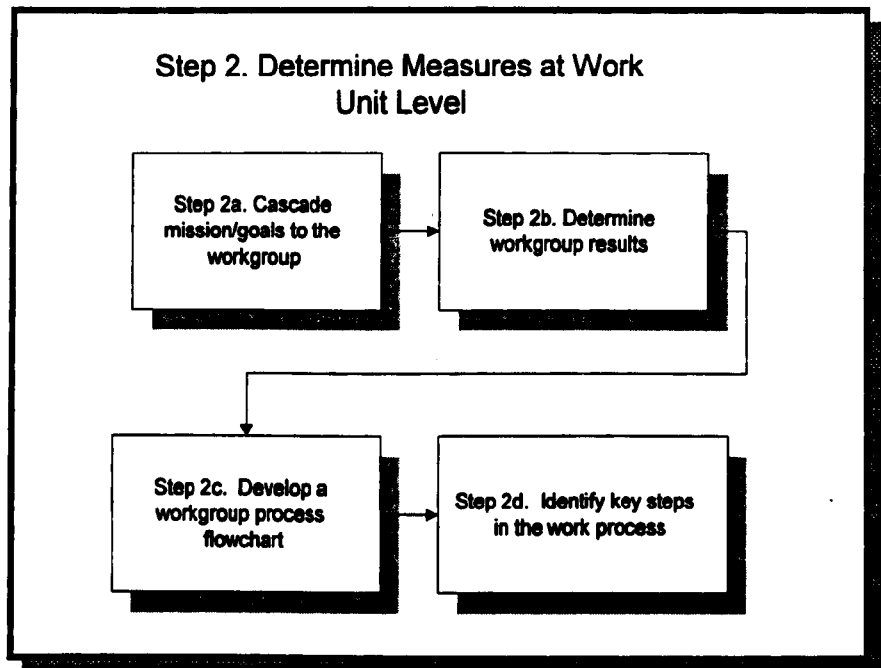
The following process is one of a number of methods for linking goals to individual responsibilities.



Step 1. Review EPA Goals, Mission, & Strategic Plan

The first step in linking organizational goals to individual responsibilities is to become familiar with EPA's:

- ▶ Organizational goals,
- ▶ Mission statements,
- ▶ Strategic direction, and
- ▶ Annual performance goals and performance measures

Step 2. Determine Measures at Workgroup Level

You'll perform a number of activities to determine what will be measured at the workgroup level, including:

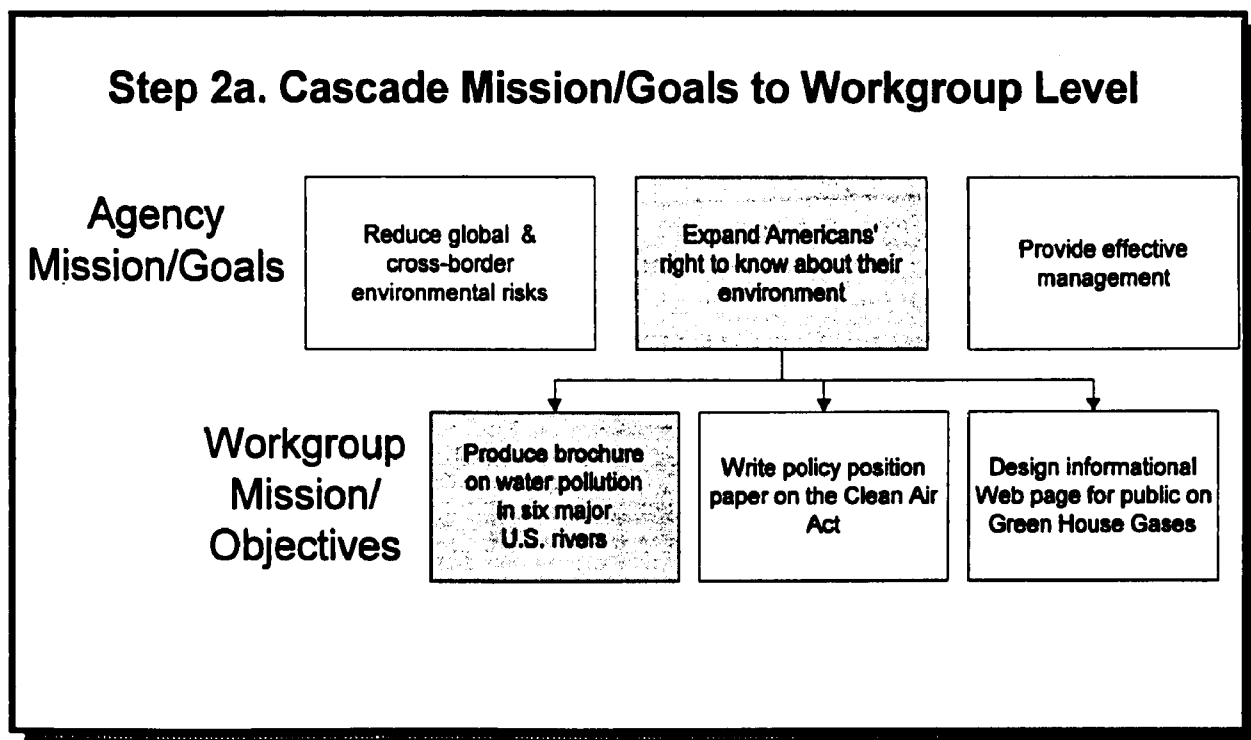
- a. Cascade the Agency's mission or goals down to the work unit level to identify work unit products and services.
- b. Determine the results the work unit provides for its customers.
- c. Develop a process flow chart for the work unit.
- d. Identify the key step(s) in the work process.

Step 2a. Cascading Mission/Goals to the Workgroup. To identify work unit products and services, you must break EPA's mission or goals down to your workgroup level.

To do this, ask yourself a few questions, including:

- ▶ What is EPA's mission?
- ▶ What are EPA's organizational goals?
- ▶ Which function(s) or objective(s) is the workgroup responsible for?
- ▶ Which goal(s) can the workgroup affect?

For example, imagine that a public relations workgroup is developing their workgroup objectives for the upcoming year. They chose the EPA goal: Expand Americans' right to know about their environment. The following graphic illustrates how the workgroup cascaded the organizational goal to the workgroup level.



Step 2b. Determine workgroup results. Next you'll determine the results your workgroup provides its customers.

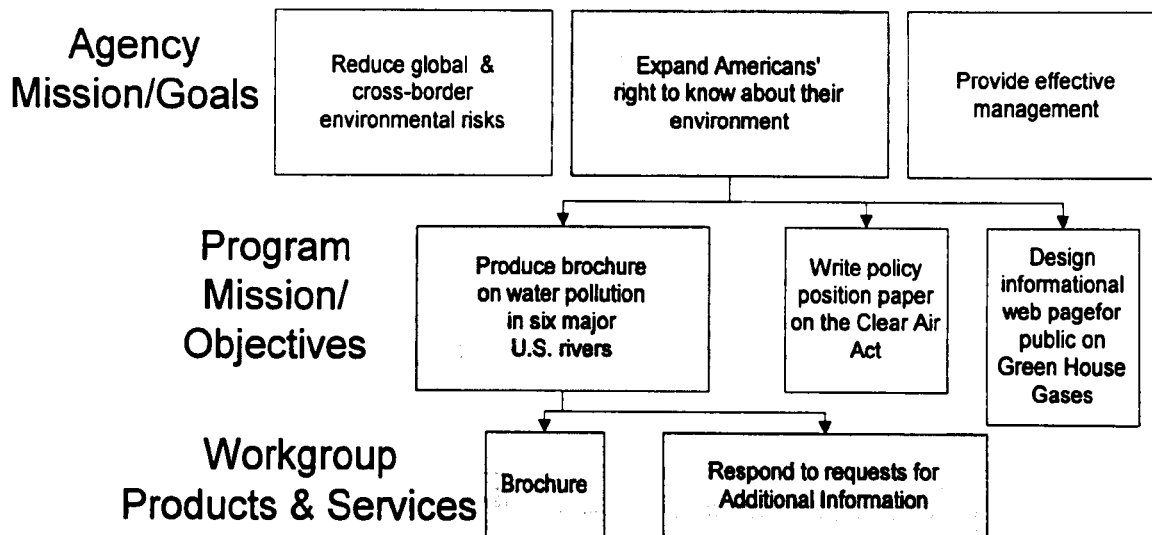
The workgroup results are the goods and/or services your work unit or office provides to customers. The 'customers' are sometimes located within the Agency, such as other offices or workgroups. Some customers may be located outside the Agency, such as other federal, state, or local agencies.

The following is an example of results that a public relations workgroup, or office, might provide to another agency.

Customer	Workgroup Results
Other federal agencies	Information on water pollution
General public	Brochure on water pollution in six major U.S. rivers

Step 2b makes the process more specific as shown in the expanded graphic that follows.

Step 2a. Cascade Mission/Goals to Workgroup Level



Check Point 2b-1



Now that you have an example of linking organizational goals to workgroup objectives, see if you can develop a link for your workgroup. Begin by thinking about which EPA goal is most related to your work.

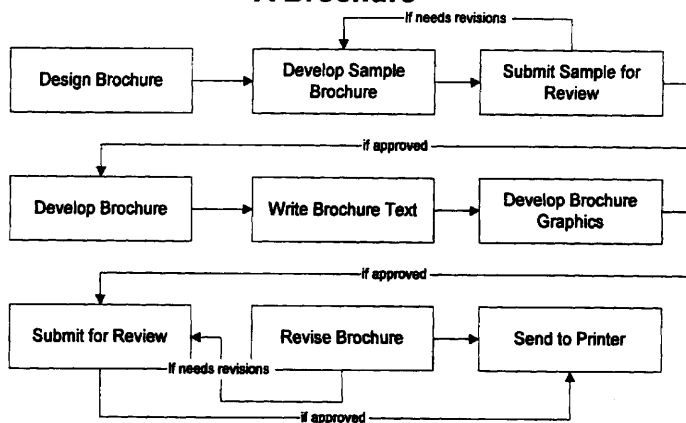
EPA Goal	
Workgroup Objective	
Workgroup Product or Service	

Step 2c. Develop a workgroup process flowchart. You can develop a process flowchart for each result your workgroup provides its customers.

When you're ready to develop the work process flowchart(s), take a moment to ask yourself: How does the workgroup achieve its results?

In this example, we determined that one of the results of the public relations workgroup is that they produce brochures. Here is their work process flowchart for that result.

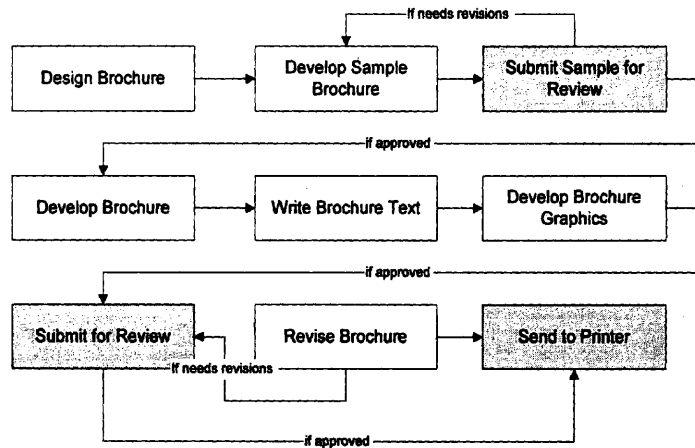
Example of a Work Process for Developing A Brochure



Step 2d. Identify key steps in the work process. Identify which steps in the process are the most critical to the workgroup. Keep in mind that the key steps generally should be measurable and the measurement should be tracked.

Ask yourself the following question: Which are the most important steps in the process? The most important steps are the ones that should be measured.

Example of a Work Process for Developing A Brochure



**Step 3. Develop
Performance
Elements**

The third step in linking organization goals to individual responsibilities is to develop performance elements that support work unit objectives and mission or work process.

Keep in mind that performance elements may include both individual and group assignments and responsibilities. The most important aspects of workgroup performance have already been identified in **Step 2: Determine Measures at Workgroup Level**. Other types of processes that workgroups may want to measure (which would not be identified through Step 2) include:

- ▶ Internal group-dynamics processes or
- ▶ Team development

Internal group-dynamics processes refer to processes that are performed in a group setting, such as:

- ▶ Decision-making processes or
- ▶ Problem-solving processes

Elements that address individual achievements can be identified using a role-results matrix. To do this, list the workgroup results or process steps across the top of the matrix. Then list each member of the workgroup or each job position down the left side of the matrix. In each cell, list the assignment or responsibility (i.e., the performance element) that the workgroup member must produce or perform to support the workgroup accomplishment or process step. All performance elements should be measurable (quantifiable or verifiable). You'll find an example of a role-results matrix in the following chart.

Example of a Role-Results Matrix for the Public Relations Department

Workgroup Members	Workgroup Results	
	Develop Brochures	Respond to Requests for Additional Information
Annie	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Develop brochure samples▶ Write text for brochures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Respond to phone calls that request additional information▶ Complete phone log for additional information requests▶ Mail out standard packages that corresponds to the request
Bob		<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Develop new materials in response to requests▶ Conduct follow-up research needed to complete requests for additional information
Cathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Develop brochure graphics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Develop graphics for new informational materials
Dave	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Design brochure layout▶ Review brochures▶ Send to printer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Approve requests for new material development

In this example, the performance elements for the workgroup are:

- Develop brochure and
- Respond to requests for additional information

The performance elements for each workgroup member is located to the right of the member's name. You can probably see how the workgroup results provide a starting point for planning individual performance. In *Unit 2c, Writing a Performance Plan*, you'll learn more about these elements of performance in the next unit.

Keep in mind that there may be aspects of performance at either the workgroup level or the individual level that:

- Cannot be measured
- Would cost too much or require scarce resources to measure
- In such cases, these should not be used to develop standards

Step 4.
Communicate
Workgroup's
Relationship to The
Strategic Plan

If you are the supervisor, be sure to communicate regularly to the staff the workgroup's relationship to the strategic plan. This will help focus your team on any redirection your workgroup's efforts must take during the year.

Check
Point 2b-2



Complete the Roles and Results Matrix on the following page. At the top of each column, put a product or service produced by your workgroup. List staff members in your unit and think about how they contribute to those results.

You can use this worksheet to develop the Roles & Results Matrix for your workgroup.

Roles & Results Matrix

EPA Goal: _____
Workgroup: _____

Workgroup Members	Workgroup Results	

Answer Sheet for Check Point 2b-1: Linking to Your Workgroup Goals

In this Check Point you were asked to link EPA's organizational goal(s) to your own workgroup's objectives.

It often helps to focus your efforts by asking yourself some questions. Check yourself to see if you answered all of the following questions when developing your workgroup objectives.

Step 1. Review EPA Goals, Mission, & Strategic Plan

Did you refer to the previous unit in this module, *Unit 2a, Organizational Goals* or the EPA Strategic Plan?

Step 2. Determine Measures at Workgroup Level**Step 2a. Cascading mission/goals to the workgroup.**

Did you ask yourself:

- ▶ What is EPA's mission?
- ▶ What are EPA's organizational goals?
- ▶ Which function(s) or objective(s) is the workgroup responsible for?
- ▶ Which goal(s) can the workgroup affect?

Answers for Check Point 2b-2: Determining Your Workgroup’s Results



In this Check Point you were asked to determine the results (products or services) of your workgroup.

Check yourself to see if you answered all of the following questions when determining the results of your workgroup.

Step 2b. Determine workgroup results.

- Did you ask yourself:
- ▶ Who are the workgroup customers?
 - ▶ What products or services does the workgroup provide our customers?

Roles & Results Matrix

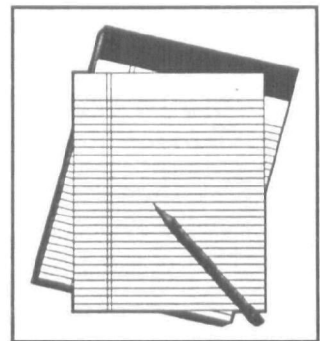
EPA Goal: _____
Workgroup: _____

Workgroup Members	Workgroup Results	
	Product or Service	Product or Service
[place members of the workgroup in this column]	[place a product or service here in this column]	[place a product or service here in this column]

Unit



Writing a Performance Plan



Unit Overview

In this unit, you will see the relationship between the information entered on the Roles and Results Matrix and the performance 'elements' used in your annual Performance Plan.

You'll learn more about performance elements. You'll also learn about the performance standards associated with each element. Performance standards make it possible to measure the result of the performance. You'll also have the opportunity to write elements and performance standards for a sample EPA employee and then for your own Performance Plan.

What is a Performance Plan?

A Performance Plan is a document that specifies the level of performance for the upcoming performance period that is required for job retention. The plan is created in the beginning of each performance period (i.e., January) of every year. The Performance Plan serves as a 'living document'— it is not etched in stone and can change according to organizational needs. The Performance Plan also provides the foundation for other aspects of PERFORMS, including employee:

- ▶ Monitoring
- ▶ Development
- ▶ Appraisal

You'll find an example of a Performance Plan on the following page. You can download a copy from the PERFORMS Web site at: <http://www.intranet.epa.gov/agcyintr/ohros> or obtain a copy from your Human Resources representative.

Performance Plan		
Name:	Office:	Year:
<hr/>		
Element:		
Type of Element: Critical Additional		
Standards and Measurement Sources:		
Assumption (if applicable):		
Element Rating: Successful Unacceptable		
<hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/>		
Element:		
Type of Element: Critical Additional		
Standards and Measurement Sources:		
Assumption (if applicable):		
Element Rating: Successful Unacceptable		
<hr/>		
Employee's Signature/Date (Discussion and/or approval of the performance agreement)		
Supervisor(s)'s Signature/Date		

Communicating Performance Plans



If you are a supervisor, it is your responsibility to communicate to employees performance expectations as well as the process for completing a Performance Plan, usually within the first month of the appraisal period.

1. The employee and the designated rater collaborate to draft plan.
2. The individual employee and designated rater agree on the plan. If they cannot agree, the supervisor of record establishes the plan.
3. To indicate approval, the designated rater initials the plan and the supervisor of record signs and dates the plan. If a higher level of review has been established, the reviewing official also signs and dates the plan indicating concurrence with the plan.
4. The employee signs and dates the plan to indicate receipt. If the employee refuses to sign, the supervisor of record dates the plan and annotates the disagreement and date in the employee signature block.
5. The supervisor of record keeps the original plan and the employee receives a copy.

Setting High Performance Expectations. Supervisors have the responsibility to communicate performance expectations to staff. Although the Performance Plan is designed specifically to determine if employee performance is rated successful or unacceptable (adequate or inadequate), it is essential to the EPA mission and employee satisfaction for the supervisor to communicate higher-than-successful performance expectations.

Employees should be encouraged to seek training to improve their skills, to find better ways of doing their jobs, to exceed customer expectations, and/or to produce more than what is expected.

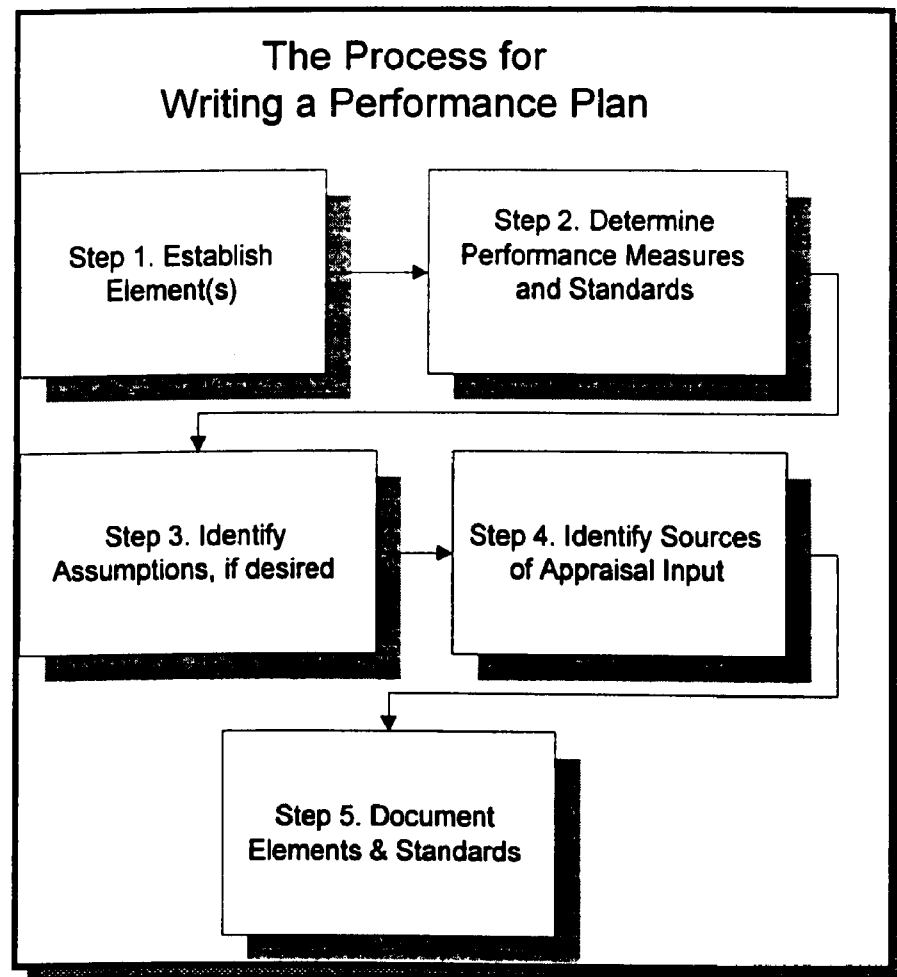
If you are a supervisor, you must take every opportunity to:

- ▶ Communicate the organization's missions and goals and how the employee fits into them,
 - ▶ Articulate and model what excellence looks like,
 - ▶ Assure that employees have the knowledge and skills necessary to achieve, and
 - ▶ Encourage the effort necessary to excel.
-

Who Writes the Performance Plan?

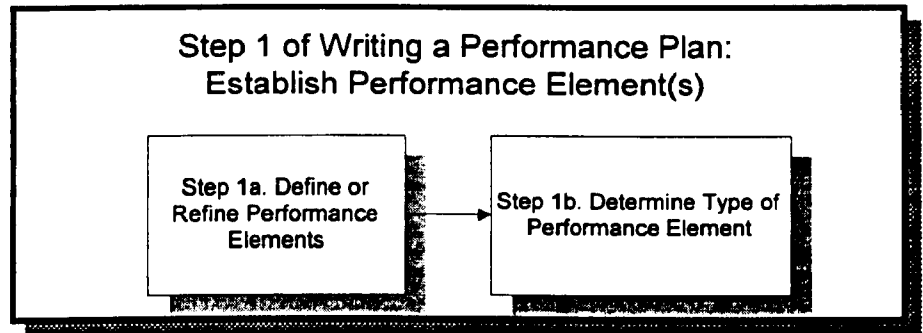
Writing a Performance Plan is a collaborative effort between the supervisor and the employee. If your job tasks haven't changed much from the previous performance period, you may be able to simply refine your existing Performance Plan.

Here's the process.



Step 1. Establish Element(s)

The first step in writing a Performance Plan is to establish the performance elements. Performance elements are job assignments or responsibilities performed at EPA.

**Step 1. Establish the performance elements.**

To establish performance elements for your Performance Plan:

- a. Define or refine the performance elements.
- b. Determine the type of each performance element.

Step 1a. Define or Refine the Performance Elements

If you created the Roles and Results Matrix in the previous unit, you have a start on defining your performance elements.

There are a few useful documents available to help you get started, including:

- ▶ Organizational planning documents, and
- ▶ Employee position description.

Focus on Accomplishments When You Write or Refine your Elements. As you write or refine your elements, keep in mind that it is best to write performance elements as the results, or the accomplishments of your work, rather than activities or behaviors.

Writing or Refining Performance Elements

- ***Accomplishments*** — results
- ***Activities*** — part of a process intended to produce a desired result
- ***Behaviors*** — actions/comportment/demeanor that produce desired results

The following are examples of performance elements.

Examples of Performance Elements

<i>A resolved complaint</i>	Accomplishment
<i>Facilitates client meetings</i>	Activity
<i>Answers phones with courtesy</i>	Behavior

**Step 1b.
Determine the
Type of
Performance
Elements**

There are two types of performance elements:

- Critical
- Additional

Critical Elements. Critical elements are the performance elements that must be included in your Performance Plan. They are the key components of your work and affect your summary level, or rating, for that period. Your Performance Plan must have at least one and no more than five critical elements.

While critical elements cannot be based on the performance of your team, your critical element can be based on your specific personal contribution to that team. Supervisors can have critical elements that are based on the work of organizations they supervise.

Additional Elements. Another type of element is the additional element. It is optional to include additional elements in your Performance Plan and they do not affect your summary level, or rating, in the performance period.

Although additional elements do not affect your rating, they can be very useful to you. For example, they can:

- Clarify a developmental responsibility and encourage feedback about it
 - Test a proposed critical element, standards, or measures to determine if they are well designed without affecting your rating
 - Measure team performance
-

**Check
Point 2c-1**

Complete the following worksheet to check your understanding of how to establish elements.

Write the elements for the position of a computer analyst. Refer to the following position description as often as you need to.

Computer Analyst — required responsibilities include setting up staff within the workgroup with computer systems, performing maintenance operations to keep the workgroup computers functioning at maximum capacity, and resolving computer problems for employees in the office.

The computer analyst's workgroup, the Office of Computer Support (OCS), supplies budget data to the contracts' office.

You'll find a worksheet on the following page that shows a draft of elements for a computer analyst at EPA. Use the worksheet to:

Identify whether the elements are critical or additional to a computer analyst. Write **Critical** or **Additional** in the Type of Element column.

Check Point 2c-1: Establishing Elements

**Position Description:**

Computer Analyst — required responsibilities include setting up staff within the workgroup with computer systems, performing maintenance operations to keep the workgroup computers functioning at maximum capacity, and resolving computer problems for employees in the office.

Element	Type of Element (Critical or Additional)
Provide functional computer systems to employees in the office	
Maintain computer systems	
Resolve computer problems	
Train coworkers to maintain computer systems	
Assist team members	
Be polite to other employees	
Complete training manuals	

Step 2. Determine Measures and Standards



All performance elements must be measurable. One or more specific measures are needed for each performance element. For each measure, a standard is set. If the measure is the performance yardstick, then the standard is the point on the measurement yardstick that needs to be achieved. Retention standards identify the specific requirements that must be met in order to attain a successful rating, and ultimately, to be retained in your current position.

General Performance Measures

General measures that can apply to all employees include:

- ▶ Quality
- ▶ Quantity
- ▶ Timeliness
- ▶ Cost effectiveness
- ▶ Manner of performance

Other Performance Measures

In addition to the general performance measures used by all employees, supervisors have some other performance measures to choose from when writing their Performance Plan. Other performance measures for supervisors include:

- ▶ Strategic effectiveness
- ▶ Stakeholder satisfaction
- ▶ Flexibility and innovation
- ▶ Productivity
- ▶ Budget approval
- ▶ Financial management

Retention Standards

Once you've determined your measures, you're ready to determine the retention standards for each measure.

Retention standards should:

- ▶ Be reasonably attainable
- ▶ Not be absolute (allow room for error)
- ▶ Inform you about the level of performance required to retain your position

Here are some examples of retention standards.

General Measure	Specific Measure	Standard
Timeliness	Response Time	Routinely provides answers within 3 days
Quality	Error Rate	Fewer than 2% incorrect answers
Quantity	Number of Inspections	A minimum of 2 inspections per month

You may be able to think of other standards that could correspond with these measures. For example, another quality measure could be to meet or exceed customer expectations.

**Standards for
Resource
Managers**

Managers and employees who have responsibilities for managing resources, financial and human, must have performance standards for those responsibilities.

Examples of positions with resource management responsibilities include:

- ▶ All supervisors
- ▶ Budget officers
- ▶ Contract managers
- ▶ Work assignment managers
- ▶ Delivery order project officers
- ▶ Funds control officers
- ▶ Certifying officers
- ▶ Commitment clerks
- ▶ Grants project officers
- ▶ Property managers
- ▶ Those who make or approve the use of payments

These resource management performance standards may be set up under a separate critical element or, where managing resources are incidental to the assignment, one or more standards may be included under existing critical element(s).

An example of a standard for resource managers is shown below.

Critical Element: Coordinates and implements the XYZ Program

General Measure: Financial management

Specific Measure: Budget tolerances

On the next page, you'll find a checklist you can use when you're developing your own standards.

Standards Checklist

Avoid Absolute Standards

An 'absolute' standard, one that allows for no errors, is acceptable only in certain circumstances. Where a single failure to meet the retention standard would result in loss of life, injury, breach of national security or great monetary loss, an agency can legitimately defend its decision to require perfection from its employees. In other circumstances, the courts will usually find that the agency abused its discretion by establishing retention standards that allow for no margin of error.

When Writing Standards

Ask yourself the following questions when writing standards. This can help you avoid writing absolute standards.

- ☐ How many times may the employee fail this requirement and still be acceptable?
- ☐ Does the standard use words such as 'all,' 'never,' and 'each'? These words do not automatically create an absolute standard, but they often alert you to problems.
- ☐ If the standard allows for no errors, would it be valid according to the criteria listed above (risk of death, etc.)?

Check Your Standards

Ask yourself the following questions to make sure your standards are effective and meet regulatory requirements. It can help you clarify your standards.

- ☐ Are the standards attainable? Are expectations reasonable?
- ☐ Are the standards challenging? Does the employee need to exert a reasonable amount of effort to reach a fully successful performance level?
- ☐ Are the standards fair? Are they comparable to what is expected of employees in similar positions? Do they allow for some margin of error?
- ☐ Are the standards applicable? Can the appraiser(s) use the standards to appraise performance? Can the appraiser(s) collect measurement data efficiently?
- ☐ Can the elements and standards be communicated and understood? Can employees be expected to understand what is required?
- ☐ Are the standards flexible? Can they be readily adapted to changes in resources or objectives?

Step 3. Identify Assumptions

Sometimes situations arise in which you have little or no ability to control while you're completing your assignment. In PERFORMS, these types of situations documented as 'assumptions' in the Performance Plan.

'Assumptions' are known factors over which an employee has little, if any, control, but that might exert a significant impact on your performance or ability to achieve a successful rating on a critical element. Supervisors will consider the factors that might legitimately and significantly influence your ability to perform when assessing your performance regardless of whether or not they are documented in the Performance Plan as 'assumptions.' If you are more comfortable with assumptions clearly documented in the Performance Plan, then go ahead and include them when you're writing or refining it.

Element: Coordinates and implements the XYZ Program (Accomplishment)

Standard: Within budget constraints

Assumption: Materials, machinery, and adequate staff is available

Step 4. Identify Sources of Appraisal Input

Now you're ready to specify how you'll know if the standard has been met. Ultimately, it is the supervisor's responsibility to use any appropriate means of obtaining performance data as a means of accurately assessing performance.

There are a variety of ways that you can track performance, including:

- ▶ Manual or automated tracking systems
- ▶ Direct observation of:
 - Supervisor
 - Designated rater
 - Team leader
 - Client/Customer feedback
 - Team members
- ▶ Surveys
- ▶ Audits
- ▶ Written products

Here's some examples of an element and standard that includes the sources of appraisal input.

Element: Coordinates and implements the XYZ Program (Accomplishment)

Standard: within budget constraints

Sources of Appraisal Input:

- ▶ Data from budget tracking system

Element: Responds to congressional inquiries

Standard: Within three business days

Sources of Appraisal Input:

- Manual tracking system for inquiries

Element: Conducts inspections for Clean Air Act permits

Standard: Any violations are properly documented

Sources of Appraisal Input:

- Direct observation of lead attorney

Step 5. Document the Elements & Standards

The final step in completing the Performance Plan is to document the elements and standards on the Performance Plan form.

Reviewing Performance Plans

If you are a supervisor of record you have the authority to review and approve Performance Plans. Some offices, though, require additional level(s) of review because they may want to:

- Verify that a group of Performance Plans works toward meeting the organizational objective
- Monitor the level of supervisory expectations across the organization

The approving and reviewing official(s) will sign the plan in the Supervisor(s) Signature/Date block along with the initials of the designated rater, if different.

Employee's Signature/Date

Supervisor(s)'s Signature/Date

**Check
Point 2c-2**

Now you'll get a chance to practice completing a Performance Plan for a computer analyst. Complete the worksheet and then the Performance Plan form on the following pages.

Feel free to refer to the rest of the unit during this Check Point, particularly the Standards Checklist.

1. Write the specific measure, or standard, for each element in the Specific Measure/Standard column.
2. Write sources of appraisal input, or the methods for tracking performance, for each standard in the Sources of Appraisal Input column of the worksheet.
3. Write the assumptions, or the factors over which an employee has little, if any, control in the Assumptions column of the worksheet.
4. Use the blank Performance Plan form to document the elements, standards, sources of appraisal input, and the assumptions.

Performance Plan Worksheet for a Computer Analyst

Element	General Measure	Specific Measure/Standard	Source of Input	Assumptions
1. Provide functional computer systems to employees in the office	Timeliness			
2. Maintain computer systems	Timeliness Manner of Performance			

HQ EPA Performance Plan		
Name:	Office:	Year:
<hr/>		
Element:		
Type of Element: Critical <input type="checkbox"/> Additional <input type="checkbox"/>		
Standards and Measurement Sources:		
Assumption (if applicable):		
Element Rating: Successful <input type="checkbox"/> Unacceptable <input type="checkbox"/>		
<hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/>		
Element:		
Type of Element: Critical <input type="checkbox"/> Additional <input type="checkbox"/>		
Standards and Measurement Sources:		
Assumption (if applicable):		
Element Rating: Successful <input type="checkbox"/> Unacceptable <input type="checkbox"/>		
<hr/>		
Employee's Signature/Date (Discussion and/or approval of the performance agreement)		
<hr/>		
Supervisor(s)'s Signature/Date		
<hr/>		

**Check
Point 2c-3**

For the final Check Point for this unit, you'll practice completing your own Performance Plan. Complete the worksheet and then the Performance Plan form on the following pages.

Feel free to refer to the rest of the unit during this Check Point, particularly the Standards Checklist.

1. Write your specific performance measures (standard) for each element in the Specific Measure/Standard column.
 2. Write your sources of appraisal input (the methods for tracking performance) for each standard in the Sources of Appraisal Input column of the worksheet.
 3. Write the assumptions (the factors over which an employee has little, if any, control) in the Assumptions column of the worksheet.
 4. Use the blank Performance Plan form to document your elements, standards, sources of appraisal input, and assumptions.
-

**Performance Plan Worksheet
for Your Position at EPA**

Element	General Measure	Specific Measure/Standard	Source of Input	Assumptions

HQ EPA Performance Plan

Name:

Office:

Year:

Element:

Type of Element: Critical ☒ Additional ☐

Standards and Measurement Sources:

Assumption (if applicable):

Element Rating: **Successful** ☐ **Unacceptable** ☐

Element:

Type of Element: Critical ☒ Additional ☐

Standards and Measurement Sources:

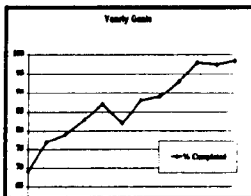
Assumption (if applicable):

Element Rating: **Successful** ☐ **Unacceptable** ☐

Employee's Signature/Date (Discussion and/or approval of the performance agreement)

Supervisor(s)'s Signature/Date

Maintaining Performance Plans



If you are the supervisor, it is your responsibility to keep the Performance Plans current and accurate. Although they can be improved or updated throughout the performance period, substantial change to a critical element must be dated so the appraisal can be based on the minimum period of performance.

The supervisor maintains the Performance Plan for the workgroup members for the performance period.

Answer Sheet for Check Point 2c-1: Establishing Elements

At this Check Point, your task was to determine whether each element was an accomplishment, activity, or behavior and then classify the type of element as either critical or additional. Your worksheet probably looked like this.

Element	Type of Element
Provide computer systems to employees in the office	Critical
Maintain computer systems	Critical
Resolve computer problems	Critical
Train employees	Additional
Assist team members	Additional
Be polite to other employees	Additional
Complete training manuals	Critical

If your worksheet differed from this one, review this unit.

Answer Sheet for Check Point 2c-2: Complete a Performance Plan for a Computer Analyst



This is how the Performance Plan Worksheet for a Computer Analyst and the actual Performance Plan for an EPA computer analyst might look. Yours will differ a bit but if you asked yourself all of the questions on the Standards Checklist, you've probably done fine. Also, if you have additional questions about completing this Check Point, ask your supervisor.

Element	General Measure	Specific Measure/Standard	Source of Input	Assumptions
1. Provide functional computer systems to employees in the office	Timeliness	Usually within two weeks of receiving the request	As shown in the request log	The equipment is in inventory and is not on back order with the computer company.
2. Maintain computer systems	Timeliness	Conduct maintenance on a monthly basis	Maintenance SOPs	All replacement parts are in inventory and adequate human resources are available to handle the number of requests received.
		Process routine requests for computer maintenance to completion, including conducting the maintenance, within two working days.	As shown in the request log	
		Process high-priority requests for computer maintenance to completion, including conducting the maintenance, usually within one working day	As shown in the request log	
	Manner of Performance	Prioritize requests by order of importance	Maintenance SOPs	

HQ EPA Performance Plan

Name: Computer Analyst **Office:** OARM/OHROS/SPPS **Year:** January 1 - December 31, 1999

Element: Provide functional computer systems to employees in the office

Type of Element: Critical ☒ Additional ☐

Standards and Measurement Sources:

- Usually within two weeks of receiving the request as shown in the request log
As verified by the supervisor

Assumption (if applicable): The equipment is in inventory and is not on backorder with the computer company.

Element Rating: Successful ☐ Unacceptable ☐

Element: Maintain computer systems

Type of Element: Critical ☒ Additional ☐

Standards and Measurement Sources:

- Conduct computer maintenance checks on a monthly basis as outlined in the Maintenance SOPs
- Prioritize requests by order of importance as outlined in the Maintenance SOPs
- Process routine requests for computer maintenance to completion, including conducting the maintenance, within two working days as shown in the request log and Maintenance SOPs
- Process high-priority requests for computer maintenance to completion, including conducting the maintenance, usually within one working day as shown in the request log and Maintenance SOPs
Supervisor spot checks maintenance logs and log of customer complaints.

Assumption (if applicable): All replacement parts are in inventory and adequate human resources are available to handle the number of requests received.

Element Rating: Successful ☐ Unacceptable ☐

Employee's Signature/Date (Discussion and/or approval of the performance agreement)

Supervisor(s)'s Signature/Date

Answer Sheet for Check Point 2c-3: Write Your Own Performance Plan

If you had difficulty completing your own Performance Plan, review the following questions for each section.

Preparation

- ▶ Did you create a Roles & Results Matrix for your workgroup?
- ▶ Did you determine how the workgroup achieves its results?
- ▶ Did you identify the key steps in the work process?
- ▶ Did you obtain your position description or organizational planning documents to use as a starting point?

Categorizing the Elements

- ▶ Did you categorize the performance elements as Accomplishments, Activities, or Behaviors? Keep in mind that the categories are:

Writing or Refining Performance Elements

- *Accomplishments* — results
- *Activities* — part of a process intended to produce a desired result
- *Behaviors* — actions/comportment/demeanor that produce desired results

Determining the Type of Performance Elements

- ▶ Did you identify critical elements as those that:
 - Are based on the result of your individual performance during the performance period?
 - Affect your summary level, or rating, for that period?
- ▶ Did you identify at least one and no more than five critical elements?
- ▶ Did the critical elements include any of your contributions to a team effort?

Did you identify additional elements (optional) as those that:

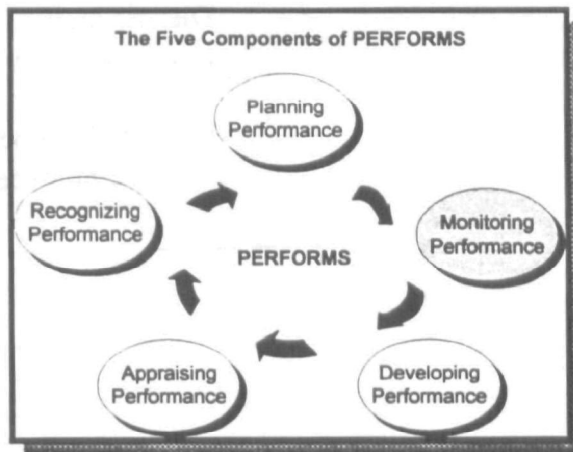
- Clarify a developmental responsibility and encourage feedback?
- Test a proposed critical element, standard, or measure to determine if they are well designed without affecting your rating?
- Measures team performance?

Then if you're still uncertain about a few things, consult your supervisor.

Module

3

Monitoring Performance



Module Overview

Another essential component of PERFORMS is Monitoring Performance. In this module, you'll learn how your performance is measured and the procedures for conducting/participating in a formal employee feedback discussion.

**Module
Objectives**

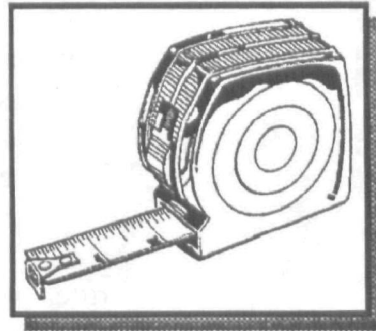
After reviewing this module, you should be able to:

- Understand how your performance will be measured.
 - Discuss methods of developing informal assessment and feedback with your supervisor.
 - Identify the procedures for conducting/participating in a formal employee feedback discussion (progress review).
-

Unit



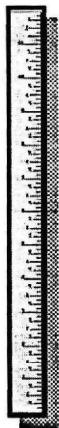
Measuring Performance



Unit Overview

An important element of monitoring performance is measuring performance. In this unit, you will learn how your performance is measured by sources of appraisal input.

Measure Performance



Your performance can be measured through a variety of sources of appraisal input. A combination of two or more appraisal inputs are typically used in trying to depict an accurate assessment of your performance. The sources of appraisal input that might be used are:

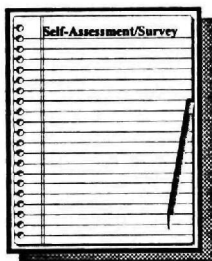
- Manual or automated tracking systems
- Client/Customer feedback
- Audits
- Team members
- Direct observation of performance by a:
 1. Supervisor
 2. Designated Rater
 3. Team Leader
- Surveys
- Written products
- Management information systems developed for mission purposes sometimes capture performance data as a secondary product.

Examples of an appraisal input:

An inventory system may contain the name or code of the employee who produced the item for tracking purposes. This information could also be used to track employee productivity or error rate.

A Team Leader may have direct experience with an employee's performance that could then be communicated to the supervisor.

Customers may routinely complete a survey on their satisfaction, which could be linked to the employee who works with that customer.



If there is no source of appraisal input, the standards cannot be measured or used.

Unit

3B

Providing Feedback to the Employee on a Regular Basis



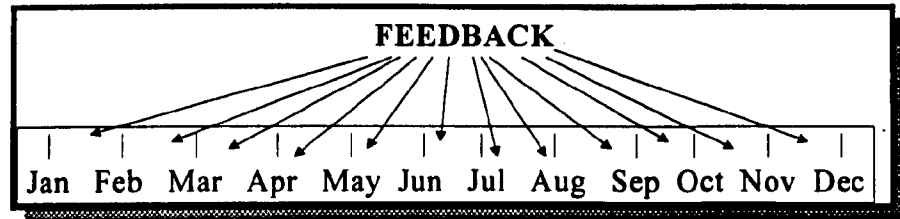
Unit Overview

Another important element of Monitoring Performance is the formal and informal employee feedback discussions. In this unit, you'll learn when employee feedback discussions should take place and the procedures for conducting these discussions.

Providing Feedback to the Employee on a Regular Basis

The best feedback systems provide performance feedback to you throughout the entire year.

PERFORMS is intended to create an open atmosphere for the exchange of information between you and your supervisor throughout the entire year.



Informal Assessment and Feedback

At the beginning of the year you and your supervisor should discuss different methods of feedback and what your individual preferences are for giving and receiving feedback. You may want to document this in a feedback plan.



Feedback Plan	
Type of Feedback desired?	
How often?	
What setting?	
Who should contribute feedback?	

A feedback discussion might include:

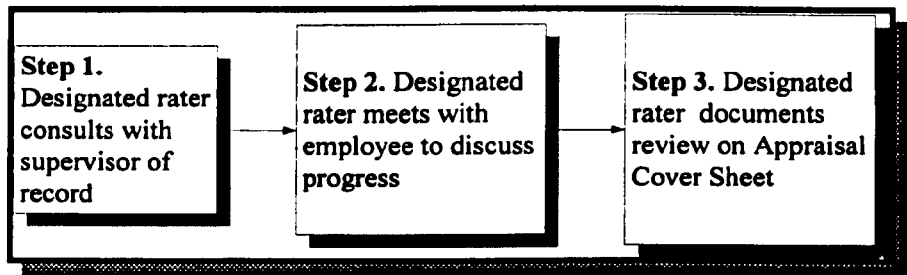
1. What type of feedback is desired and appropriate (when writing the Performance Plan)
2. How often you would like feedback
3. Appropriate setting for feedback
4. How to expand feedback opportunities
5. Who should contribute to it other than the supervisor

Progress Review

Under PERFORMS, you will engage in at least one formal employee feedback discussion (progress review) during the year, preferably mid-year. During this progress review, you will be given an assessment by your supervisor of your strengths and weaknesses. You will also be given the opportunity to evaluate your own performance.

The progress review process can be broken down into three steps.

Progress Review Process



Step 1. Designated rater consults with supervisor of record

The first step in the progress review is for the designated rater to discuss with the supervisor of record:

1. The employee's performance progress.
2. The standards against which the employee's progress will be measured.
3. Any information that could affect the employee's job.

If the designated rater is the supervisor of record this step is unnecessary.

Step 2. Designated rater meets with employee to discuss progress

The second step in the feedback process is for the designated rater to meet with the employee to discuss his/her performance. It is during this step that the performance review actually occurs. This should be an open, two-way, candid, and work-oriented session between you and your supervisor. If concerns are expressed about your performance, you will have an opportunity to make an improvement plan.

Step 3. Designated rater documents review on Appraisal Cover Sheet

The final step in the feedback process occurs when the designated rater documents the performance review on the Appraisal Cover Sheet. In so doing, the designated rater should note the date and initial the form. In addition, the designated rater should have the employee initial the "Formal Progress Review" on the Appraisal Cover Sheet. If the designated rater is not the supervisor of record, then the supervisor may also wish to meet with an employee.

<p align="center">HQ EPA PERFORMS Appraisal Cover Sheet</p>		<p>Employee Name:</p> <p>SSN:</p> <p>Office:</p> <p>Calendar Year:</p>	
<p>Formal Progress Review(s):</p>		<p align="right"><i>(dated & initialed)</i></p>	
<p>To derive summary level:</p> <p>1) <i>If the rating for any critical element is unacceptable, then the summary level is unacceptable.</i></p> <p>2) <i>Otherwise the summary level is successful.</i></p> <p>3) <i>Additional elements do not factor into summary level.</i></p>		<p>Summary Level:</p> <p align="center"><i>Successful Unacceptable</i></p>	
		<p>My supervisor and I have discussed my performance for this period in relation to my performance measures and standards, and my supervisor has informed me of my rating of record.</p> <p>Employee's Signature/Date:</p>	
		<p>Supervisor(s)'s Signatures/Date:</p>	
<p>Supervisor's Comments:</p>			
<p>Employee's Comments:</p>			

**Check
Point**

Here's a chance to check your understanding.

1. Put a checkmark on the line that corresponds to a source of appraisal input:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Client/Customer feedback | <input type="checkbox"/> Speech and mannerisms |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vendor evaluation | <input type="checkbox"/> Audits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sick leave taken | <input type="checkbox"/> Team members' observations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hearsay | <input type="checkbox"/> Number of friends |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Surveys | <input type="checkbox"/> Team leader's observation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Manual or automated tracking systems | <input type="checkbox"/> Written products |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supervisor's observation | <input type="checkbox"/> Peer's observation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Management information systems | <input type="checkbox"/> Style of dress |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Designated rater observation | |

2. When is the appropriate time to provide/receive performance feedback?

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Once per year | <input type="checkbox"/> Twice per year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Only on the first of the year | <input type="checkbox"/> Anytime |

3. What is the proper order of the steps of the performance feedback process? Mark a "1" by the first step, "2" by the second step, and so on until you have completed all the steps in the performance feedback process.

- ☐ Designated rater consults with supervisor of record.
- ☐ Designated rater and employee document review on Appraisal Cover Sheet.
- ☐ Designated rater meets with employee to discuss progress.

**Additional
References &
Resources**

HQ Supplemental Guidance

Answer Sheet for Check Point

1. Put a checkmark on the line that corresponds to a source of appraisal input:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Client/Customer feedback | <input type="checkbox"/> Speech and mannerisms |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vendor evaluation | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sick leave taken | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Team members' observations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hearsay | <input type="checkbox"/> Number of friends |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Surveys | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Team leader's observations |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Manual or automated tracking systems | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Written products |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supervisor's observation | <input type="checkbox"/> Peer's observation |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Management information systems | <input type="checkbox"/> Style of dress |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Designated rater observation | |

2. When is the appropriate time to provide/receive performance feedback?

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Once per year | <input type="checkbox"/> Twice per year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Only on the first of the year | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Anytime |

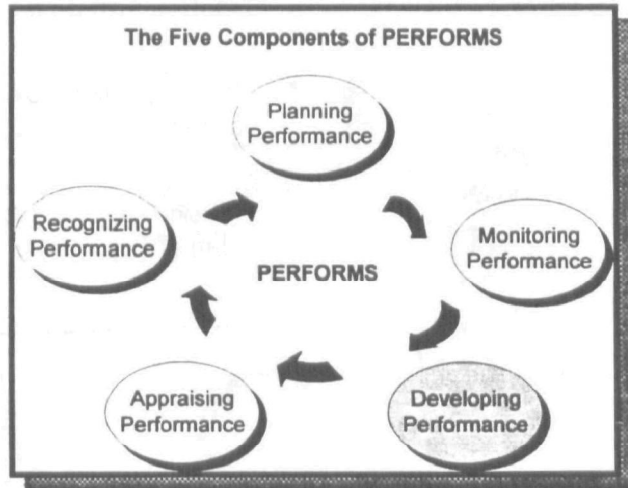
3. What is the proper order of the steps of the performance feedback process? Mark a "1" by the first step, "2" by the second step, and so on until you have completed all the steps in the performance feedback process.

- 1 Designated rater consults with supervisor of record.
- 3 Designated rater and employee document review on Appraisal Cover Sheet.
- 2 Designated rater meets with employee to discuss progress.

Module

4

Developing Performance



Module Overview

The fourth component in PERFORMS is Developing Performance. In this module, you'll learn more about the possible tools, techniques, and performance assistance procedures that you and your supervisor might use to help develop and enhance your work performance.

**Module
Objectives**

After reviewing this module, you should be able to:

- Define coaching and feedback.
 - Explain the purpose of an Individual Development Plan (IDP).
 - Define 360 degree feedback.
 - Identify the procedures for implementing performance assistance.
 - Explain the purpose of a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP).
-

Unit



Feedback and Coaching



Unit Overview

Two possible performance development techniques your supervisor may use are feedback and coaching. In this unit, you'll examine the differences between these techniques and how they are used to develop and enhance your work performance.

Giving Feedback



One technique your supervisor may use in helping you enhance your work performance and develop your work skills is feedback. Feedback is the backbone of PERFORMS and is involved in each of its components and processes (see Unit 5 – Appraising Performance). It is the central thread that not only runs throughout the entire PERFORMS process, but also each phase of PERFORMS.

- Feedback is the one-to-one interaction between you and your supervisor with the intention of guiding and developing you.
- Feedback fosters open communication about performance between you and your supervisor.
- Because of its importance to the overall success of PERFORMS, you and your supervisor are encouraged to attend training in feedback to learn:
 1. The objectives of feedback
 2. Approaches
 3. Techniques

Constructive Feedback

Constructive feedback is providing positive and negative information to another in order to improve performance and recognize desired behavior.

Constructive feedback is comprised of a number of important elements that include:

- Presenting observations in a noncritical manner.
- Reinforcing positive behaviors and correcting unsatisfactory behaviors.
- Reinforcing positive behaviors in order to recognize outstanding performance.

These tips should be considered when you provide feedback. You should ask for feedback and be open to receiving it. When contemplating giving feedback to a peer ask the person if they're open to hearing some feedback.

Some additional feedback tips include:

- Deliver feedback to the employee or group performing the relevant task and provide the feedback yourself.
 - Give feedback as soon as possible after the event.
 - Provide specific feedback. For example, feedback should:
 - Be tied to goals
 - Be both quantitative and qualitative
 - Include what the employee did that was right
 - Be linked to the big picture—how what they do affects their peers, project, and organization
 - Only give feedback on the issue or situation that you honestly feel the employee can control. Be careful to keep the feedback conversation from being personal. Focus on the behavior that is a problem.
 - Provide feedback on good behavior as well as behavior needing improvement.
 - Use feedback as a motivator.
-

Activity 4.1 – Feedback Examples

Which of the following stories are examples of constructive feedback?

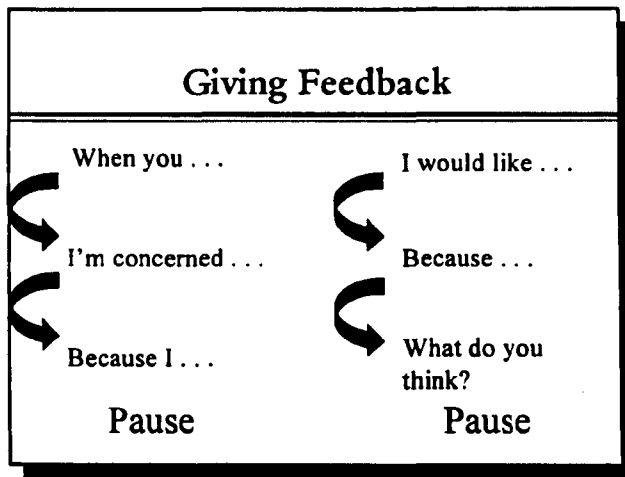
- 1. I really enjoyed the way you handled the staff meeting when you were filling in for Alice this week. You kept on schedule, did a good job of leading discussion, and made it fun for all of us.*
- 2. John Smallwood in the Multimedia Division asked me to tell you that he thought you needed work on giving presentations.*
- 3. You really need to improve your attitude if you are going to continue working here.*
- 4. You did a great job with the report on pollution in the Mississippi River that you finished last week. It was clear, easy to follow, and had great illustrations.*
- 5. We couldn't discuss the first topic on the agenda at the staff meeting because you arrived late and were going to bring the budget. We were looking forward to seeing what you came up with.*
- 6. Have you ever considered taking a course in English grammar?*
- 7. I think you are doing a good job, although others I have talked with do not agree.*
- 8. I was worried about where you were an hour ago. In the future, please let me know when you will be going out to the other building for a meeting. It's important that your time is accounted for and that we know where to find you.*

Answers are at the end of this module

Providing Negative Feedback

Typically, people find it difficult to give negative feedback. The following model should assist you and your supervisor in giving negative feedback.

An important feature of this model is it allows the person receiving feedback to have input and put forth a resolution to the performance problem during the process and at the end of the discussion.



Communication Techniques For Giving Negative Feedback

Step	Explanation	Example
"When you. . ."	State specific facts of behavior (non-judgmental).	When you do not attend staff meetings as you did today and last week. . .
"I'm concerned. . ."	Describe how behavior affects you or the office.	. . .I get concerned. . .
"Because I. . ."	State why the observed behavior affected you in this way.	. . .because I value your contributions. You play an important role in this office and accomplishing its goals.
Pause and listen for response	Give the other person an opportunity to respond.	
"I would like. . ."	Describe change you want the other person to consider.	I would like you to consider planning your schedule so that you can attend meetings or calling in advance if there is an important reason for the meeting to be rescheduled.
"Because. . ."	State why the change is needed.	Because you are a valuable member of our team and we miss your input when you are not there.
"What do you think?"	Listen to response. Discuss options and compromise on a solution, if necessary.	One way to ensure that both our needs are met is to. . . What do you think?

**Receiving
Constructive
Feedback**

What type of feedback do you think is the easiest to receive, positive or negative?

Most supervisors and employees will say positive.

**Responding to
Feedback**

Feedback is a critical component of PERFORMS. Feedback is expected to be a give-and-take, two-way conversation—even from you to your supervisor. We can think of responding to feedback in terms of three steps:

1. Listening to the feedback
2. Identifying problem, or success
3. Forming an action plan

When responding to performance feedback from your supervisor, you should demonstrate and use active listening techniques to be sure you understand what your supervisor is saying.

Keep in mind your supervisor's feedback should identify a specific problem, or success.

Once you have had the chance to receive your supervisor's feedback and give input on your performance, you and your supervisor should work together to develop an action plan to correct any identified performance problems, if necessary.

If the feedback has been positive you should reflect upon how you can continue that performance in the future.

**Tips for Receiving
Feedback through
Active Listening**

Active listening is vital to understanding performance feedback from your supervisor. Active listening is comprised of a number of key behaviors. For you to further develop and enhance your work performance, you will need to employ active listening techniques. These active listening techniques focus on your behavior when you are being given performance feedback from your supervisor. The active listening techniques include: concentrating, not interrupting, seeking the meaning, and asking questions.

Active Listening Tips

<i>Concentrating</i>	on the words of the message.
<i>Not interrupting</i>	before the speaker has finished his/her thoughts.
<i>Seeking the meaning</i>	of the words (connotation and denotation).
<i>Asking questions</i>	(open-ended, probing)

**Identifying Problem
Behaviors**

After receiving your supervisor's feedback it is important that you reflect on what was said and identify what specific behaviors need improvement.

**Forming an Action
Plan**

After reflecting on the behaviors that need improvement, you should work with your supervisor to develop a specific action plan for improvement.

As your performance improves it is important that your supervisor notes your progress and provides positive feedback when it is appropriate.

Coaching

Another technique your supervisor might use to help enhance your work performance and develop your work skills is coaching.

Coaching is the one-to-one interaction between you and your supervisor with the intention of motivating you towards greater work performance. Others may also act as coaches, including your peers, or even subordinates.



The goal of coaching is to help you change your behavior(s), improve skills, or enhance knowledge by:

- Mentoring
- Tutoring
- Counseling

You and your supervisors are encouraged to attend training in coaching to learn:

- The objectives of coaching
 - Approaches
 - Techniques
-

Unit

4B

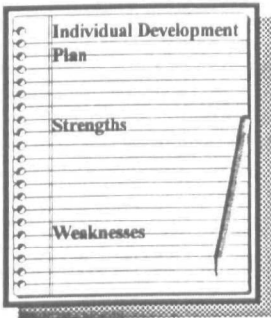
Developing an Individual Development Plan

	Individual Development Plan
	Strengths
	Weaknesses

Unit Overview

Another aspect of the Developing Performance component is the development of your Individual Development Plan (IDP). In this unit, you'll learn how and why it is important to develop an Individual Development Plan.

What is an IDP?



An Individual Development Plan (IDP) identifies developmental needs and career objectives. It is a useful tool for career development that benefits you and the organization.

- You and your designated rater/supervisor of record are encouraged to make the IDP part of the performance management process.
- An IDP is required when either you request one or your supervisor assigns one.
- The Individual Development Plan process may include:
 - Conducting a self-assessment
 - Obtaining assessments from peers, superiors, and others
 - Identifying opportunities and other options for career growth.



For more information on IDPs, see the workbook *Developing Your Strengths*.

This workbook is designed to help you construct your Individual Development Plan.

- You can download a copy of the workbook from the PERFORMS Intranet site at:
<http://www.intranet.epa.gov/agcyintr/ohros> or obtain a copy from your Program Management Officer (PMO).

Formal Procedures for IDPs



An Individual Development Plan (IDP) is required when you request it or your supervisor assigns it.

Your supervisor might assign an IDP if he/she determines that you have a training need. If the supervisor identifies required training, he/she will notify you and, if applicable, annotate your IDP.

After you and your supervisor have identified areas to develop or improve, create an improvement plan or strategy in the IDP, which includes:

- A listing of training courses that will help you meet your goals,
- Special projects you could undertake, or
- Other assignments to improve your skills.

The IDP will form the basis for a developmental discussion after which your supervisor may approve the IDP as proposed or as modified.

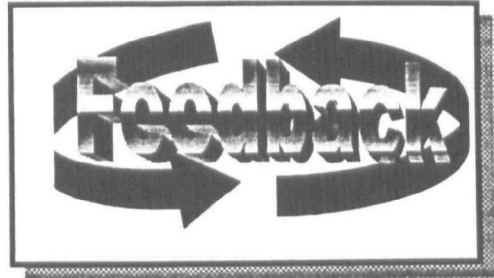
Even if a formal IDP is not done, you are entitled to at least one formal assessment and development discussion.

When working on or developing your IDP, if you and your supervisor have any questions, contact your Human Resources representative.

Unit

4c

360° Feedback Instruments



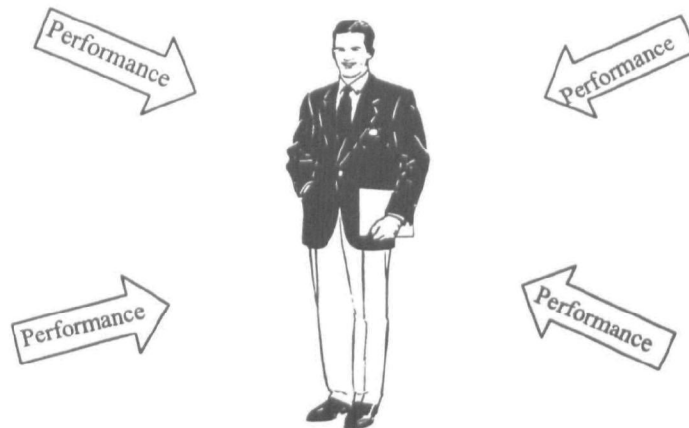
Unit Overview

Another frequently used tool is 360 degree feedback instruments. This tool can be valuable in collecting anonymous performance feedback data for developmental purposes.

In this unit, you'll learn more about 360 degree feedback and how it could be used with PERFORMS.

What are 360 degree feedback instruments?

Another helpful tool in the Developing Performance component is 360 degree feedback instruments. The name of this tool suggests looking at performance from all sides. These instruments are used to assess broad performance variables based on the observations of superiors, peers, and subordinates.



Some of the unique features and benefits of these instruments include:

- Using a feedback mechanism that includes feedback from work associates at all levels.
- Providing useful input in improving your performance. The instruments solicit candid commentary anonymously from a variety of sources and present the findings to you in an aggregated, impersonal, and non-threatening format.

Who will use them?

Headquarters may use 360 degree feedback instruments that affect bargaining unit employees either as suppliers or recipients of feedback **only after negotiating its implementation with the affected local unions.**

**When will 360
degree feedback
be used?**

These instruments may be used at a later date.

360 Degree Feedback Instruments and Multi-Source Input

Although offices may not use 360 degree feedback instruments that have not been negotiated and that affect bargaining unit employees, supervisors may use input from other persons in measuring performance against the performance plan for appraisal purposes. The following table contrasts the concept of the 360 degree feedback instrument against that of multiple sources for rating input.

	Multi-Source Input	360 Degree Feedback
Authority	Permitted by union agreements.	Requires union negotiations.
Use	Appraisal input.	Employee development.
Sources	Any relevant source, noted in the performance plan, such as people, documents, and systems; source known to employee.	Anyone: supervisors, peers, suppliers, customers; usually anonymous.
Content	Factual, specific, and relevant to the performance standard.	Broad, generalized.
How Obtained	Discussion with supervisor; tailored survey as specified in the plan; document review. Routine.	Formal survey, usually with consultant support and computerized results.
Filter	Supervisor, who is responsible for assessing its suitability and quality.	Unfiltered, compiled by third party professional.

Unit

4D

Formal Employee Development Discussion

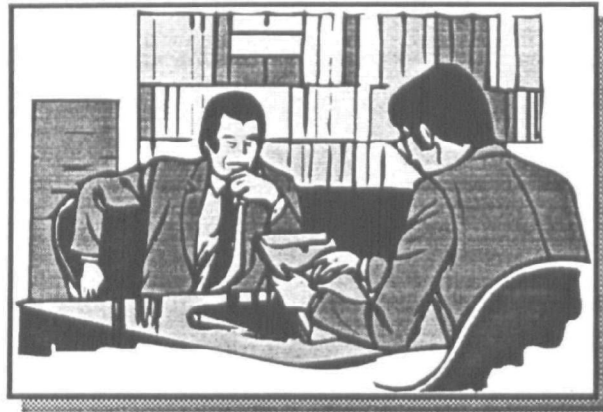


Unit Overview

In determining what your work performance and skill needs are, you and your supervisor, and possibly the designated rater, will have a formal development discussion.

In this unit, you'll learn more about the formal employee development discussion.

Formal Employee Development Discussion



You should have at least one formal employee development discussion with your supervisor per year.

This discussion can coincide with a:

- Performance planning meeting,
- Mid-year or other progress review, or
- Appraisal interview.

The discussion can also be handled separately. Should you need more time, additional formal and informal discussions should be held as you and your supervisor feel necessary.

Unit

4

Performance Assistance



Unit Overview

Once your work performance needs and weaknesses have been determined, your supervisor will work with you on identifying possible resources that may be available to you in the form of performance assistance. In this unit, you'll review and learn more about the various types of performance assistance available to you under PERFORMS.

Performance Assistance



Performance assistance is designed for employees whose performance has slipped significantly, but has not yet reached the unacceptable level. Should you need this assistance, you should understand that these performance assistance services are intended to help you improve your performance to a level that is comfortably in the successful range.

The performance assistance services offered to you will be tailored to your specific needs. These services include:

- Formal training
- On-the-job training
- Counseling
- Assignment of a mentor or
- Other assistance as appropriate

Note: At any time during the assistance period, your supervisor may conclude that the assistance is no longer necessary. If this occurs, your supervisor will notify you of his/her decision in writing. On the other hand, if at any time during the assistance period your performance is determined to be unacceptable in one or more critical elements, a formal opportunity to demonstrate success through a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) will be initiated.

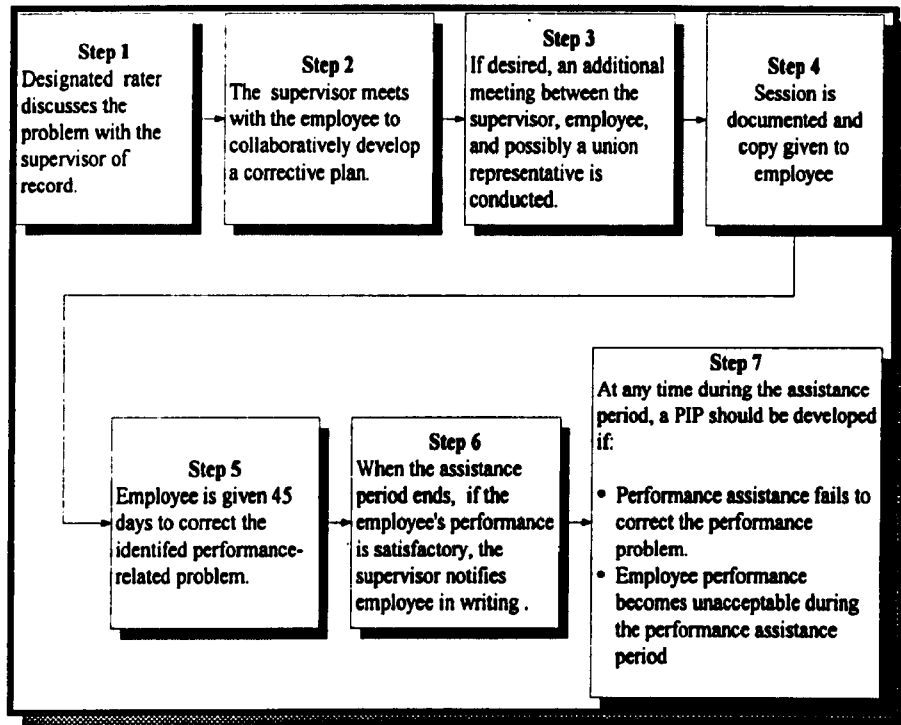
Performance Assistance Process

Any time a performance problem is noted and the level of performance approaches an unacceptable rating, but before an unacceptable rating has been assigned, the designated rater raises the matter to the supervisor of record.

The supervisor of record and the designated rater (if desired) will meet with you to work collaboratively to develop a plan to correct the work performance problem. If you feel that additional consultation is needed and if your supervisor concurs, then your union representative may also participate in part or all of the collaborative process to develop a plan to correct the problem.

The counseling session will be documented in writing and a copy will be given to you. The developed plan will afford you an opportunity of at least 45 days to resolve the identified performance-related problem. During this period, your performance will be considered successful for purposes of any performance/personnel-related actions.

Actions/Steps in the Performance Assistance Process



Unit

4

Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)

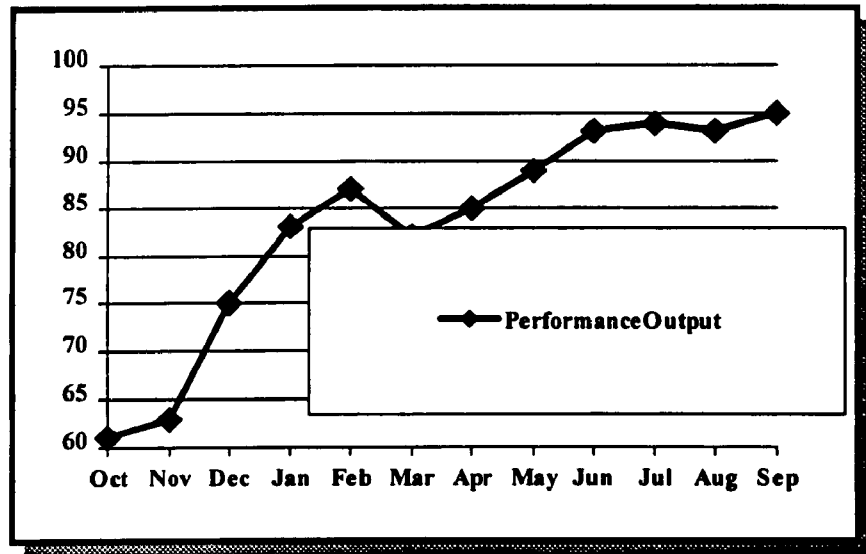


Unit Overview

When work performance becomes unacceptable, your supervisor will develop a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) in consultation with you. In this unit, you'll learn what the goals of the PIP are, how it developed, and how the Performance Improvement process is initiated and terminated.

Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)

The goal of any PIP is to return you to successful performance as soon as possible.



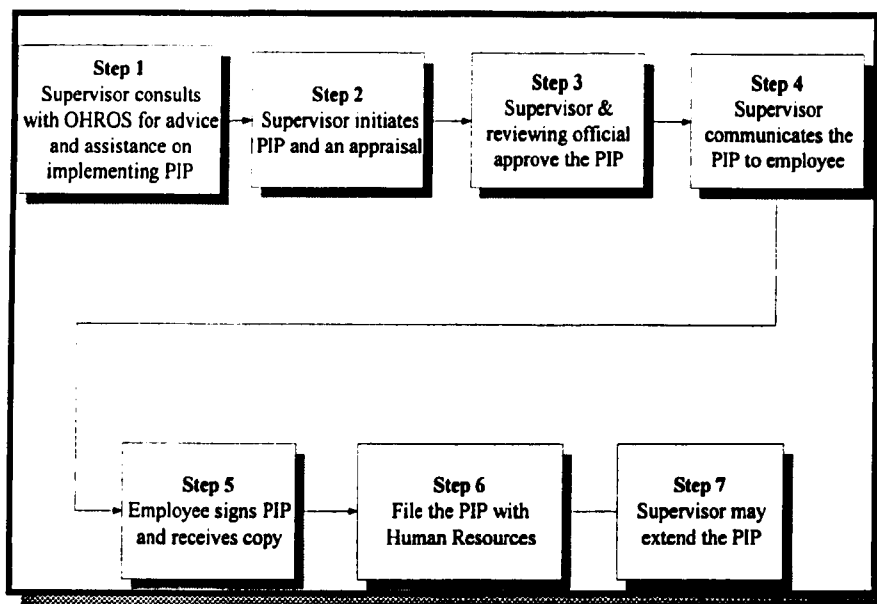
In a memo from your supervisor to you a Performance Improvement Plan identifies:

- Your performance deficiencies (performance below successful)
- Actions that you must take to improve performance
- Provisions for assistance to achieve a successful performance level

Note to supervisor: Contents of PIP can be found in Appendix B of Supplemental Guidance.

PIP Procedure

The Performance Improvement Process (PIP) is comprised of six steps. It is important to remember that your PIP is developed in consultation with you and your union representative, if requested.



Step 1

As soon as your performance on a Critical Element (CE) and overall work performance becomes unsatisfactory, the supervisor of record contacts the Human Resources Office to solicit guidance and assistance in implementing a PIP for you.

Step 2

As soon as your performance becomes unacceptable on a critical element that you have performed for at least 90 days, then your supervisor initiates an appraisal and a written PIP. This written PIP must be in place within 15 working days after you have been formally informed that your performance has been unacceptable.

A PIP may be initiated at any time during the appraisal year whenever your performance slips to the unacceptable level.

Step 3 Your supervisor of record signs and dates the PIP and then obtains the reviewing official's signature.

Step 4 Your supervisor of record will discuss the details of the approved PIP with you to ensure you understand what will be required of you in the future.

Step 5 You will sign the PIP and be given a copy for your records. Your signature on the PIP does not signify that you agree with the PIP, but instead that you have received a copy of the PIP for your records.

If you refuse to sign the PIP, your supervisor of record will note that on the PIP and date your statement.

Step 6 Your supervisor of record will then send of a copy of the PIP to the Human Resource Office along with the original Performance Plan and the rating package. The PIP will then be filed in your Employee Performance File.

Step 7 Your supervisor of record with the concurrence of the reviewing official may extend the duration of your PIP at any time. If an extension of the PIP is granted, the extension memo will be added to your Employee Performance File and will become part of your PIP.

Check Point

Here's a chance to check your understanding.

1. In Step 5 of the Performance Assistance Process, the employee is given at least ____ days to correct an identified performance problem.

- A. 50
- B. 90
- C. 30
- D. 45

2. All of the following are forms of performance assistance except:

- A. On-the-job training
- B. Education assistance
- C. Counseling
- D. Paid vacation time
- E. Assignment of a mentor

3. _____ is the central thread that runs throughout all the components and entire PERFORMS process.

- A. Reinforcement
- B. Feedback
- C. Rewards
- D. Coaching

4. Put a checkmark next to the components that may be a part of your IDP.

- A. ____ Writing a job description
- B. ____ Conducting a self-assessment
- C. ____ Obtaining assessments from peers, superiors, and subordinates
- D. ____ Identifying opportunities and other options for career growth

**Additional
References &
Resources**

*HQ Supplemental Guidance
Developing Your Strengths Workbook*

Answer Sheet for Feedback Exercise

1. *I really enjoyed the way you handled the staff meeting when you were filling in for Alice this week. You kept on schedule, did a good job of leading discussion, and made it fun for all of us.*
Meets all feedback criteria
2. *John Smallwood in the Multimedia Division asked me to tell you that he thought you needed work on giving presentations.*
Second-hand feedback
Not very specific
Hearsay
3. *You really need to improve your attitude if you are going to continue working here.*
Not specific
Not based on observable behavior
Personal attack
4. *You did a great job with the report on pollution in the Mississippi River that you finished last week. It was clear, easy to follow, and had great illustrations.*
Meets all feedback criteria
5. *We couldn't discuss the first topic on the agenda at the staff meeting because you arrived late and were going to bring the budget. We were looking forward to seeing what you came up with.*
Meets all feedback criteria, but could describe how to correct behavior.
6. *Have you ever considered taking a course in English grammar?*
Not specific or direct about the type of behavior that needs correcting
Could be construed as a personal attack
7. *I think you are doing a good job, although others I have talked with do not agree.*
Not specific, too general
Not direct feedback in regard to others
8. *I was worried about where you were an hour ago. In the future, please let me know when you will be going out to the other building for a meeting. It's important that your time is accounted for and that we know where to find you.*
Meets all feedback criteria

Answer Sheet for Check Point

1. In Step 5 of the Performance Assistance Process, the employee is given at least ____ days to correct an identified performance problem.



- A. 50
- B. 90
- C. 30
- D. 45**

2. All of the following are forms of performance assistance except:

- A. On-the-job training
- B. Education assistance
- C. Counseling
- D. Paid vacation time**
- E. Assignment of a mentor

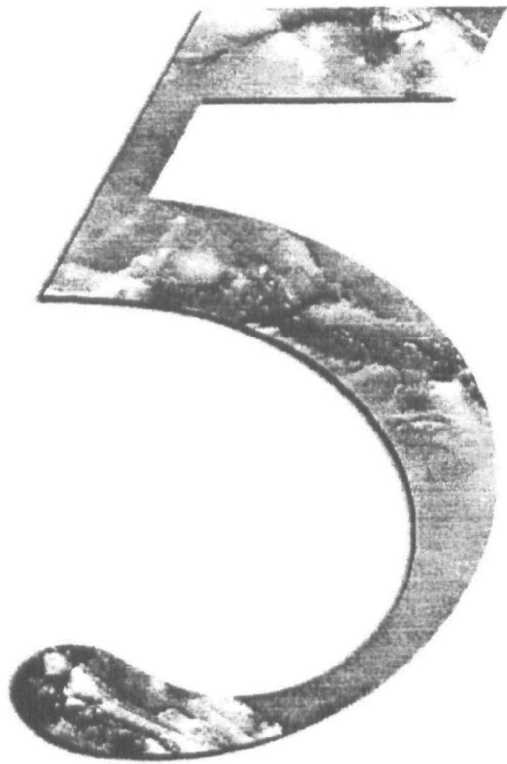
3. _____ is the central thread that runs throughout all the components and entire PERFORMS process.

- A. Reinforcement
- B. Feedback**
- C. Rewards
- D. Coaching

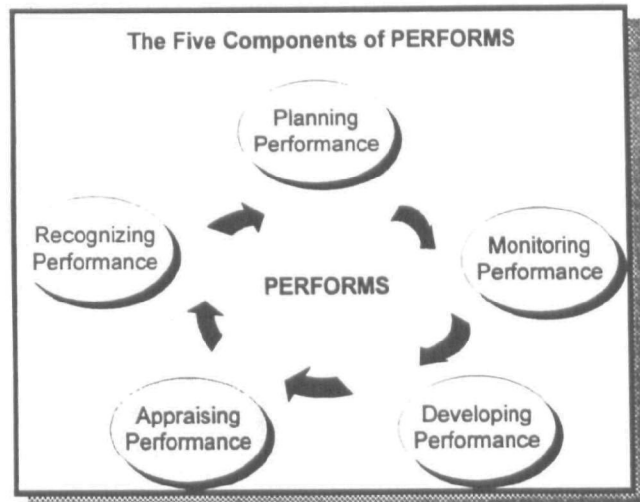
4. Put a checkmark next to the components that may be part of your IDP.

- A. ____ Writing a job description
- B. ☒ Conducting a self-assessment
- C. ☒ Obtaining assessments from peers, superiors, and subordinates
- D. ☒ Identifying opportunities and other options for career growth

Module



Appraising Performance



Module Overview

The fourth essential component in PERFORMS is Appraising Performance. This component typically involves the interaction and exchange of performance feedback between you and your supervisor during the performance appraisal process.

In this module, you'll learn when it is appropriate to conduct a performance appraisal and the steps in the performance appraisal process.

You'll also have exercises to evaluate the performance of an employee and provide that person with performance feedback. Then you'll be ready for your performance appraisal.

**Module
Objectives**

After reviewing this module, you should be able to:

- Identify the end-of-year performance appraisal process.
 - Identify the procedures for conducting performance appraisals.
 - Given a scenario of employee performance, assess the employee's performance using the Performance Appraisal Cover Sheet and a copy of the employee's Performance Plan.
-



When to Conduct Performance Appraisals



Unit Overview

In this unit, you will learn when it is appropriate to conduct a performance appraisal.

When to Conduct Performance Appraisals

Your performance appraisal (rating of record) will be done annually during January within one month of the close of the appraisal period. Before your performance appraisal can take place, the following conditions must be met:

A minimum period of performance for you must be established. This minimum period of performance is equal to the least amount of time you must be under the standards before a designated rater can provide a rating of record.

- Typically the minimum period of performance is a completed 90-day appraisal period. This 90-day period begins when you sign or choose not to sign the Performance Plan.
 - If the minimum 90-day period can not be met before the end of the performance cycle, the appraisal period must be extended until the 90 days are met.
-

Exceptions

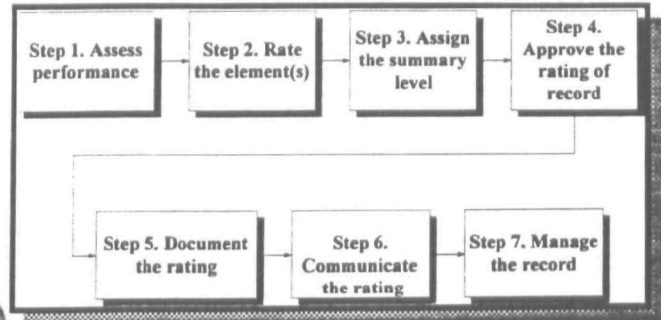
Under special circumstances, appraisals may deviate from the normal appraisal schedule:

- If you have not completed the minimum period of performance by the end of the performance cycle, or if a critical element has been added or substantially modified in the preceding 90 days, the appraisal must wait until you have completed the minimum rating of performance.
 - If at any time during the year, you have been under an approved plan for at least 90 days and are observed to have performed below the successful level on a critical element, your supervisor of record should initiate the appraisal (not a rating of record) and a PIP.
 - If your designated rater changes, the previous rater prepares an interim appraisal, which is weighed in proportion to the amount of time you were supervised by the departing rater.
 - If you conclude a detail of 90 days or more to another position or a temporary promotion. You must have an appraisal of that performance by a designated rater. This will be weighed in proportion to the time spent on that detail.
-

Unit



The Performance Appraisal Process



Unit Overview

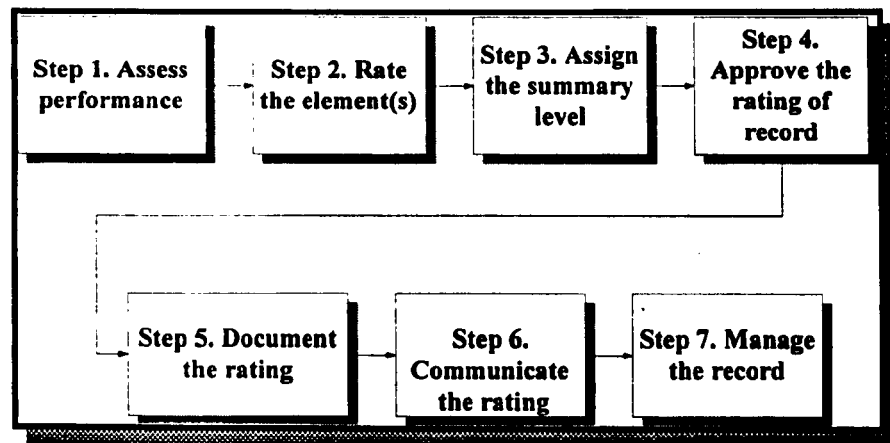
The performance appraisal process is made up of seven steps. Successful completion of each of these steps is needed for the performance appraisal process to work properly. In this unit, you'll learn about these seven steps and the critical components that comprise them.

The Performance Appraisal Process

The seven-step performance appraisal process occurs after the end of the performance year.

A mid-year review is also typically conducted to allow time for the employee to adjust performance as needed.

Performance feedback should not be limited to your formal performance appraisal review or mid-year progress review, but should be given at any time if your supervisor feels it is necessary or if you feel it is needed.



How to Conduct Performance Appraisals

Before you can have a performance appraisal, you and your supervisor must understand the steps in assessing the performance appraisal process. As long as there is open and consistent communication between you and your supervisor, the performance appraisal should be a smooth discussion.

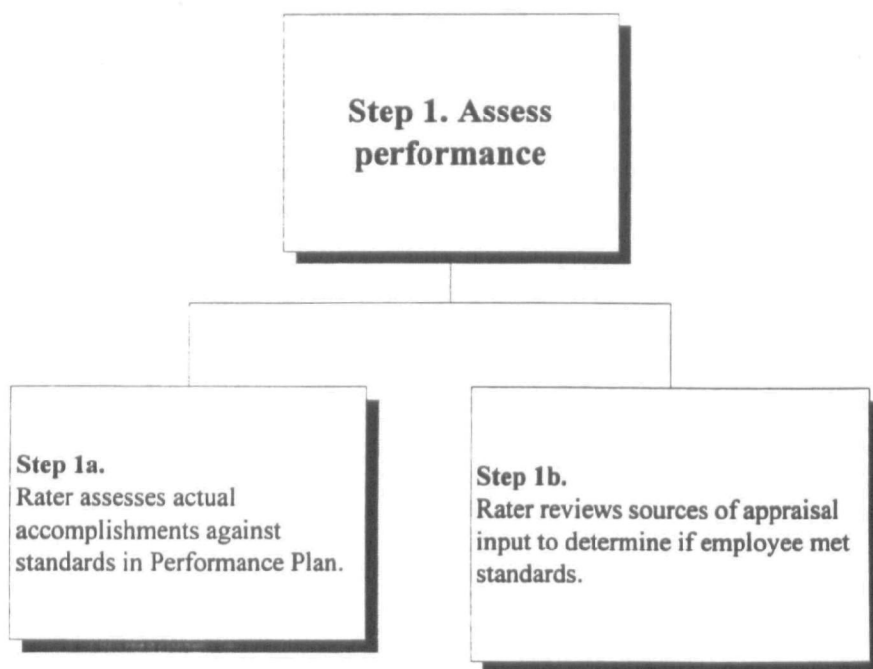
Step 1: Rater reviews the appraisal input



The first step in the performance appraisal process is when the designated rater assesses your actual performance. The designated rater will assess your actual performance accomplishments against the standards contained in your approved Performance Plan.

The designated rater should review the standard(s) established for each performance element (both critical and additional) and the agreed-upon sources of appraisal input to determine whether or not you have met the standard(s).

Further, the designated rater is required to invite you to provide a written and/or oral assessment to be considered before the rating is finalized. If you are represented by NTEU then the designated rater will also give you the opportunity to meet to exchange views on your performance.

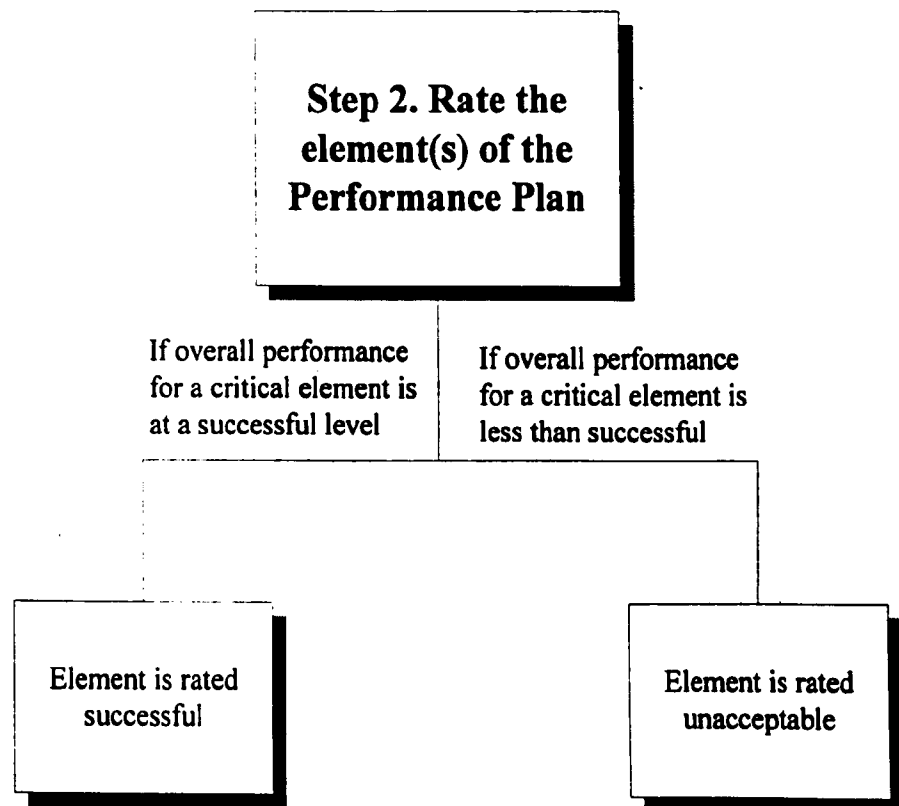


Step 2: Rate the elements of the Performance Plan

After assessing the appraisal inputs against the standards, the designated rater proposes a rating for each performance element. If a performance element has more than one measure, then the designated rater should treat the measures as a collective when evaluating employee performance against the standards. The designated rater should assess the input or data gathered for each standard and then balance them against each other when proposing the rating for the performance element.

If, on balance, the overall performance for a critical element (with one or more standards) is at a successful level, then the element is rated successful.

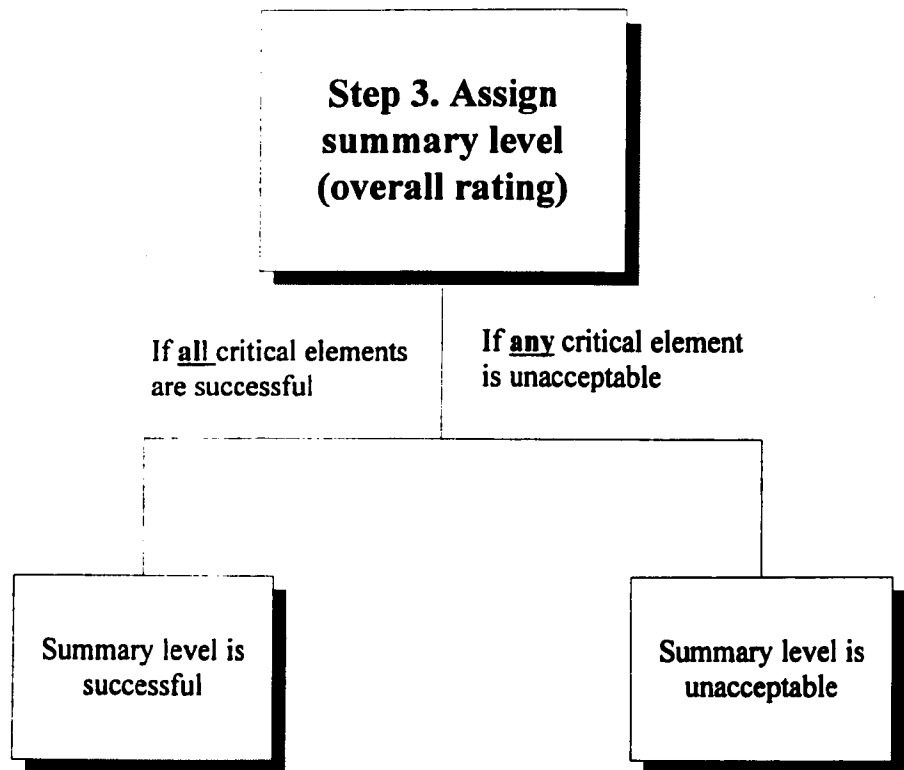
If, on balance, the overall performance for a critical element (with one or more standards) is less than successful, then the element is rated unacceptable.



Step 3: Assigning the Summary Level

Once all the performance elements have been rated, the designated rater assigns the summary level (rating) as follows:

- If ***all*** critical elements are successful, then the summary level is successful
- If ***any*** critical element is unacceptable, then the summary level is unacceptable

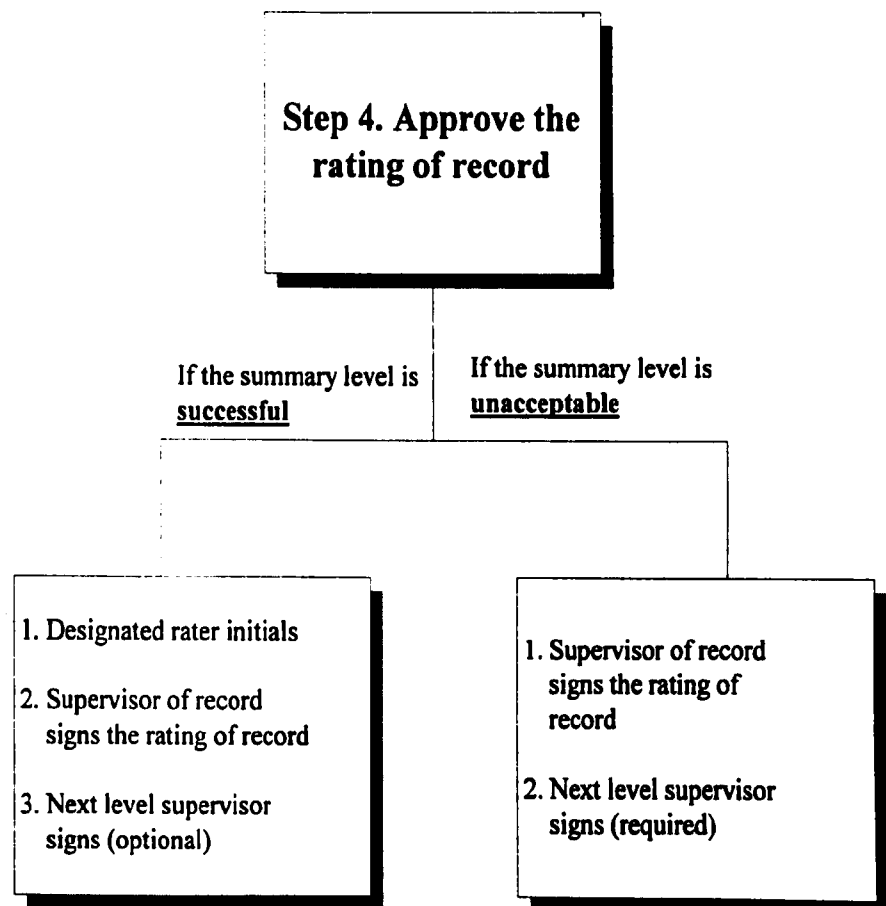


Step 4: Approve the rating of record

After the performance elements have been rated, the designated rater has to meet the supervisory signature requirements for the ratings of record.

The signature requirements are:

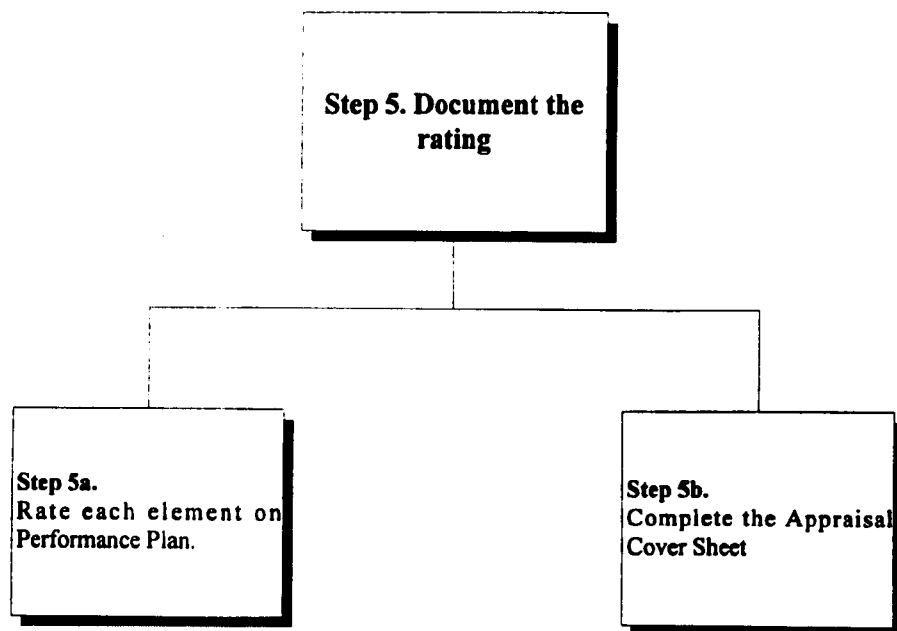
- If the rating of the record (summary level) is successful, then the designated rater initials and the supervisor of record signs. The signature of the next level supervisor or reviewing official is optional.
- If the rating of the record (summary level) is unacceptable, then the signature of the supervisor of record and next level supervisor or reviewing official is required.



Step 5: Document the rating

The fifth step in the performance appraisal process is documenting the rating. Because of the confidential nature and importance of the performance appraisal information gathered and discussed between you and your supervisor, it is very important that the results of your performance appraisal process be carefully and thoroughly documented. The official documentation of the rating of record consists of:

1. The completed Performance Plan (plus any amendments), which shows the rating of each element.
2. The completed Appraisal Cover Sheet, which includes:
 - the rating of record (either successful or unacceptable) with signature and date
 - any performance highlights (supervisor's comments)
 - employee comments
 - additional pages if needed



**Step 6:
Communicate the
rating**

The sixth step in the performance appraisal process is communicating the rating. This is the most important step in the performance appraisal because it is when your supervisor provides you with his/her assessment of your performance. During this discussion, your supervisor should explain how he/she came to his/her assessment of your performance. Your supervisor should take time to describe the degree to which your performance met, exceeded, or did not meet the standard(s) and how any appraisal input sources may have adversely affected your performance rating.

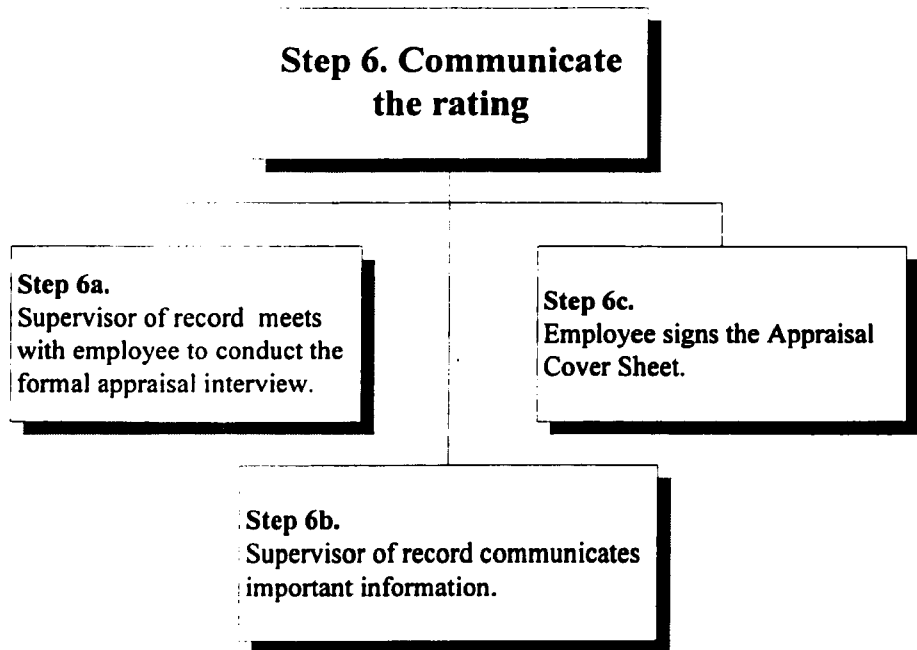
The performance appraisal meeting should not be a one-sided talk from your supervisor, but instead should be an open exchange of information between you and your supervisor conducted in a professional and courteous manner.

During the formal appraisal meeting your supervisor should describe:

1. How each element was rated.
2. The rating of record and how the rating of critical elements determined the rating of record.
3. Areas in need of improvement, including suggestions from both supervisor of record and yourself.
4. Proposed pay and other personnel decisions, if any.
5. If needed, requirements for a Performance Improvement Plan.

At the conclusion of the appraisal interview, you will sign the Appraisal Cover Sheet:

1. This signifies that you acknowledge that the appraisal was conducted.
2. It does not necessarily signify that you agree with the rating of record.
3. You can attach your disagreement or concern to the rating of record.
4. The date you sign or refuse to sign will be considered the date the rating of record was communicated to you.
5. You should receive a copy of the rating of record within three days of appraisal interview.

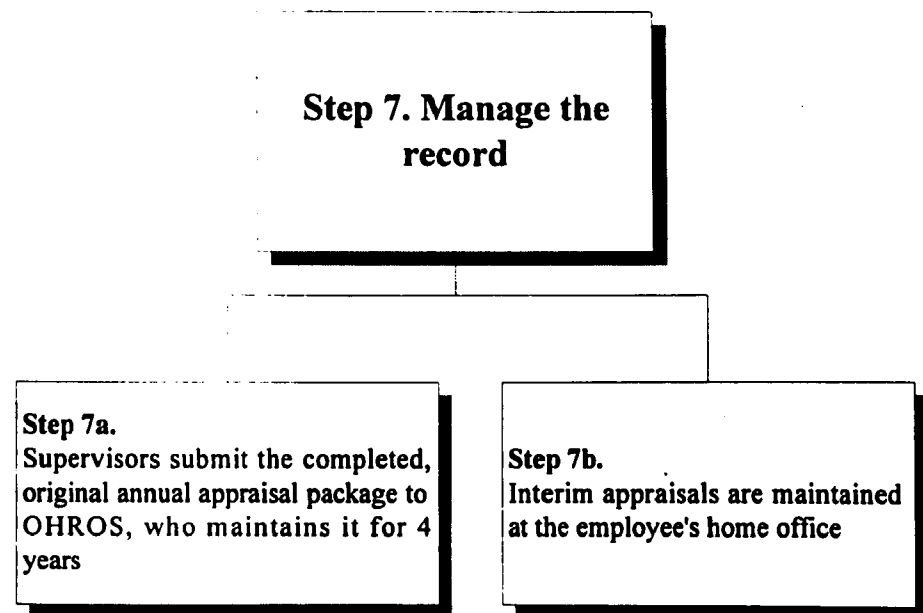


Note: Appraisal interviews with bargaining unit members must be conducted in a private one-to-one meeting (employee and designated rater or supervisor of record only), unless the employee agrees otherwise.

Step 7: Manage the record

In the seventh and final step of the performance appraisal process, your supervisor must submit the completed, original annual appraisal package to the appropriate Human Resources Office, which maintains it in the Employee Performance File for four years.

Safe storage of interim appraisals is the responsibility of the your home office.



**HQ EPA
PERFORMS
Appraisal Cover Sheet**

SSN:

Office:

Calendar Year:

(dated & initialed)

3) Additional elements do not factor into summary level.

Unacceptable

Employee's Signature/Date:

Supervisor(s)'s Signatures/Date:

Employee's Comments:



Activity 5-1: Giving Performance Appraisal Feedback

Directions: You are the supervisor of Jane Doe, your administrative assistant. Review her accomplishments against her performance standards as well as performance records collected from your appraisal inputs as agreed upon.

HQ EPA Performance Plan**Name:** Jane Doe**Office:** Administrative Assistant**Year:** June 1 - December 31, 1998

Element: Customer service: Provides customers with timely, accurate, and reliable information and guidance on OHROS products, programs, and services.

Type of Element: Critical ☒ Additional ☐

Standards and Measurement Sources:

- Generally meets customer information and guidance needs as shown by lack of customer complaints.
- Usually communicates and exchanges information in such a way as to meet customer expectations as shown by lack of customer complaints.
- Communicates effectively within and outside the organization as shown by lack of customer complaints.
- From time-to-time, solicits customer feedback on information and guidance provided as shown by lack of customer complaints.

Assumption (if applicable):

Element Rating: Successful ☐ Unacceptable ☐

Element: Customer service: Provides products and services that are timely and high quality.

Type of Element: Critical ☒ Additional ☐

Standards and Measurement Sources:

- Generally delivers products and services on schedule that are useful to the customer as shown on the product delivery and service schedule.
- Typically provides service considered courteous and responsive to customer issues and concerns and demonstrates a basic level of understanding of the client's program and work as shown by lack of customer complaints.
- Usually deals with problems in a timely manner and acts to resolve them with tact and diplomacy as shown by lack of customer complaints.
- Strives to ensure customer's input is factored into problem-solving process as shown by lack of customer complaints as well as customer survey results.
- From time-to-time, solicits customer feedback to improve/enhance the quality of the products or services by providing customers with survey forms.

Assumption (if applicable):

Element Rating: Successful ☐ Unacceptable ☐

Employee's Signature/Date (Discussion and/or approval of the performance agreement)

Supervisor(s)'s Signature/Date

Activity 5-1

Your experienced administrative assistant, Jane Doe, has been showing signs of problem performance for the past couple of months. When she started her job a year ago, she was completing all of her tasks efficiently and on time. However, two months ago, the quality of her work started to decline. Although she was still completing work requests on time, numerous errors began appearing in her word-processing documents and she was not completing important administrative matters. Yesterday a document that was sent to the regions for review had several embarrassing typos, including referring to the “manager” of the office as the “manger” of the office and giving his name as “Toad,” rather than “Todd.”

What are some of the specific behaviors that Jane has recently demonstrated that you would hope to address in her performance appraisal?

How would you rate each of her performance elements? Why?

How would you address any performance problems?

What might be some of the possible solutions or suggestions you would give Jane regarding her performance?

Module

Unacceptable Ratings



Unit Overview

If your performance ever receives an unacceptable rating, you will be supported under the various forms of performance assistance offered under PERFORMS. In this unit, you will learn about the types of performance problems and personnel actions stemming from unacceptable performance.

Performance Problems

You should never be surprised with an unacceptable rating.

Assistance must be provided to you as soon as the designated rater identifies a significant performance-related problem. This should be done well before you are given an unacceptable rating.

Once your performance becomes unacceptable, you will be afforded an opportunity to raise performance to the successful level.

If you fail to improve your performance to the successful level after a reasonable opportunity period, the supervisor of record must take one or more of the following actions:

- Denial of within grade increase – you would not be allowed to advance to the next higher step of the grade for your position, even though you are otherwise eligible.
 - Reassignment – you could be moved from one position to another without promotion or demotion.
 - Reduction in grade – you could be involuntarily assigned to a position at a lower classification or job grading level.
 - Removal – you could be involuntarily separated from employment with EPA and the Federal Service.
-

Employee Appeal and Grievance Rights

You have certain rights to appeal and/or grieve some decisions or personnel actions associated with your performance.

You may not agree with critical elements included in your Performance Plan, or you may not agree with the standards for assessing performance. Also, you may not agree with recognition decisions.

You may object by following certain procedures.

Note: If you believe that a decision or other action taken or not taken under PERFORMS resulted from a prohibited personnel practice or an act of discrimination, you may: (1) File a grievance under the negotiated grievance procedure or file a charge of discrimination with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and/or (2) File a complaint with the Office of the Special Counsel.

Objection to Rating of Record

You may also reject the rating of record. Your signature on the Appraisal Cover Sheet does not indicate concurrence with the rating of record nor does it preclude you from filing a grievance.

You may disagree with your final rating of record and decide on one of two different paths to follow depending on whether or not you are covered by negotiated grievance procedures.

If you are not covered by negotiated grievance procedures, you should follow grievance procedures covered in EPA Order 3110.8--EPA Administrative Grievance System.

If you are covered by the negotiated grievance procedures, you may file a grievance under the provisions of the negotiated grievance process.

Note: If you believe that a decision or other action taken or not taken under PERFORMS resulted from a prohibited personnel practice or an act of discrimination, you may: (1) File a grievance under the negotiated grievance procedure or file a charge of discrimination with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and/or (2) File a complaint with the Office of the Special Counsel.

Check Point

Here's a chance to check your understanding.

1. Performance feedback should be limited to your formal performance appraisal review. True or False
2. What is the proper order of steps in the performance appraisal process from the list below:
 - A. Review appraisal input, assign the summary level, manage the record, rate the elements, document the rating, approve the rating of record, communicate the rating.
 - B. Manage the record, approve the rating of record, review appraisal input, assign the summary level, communicate the rating, rate the elements, document the rating.
 - C. Assess performance input, rate the elements, assign the summary level, approve the rating of record, document the rating, communicate the rating, manage the record.
 - D. Review appraisal input, assign the summary level, rate the elements, approve the rating of record, communicate the rating, document the rating, manage the record.
 - E. Communicate the record, document the rating, review appraisal input, assign the summary level, manage the record, rate the elements, approve the rating of record.
3. When is the summary level successful?
 - A. When most of the critical elements are rated successful.
 - B. When all the critical elements are rated unacceptable.
 - C. When all but one of the critical elements are rated successful.
 - D. When all the critical elements are rated successful.

4. The next level supervisor is required to sign the rating of the record when:
 - A. The summary level is successful.
 - B. The summary level is unacceptable.

5. The supervisor of record communicates all the following except:
 - A. The rating of record and how the rating of critical elements determined the rating of record.
 - B. How each element was rated.
 - C. Proposed pay and other personnel decisions, if any.
 - D. How other employees in the office were rated.

**Additional
References &
Resources**

HQ Supplemental Guidance

Answer Sheet for Check Point

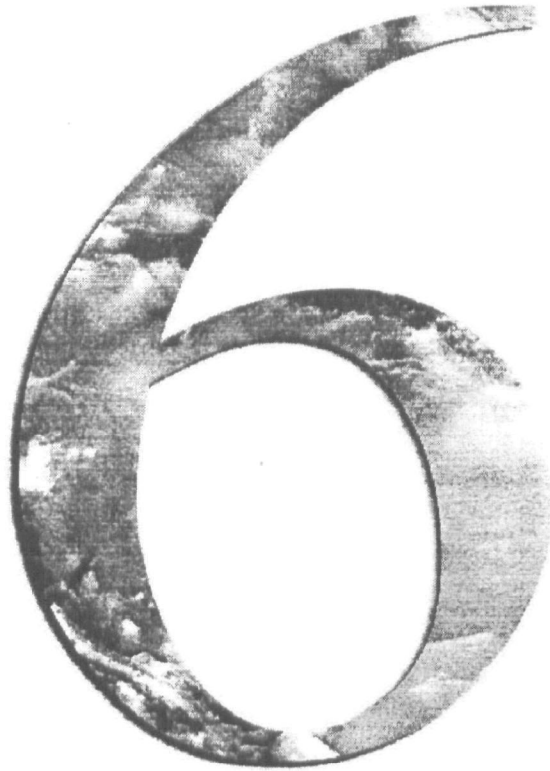


1. Performance feedback should be limited to your formal performance appraisal review. True or False
2. What is the proper order of steps in the performance appraisal process from the list below:
 - A. Review appraisal input, assign the summary level, manage the record, rate the elements, document the rating, approve the rating of record, communicate the rating.
 - B. Manage the record, approve the rating of record, review appraisal input, assign the summary level, communicate the rating, rate the elements, document the rating.
 - C. Assess performance input, rate the elements, assign the summary level, approve the rating of record, document the rating, communicate the rating, manage the record.**
 - D. Review appraisal input, assign the summary level, rate the elements, approve the rating of record, communicate the rating, document the rating, manage the record.
 - E. Communicate the record, document the rating, review appraisal input, assign the summary level, manage the record, rate the elements, approve the rating of record.
3. When is the summary level successful?
 - A. When most of the critical elements are rated successful.
 - B. When all the critical elements are rated unacceptable.
 - C. When all but one of the critical elements are rated successful.
 - D. When all the critical elements are rated successful.**
4. The next level supervisor is required to sign the rating of the record when:
 - A. The summary level is successful.
 - B. The summary level is unacceptable.**

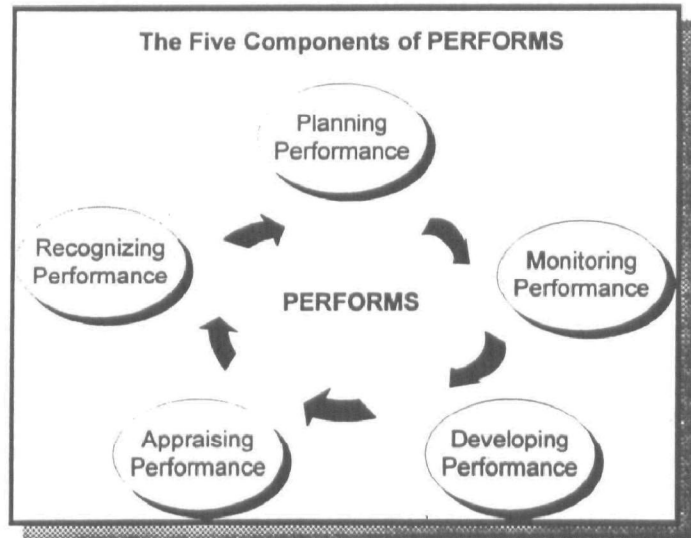
5. The supervisor of record communicates all the following except:

- A. The rating of record and how the rating of critical elements determined the rating of record.
- B. How each element was rated.
- C. Proposed pay and other personnel decisions, if any.
- D. How other employees in the office were rated.**

Module



Recognizing Performance



Module Overview

The sixth and final component of PERFORMS is Recognizing Performance. Recognizing exceptional performance in an immediate and proper manner is an important goal of PERFORMS.

In this module, you will learn about the PERFORMS nomination award processes and procedures, including peer nominations.

**Module
Objectives**

After reviewing this module, you should be able to:

- Compare and contrast the procedures for awards that go through the Awards Board and those that do not go through the Awards Board.
 - Identify the roles and responsibilities of the Awards Board.
 - Nominate employees for awards when scenarios are presented.
-

Recognizing Performance through Awards

Before we begin, it is important that you understand the different award classifications listed in the table on the following page.

Informal non-monetary awards are those awards granted to you or your team for accomplishments of lesser scope than those recognized by formal honor or monetary awards.

Monetary awards are lump sum cash payments to you or your team for noteworthy accomplishments or high quality work performance.

Two other forms of awards are quality step increases and time-off awards.

Resources

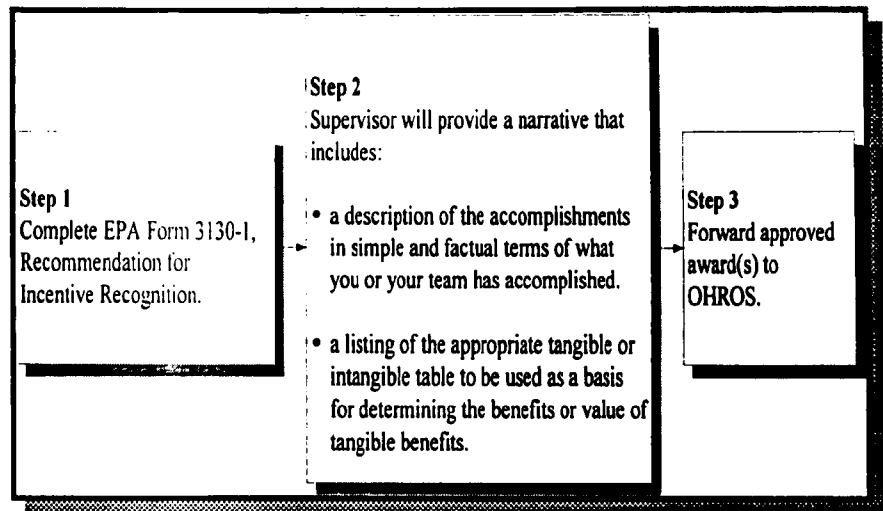
The EPA Recognition Policy and Procedures Manual or the *Recognition Handbook* is another source of supplementary information on the award types and criteria for each award.

Recognition Options

Award Type	Classification	Description
Non-Monetary	Formal Honor Award	A non-monetary award is given for the recognition of individual employees or teams for exceptional, distinguished, or heroic achievements.
	Informal Recognition	A non-monetary award granted to an employee or team to recognize accomplishments of lesser scope than those recognized by a formal honor award or monetary award.
Monetary	Individual/Team Awards	This award is given to recognize an employee or a team for exceptional and rare accomplishments of extraordinary scope, impact, difficulty, and precedent. This award is intended to recognize an employee or team that displays the highest level of accomplishment achievable in the Agency. The value for this award is between \$5000 and \$10,000.
	Quality Awards (Q Award)	
	Superior Accomplishment Recognition Awards (S Award)	This award is given in recognition of a one time special act, service or achievement of a nonrecurring nature, and for high quality performance of assigned duties by an employee or a team of employees. The value for this award is up to \$5,000.
	On-the-spot Awards	This award is given in recognition of a one time special act, service or achievement of a non-recurring nature and for high quality performance of assigned duties by an employee or a team of employees. This award will not exceed a net amount of \$250.
Quality Step Increases	Quality Step Increases (QSI) are additional salary step increases granted for continuing high quality performance during a rating period and for expected maintenance of high quality performance over the next rating period.	
Time-off Awards	Time-off awards are intended to reward one time, nonrecurring employee contributions to the quality, efficiency, effectiveness and/or economy of EPA operations. A maximum of forty hours can be given during any particular pay period and 80 hours during a leave year, unless a higher amount is approved at the AA level.	

Procedures for Supervisor to Recommend a Monetary Award

When nominating you or another employee for an award, your supervisor will follow a simple three-step process. The intent of this process is to provide a simple and consistent method for disseminating awards.



EPA Form 3130-1, Recommendation for Incentive Recognition

EPA	UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY						
RECOMMENDATION FOR INCENTIVE RECOGNITION							
Directions: Check below as appropriate. Refer to Recognition Manual 3130 for criterion. For monetary awards, cite appropriate table, calculation of tangible benefit, and/or extent and scope of intangible benefits in written description.							
<input type="checkbox"/> "Q" Award - QUALITY ACCOMPLISHMENT RECOGNITION AWARD. The Agency's highest monetary award. Exceeds criteria for "S" Award, for exceptional and rare accomplishments. (Attach detailed description of accomplishments.) <input type="checkbox"/> QUALITY STEP INCREASE (QSI) - Step increase to base salary: based on high quality performance during most recent rating period of record; and, anticipated during next rating period. Employee may receive no more than one QSI in a 52 week period (Attach completed EPA Form 3130 - QSI) <input type="checkbox"/> "S" Award - SUPERIOR ACCOMPLISHMENT RECOGNITION AWARD - For noteworthy accomplishments including one-time acts or high quality performance. (Attach brief description of accomplishments) <input type="checkbox"/> On-The-Spot (OTS) - Same general criteria as "S" Award, except intended to recognize modest accomplishments quickly. Maximum cash value: \$250. (Attach brief description of accomplishments). <input type="checkbox"/> TIME-OFF AWARD (TO) - Award of excused absence, in increments of from 1 hour to 40 hours, for noteworthy achievements, either one-time acts or performance. (Attach description of achievement). <input type="checkbox"/> "T" Award - TEAM AWARD - For accomplishments by entire team, individual team members, and/or team peers on a team. (Attach brief description of achievement, as appropriate, description of individual member achievement & justification of cash amounts other equal shares). Indicate whether this is a "Q" or "S" Award. <input type="checkbox"/> Award to entire Team <input type="checkbox"/> Award to Individual Team Member(s)							
INFORMATION ON RECIPIENT(S)							
NAME (For team awards attach a list showing names, SSNs, position titles, series, grade/step)				POSITION TITLE, SERIES, GRADE/STEP			
ORGANIZATION AND LOCATION							
SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER		TIMEKEEPER NUMBER		PERSON TO RECEIVE CHECK			
PERIOD OF SERVICE ON WHICH AWARD IS BASED FROM _____ TO _____							
RECOMMENDED AMOUNT OF MONETARY AWARD (Refer to table #1, #2, or #3 in EPA 3130 Recognition Policy and Procedures Manual)							
TIME OFF		TANGIBLE		INTANGIBLE		TOTAL	
OFFICIAL	SIGNATURE			TITLE		DATE	
NOMINATING EMPLOYEE (PEER)							
RECOMMENDING OFFICIAL							
APPROVING OFFICIAL							
OBLIGATION OFFICIAL							
LINE	DCN	BUDGET/FY	APPROP CODE	BUDGET ORG CODE	PROGRAM ELEMENT	OBJECT CLASS	INFO
AMOUNT	DOLLARS	CENTS	NET PROFIT	CURT ORGCD	FUNDING APPROP. (%)		

**Peer
Nominations**

In addition to award recommendations from supervisors, a non-supervisory employee has the opportunity to nominate another non-supervisory coworker (with whom there is a working relationship) or team for either an informal non-monetary or a monetary award.

**Non-monetary
Awards**

When you nominate a fellow employee or team for a non-monetary award, the award should be intended to recognize accomplishments of lesser scope than would be recognized by a formal honor award or monetary award.

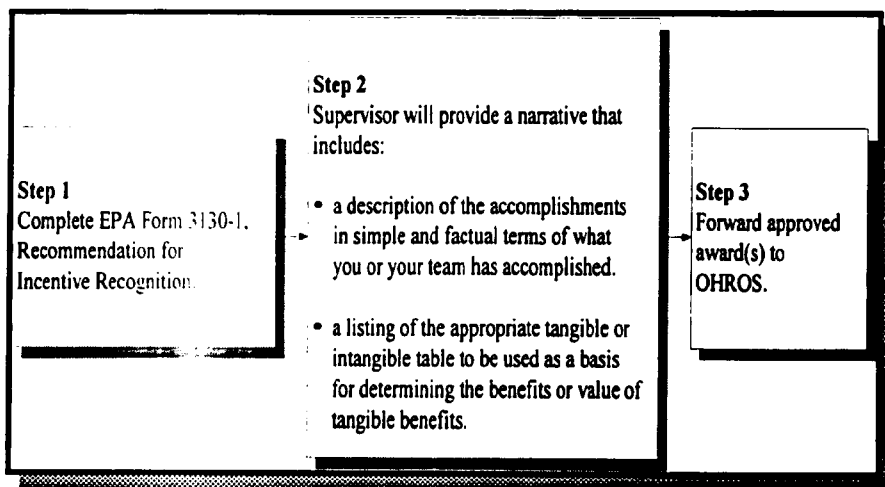
Your creativity is encouraged; noteworthy accomplishments should not go unnoticed.

Examples include:

- Trophies
- Coffee mugs
- Certificates
- Employee of the month
- Pens
- Tee shirts
- Team office luncheon

Monetary Awards

You can also nominate a fellow employee or team for a monetary award. To do this, you should follow the same procedures as a supervisor would except that you do not recommend a dollar amount. The approval of the award and determination of the dollar amount is up to the supervisor.



Award Criteria

It is important to understand a couple of key concepts when using the following Award Criteria Guideline Tables. The amount of an award should be related to the benefit of the performance to EPA. This benefit may be tangible or intangible.

Tangible benefits are benefits that have a measurable monetary value. Documentation of this accomplishment must specify how the measurable benefits were calculated.

Intangible benefits are calculated when no measurable monetary benefits can be substantiated and when tangible benefits are considered of little significance in relation to the total benefits. Good judgement should be shown in setting values on accomplishments that do not result in benefits having a measurable monetary value. The documentation must describe in specific terms how the benefits are to be realized.

Some of the key factors to consider when determining the amount of intangible benefits include:

1. Significance of contribution
 2. Importance of the program affected
 3. Extent of the accomplishment
-

**Guidelines for Monetary Awards
Based on Tangible Benefits**

Estimated First Year Benefits to Government	Amount of Award
Up to \$10,000 in benefits	10% of benefits
Between \$10,000 and \$100,000 in benefits	\$1,000, plus 3% to 10% of benefits over \$10,000
More than \$100,000 in benefits	\$3,700 to \$10,000* for the first \$100,000 in benefits plus 0.5% to 1.0% of benefits above \$100,000

* NOTE: For awards over \$10,000, the approval authority is the Office of Personnel Management. For Awards over \$25,000, the approval authority is the President of the United States through the Office of Personnel Management.

Guidelines for Q Awards Based on Intangible Benefits

Value of the Benefit	Extent of Application	
	Broad	General
	<p>The contribution affects the duties, work assignments, and employees of offices or larger organization.</p> <p>A broad area of science, technology, a program, legal or environmental element that has been affected.</p>	<p>The contribution affects the duties, work assignments, and employees of multiple agencies or are Agency-wide.</p> <p>An extensive area of science, technology, a program, legal or environmental element that has been affected.</p>
<p>High Value A superior contribution to a critical or sensitive product, activity, program or service that substantially improves the effectiveness, efficiency, quality, productivity or service. A complete revision of operating principles or procedures.</p>	<p>This cell is not applicable for Suggestions, Team Award or Q-Award.</p>	<p>\$5,001 - \$6,300</p>
<p>Exceptional Value An extraordinary contribution to a highly critical or highly sensitive product, activity, program, or service that defines a new standard of excellence for effectiveness, efficiency, quality, productivity or service. Initiation of a new principle or major procedure with extensive impact.</p>	<p>\$5,001 - \$6,300</p>	<p>\$6,300 - \$10,000</p>

Guidelines for S Awards Based on Intangible Benefits

Value of the Benefit	Extent of Application			
	Limited	Extended	Broad	General
	<p>The contribution affects the duties, work assignments, and employees of one division or office.</p> <p>A limited area of science, technology, a program, environmental or legal element that has been affected.</p>	<p>The contribution affects the duties, work assignments, and employees of multiple divisions or offices.</p> <p>A substantial area of science, technology, a program, environmental or legal element that has been affected.</p>	<p>The contribution affects the duties, work assignments, and employees of offices or larger organization.</p> <p>A broad area of science, technology, a program, environmental or legal element that has been affected.</p>	<p>The contribution affects the duties, work assignments, and employees of multiple agencies or are Agency-wide.</p> <p>An extensive area of science, technology, a program, environmental or legal element that has been affected.</p>
Moderate Value A limited contribution to a product, activity, program or service that improves the effectiveness, efficiency, quality, productivity, or service.	\$25 - \$125	\$125 - \$325	\$325 - \$650	\$650 - \$1,300
Substantial Value A noteworthy contribution to a product, activity, program or service that improves the effectiveness, efficiency, quality, productivity, or service. A revision to a major part of an operating principle or procedure.	\$125 - \$325	\$325 - \$600	\$650 - \$1,300	\$1,300 - \$3,100

Guidelines for S Awards Based on Intangible Benefits

Value of the Benefit	Extent of Application			
	Limited	Extended	Broad	General
	<p>The contribution affects the duties, work assignments, and employees of one division or office.</p> <p>A limited area of science, technology, a program, environmental or legal element that has been affected.</p>	<p>The contribution affects the duties, work assignments, and employees of multiple divisions or offices.</p> <p>A substantial area of science, technology, a program, environmental or legal element that has been affected.</p>	<p>The contribution affects the duties, work assignments, and employees of offices or larger organization.</p> <p>A broad area of science, technology, a program, environmental or legal element that has been affected.</p>	<p>The contribution affects the duties, work assignments, and employees of multiple agencies or are Agency-wide.</p> <p>An extensive area of science, technology, a program, environmental or legal element that has been affected.</p>
<p>High Value A superior contribution to a critical or sensitive product, activity, program or service which substantially improves the effectiveness, efficiency, quality, productivity or service.</p> <p>A complete revision of operating principles or procedures.</p>	\$325 - \$650	\$650 - \$1,300	\$1,300 - \$3,150	\$3,150 - \$5,000
<p>Exceptional Value An extraordinary contribution to a highly critical or highly sensitive product, activity, program, or service that defines a new standard of excellence for effectiveness, efficiency, quality, productivity or service.</p> <p>Initiation of a new principle or major procedure with extensive impact.</p>	\$650 - \$1,300	\$1,300 - \$3,150	\$3,150 - \$5,000	This cell is not applicable to the S-Award.

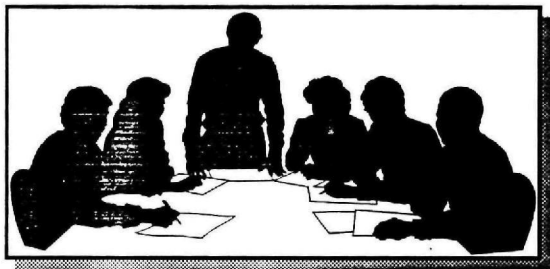
Quality Step Increases

Criteria Information	Quality Step Increases
What is the purpose of Quality Step Increases (QSIs)?	<p>QSIs are additional salary step increases for continuing high quality performance during a rating period and for expected maintenance of high quality performance over the next rating period.</p> <p>A QSI may be granted to an employee when: (a) the employee's most recent performance rating of record is successful and the recommending official certifies the employee's performance was at a high level of performance during the period covered by the most recent rating; and (b) the recommending official anticipates that the employee's performance during the next performance rating period will merit a successful rating and will continue at a high level of performance.</p>
Who is eligible for these awards?	<p>QSIs may be granted to General Schedule employees who occupy permanent positions, or who are serving in a term or Temporary Appointment Pending Establishment of a Register (TAPER) position, and are paid less than the maximum rate of their grade.</p> <p>Agency employees on Intergovernmental Personnel Act assignments are not eligible for Quality Step Increases.</p>
Are there any limitations?	<p>An employee may receive only one Quality Step Increase in any 52-week period.</p>
Are there any special stipulations to these awards?	<p>Quality Step Increases are granted in conjunction with the employee's annual performance appraisal.</p> <p>Recommending official will complete EPA Form 3130-1 and Form 3130-QSI for processing.</p> <p>Approved Quality Step Increases will be effective as soon as possible after all approvals have been received.</p>

Awards Board Function

Each AAship (or equivalent) will have at least one Awards Board. Each board will be comprised of an equal number of members appointed by AFGE, NTEU, and management from the local organization that the board serves.

All award nominations covered by the board will be collected by an employee assigned by management and given to the board. The designated employee will send out a call for nominations, schedule board meetings, and distribute award nomination packages to board members.



An Awards Board functions solely as an advisory and recommending body for the purpose of:

- Reviewing award processes to promote fairness and to prevent arbitrary and capricious procedures.
- Reviewing award nominations and making recommendations for bargaining unit employees for honor awards, and monetary awards (i.e., S Awards and Q Awards).

An Awards Board will meet at least quarterly for monetary awards and at least annually for honors awards. Any three board members present comprise a quorum.

Authority

An Awards Board will review all appropriate award nominations, and provide the management official at the board level with a ranked list of nominations recommended for awards and a list of nominations not recommended.

When applicable:

The management official with the delegated authority will retain final approval of all award and recognition matters.

The management official will decide which nominations to put forward to the next level board.

**Awards Covered
Under the
Awards Board
Process**

An Awards Board has recommending authority over many awards including:

Honor Awards – A non-monetary award that is given for the recognition of individual employees or teams for exceptional, distinguished, or heroic achievements.

- **Gold Award** – This is the highest honor award granted by the Agency in recognition for distinguished service of major significance to environmental improvement and public service.
- **Silver Award** – This honor award is presented for contributions or services of unusual value beyond that ordinarily required.
- **Bronze** – This honor award is in recognition of significant acts or achievements that materially affect the successful accomplishment of the Agency mission or service to the public interest.

Quality Awards (Q Award) – This award is given to recognize an employee or a team for their exceptional and rare accomplishments of extraordinary scope, impact, difficulty, and precedent. This award is intended to recognize an employee or team displaying the highest level of accomplishment achievable in the Agency. The value for this award is between \$5,000 to \$10,000.

Superior Accomplishment Recognition Awards (S Awards) – This award is given in recognition of a one time special act, service or achievement of a non-recurring nature, and for high quality performance of assigned duties by an employee or a team of employees. Awards Boards review and recommend S Awards over a specified monetary amount.

**Union
Involvement with
Awards Board**

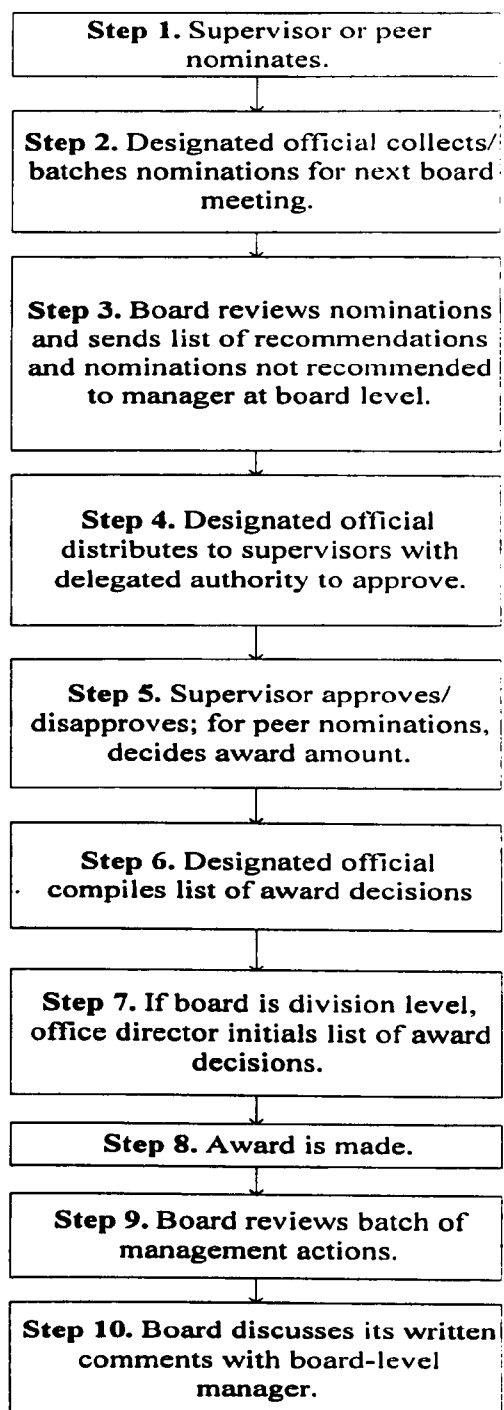
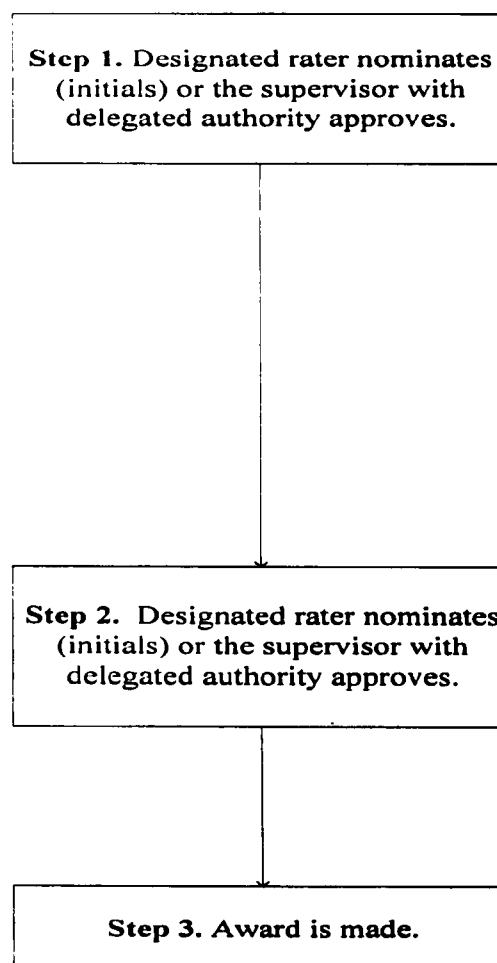
All awards for bargaining unit employees must go through an Awards Board. The development of the Awards Board and awards procedures was through a negotiated agreement between:

- AFGE Local 3331
 - NTEU Chapter 280
 - EPA Headquarters Management.
-

**Additional Sources of
Information**

For more information on these agreements, please visit the EPA Intranet at:

<http://www.intranet.epa.gov/agcyintr/ohros/awdsboard.htm>

The Awards Board Process**The Non-Awards Board Process**

Activity 6-1: Awards Nomination

Directions: Review the three scenarios of employee performance. After reviewing the scenarios, determine which employees to recommend for an award and the type of award they should receive. Answer the questions below.

Refer to the reference information before this exercise in this Self-Study Guide. The chart and Types of Awards may be particularly useful to you. Be specific and creative in this activity.

Scenario: You are a supervisor in the Environmental Compliance Division at EPA and are reviewing a number of employees in your Division for awards.

Who would you nominate for an award? What type of award would you nominate them for (i.e., informal non-monetary or monetary)?

Why would you nominate the individuals you chose for awards? Why did you not nominate the others?

Employee Information

Employee #1: Elda Price, your office clerk, has been doing her daily tasks of filing, writing memos, scheduling your appointments, and other assorted administrative functions exceptionally well since she joined your office a year ago. Nobody ever calls with complaints about her work and you have received many comments on what a pleasure it is to deal with her.

Employee #2: Moss Green is a relatively new Federal employee. He has been on the job for a little over eight months. From your discussions with his other supervisors, you find out that Mr. Green is typically the first one of his team to volunteer for new projects and take on additional responsibilities. In addition, he is typically the first team member in every morning and one of the last, if not the last, to leave at the end of the day. His work has been of high quality and he has recently uncovered a number of problems at chemical plants, including waste elimination into a river and groundwater contamination.

Employee #3: Susan Sunny is an EPA OSHA inspector. She has been on the job for five years and has regularly received praise from her supervisors. In addition, Ms. Sunny initiated a community-based *Clean Up Our Streets* program. This program has been driven by her overwhelming passion to clean up her own community in the Washington area. It has been so well received by her community that it has attracted local and national media coverage. EPA is considering making this a national program.

Here's a chance to check your understanding.

Check Point



1. Match each of the items with its corresponding description.

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A. Monetary Award | ___ | 1. Award that is granted to an individual or team for accomplishments of lesser scope. |
| B. Q Award | ___ | 2. Award given for a one-time act or service or high quality performance of assigned duties. |
| C. S Award | ___ | 3. An additional salary increase granted for continued high quality performance. |
| D. Quality Step Increase | ___ | 4. Lump sum cash payments for individual employees and teams for a noteworthy accomplishment. |
| E. Non-monetary Award | ___ | 5. Award given to an individual employee or team for exceptional and rare accomplishments of extraordinary impact. |

2. If you were going to nominate a fellow employee or team for an award what process would you have to follow?

- A. Awards Board process
- B. Non-Awards Board process

3. If you are nominating a peer or team of peers for a monetary award, you can set the value of that award at \$500 or less.
True or False

**Additional
References &
Resources**

HQ Supplemental Guidance
Recognition Policy and Procedures Manual
Recognition Handbook

Answer Sheet For Unit 6 – Activity 6-1

Employee #1: Elda Price, your office clerk, has been doing her daily tasks of filing, writing memos, scheduling your appointments, and other assorted administrative functions exceptionally well since she joined your office a year ago. Nobody ever calls with complaints about her work and you have received many comments on what a pleasure it is to deal with her.

ANSWERS: On-The-Spot Award, S Award, or QSI.

You may feel that it is Elda's job to perform these tasks proficiently. However, it is invaluable to work with someone who never gets complaints and is consistently pleasant. Also, this position is one that often gets overlooked for awards. S Awards allow you to provide recognition for exceptional job performance. If you think Edna's outstanding performances will continue, a QSI might be appropriate (especially if she is at the top of her career ladder or in the higher steps of her grade).

Employee #2: Moss Green is a relatively new Federal employee. He has been an EPA site inspector for a little over eight months. From your discussions with his other supervisors, you find out that Mr. Green is typically the first one of his team to volunteer for new projects and take on new responsibilities. In addition, he is typically the first team member in every morning and one of the last, if not the last, to leave at the end of the day. His work has been of high quality and he has recently uncovered a number of problems at chemical plants, including waste elimination into a river and groundwater contamination.

ANSWERS: On-The-Spot Award, S Award, or Time-off Award.

Moss has been doing a great job and could be nominated for an On-the-Spot Award, S Award, or Time-off Award. (Moss may be especially appreciative of a Time-off Award because he has not accrued much annual leave.)

Employee #3: Susan Sunny is an EPA OSHA inspector. She has been on the job for five years and has regularly received praise from her supervisors. In addition, Ms. Sunny initiated a community-based *Clean Up Our Streets* program. This program has been driven by her overwhelming passion to clean up her own community in the Washington area. It has been so well received by her community that it has attracted local and national media coverage. EPA is considering making this a national program.

ANSWERS: Informal Non-monetary Award; and Time-Off Award or S Award.

Susan volunteered her personal time to initiate a community-based

program that EPA is considering making a national program. An informal non-monetary award would be an appropriate way to recognize her contribution outside of EPA. If EPA adopts her community based program or if you want to recognize Susan's praise worthy EPA work performance, a time-off Award or S Award should be appropriate.

Answer Sheet for Check Point



1. Match each of the items with its corresponding description.

- | | | |
|--------------------------|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A. Monetary Award | <u>4</u> | 1. Award that is granted to an individual or team for accomplishments of lesser scope. |
| B. Q Award | <u>5</u> | 2. Award given for a one-time act or service or high quality performance of assigned duties. |
| C. S Award | <u>2</u> | 3. An additional salary increase granted for continued high quality performance. |
| D. Quality Step Increase | <u>3</u> | 4. Lump sum cash payments for individual employees and teams for a noteworthy accomplishment. |
| E. Non-monetary Award | <u>1</u> | 5. Award given to an individual employee or team for exceptional and rare accomplishments of extraordinary impact. |

2. If you were going to nominate a fellow employee or team for an award what process would you have to follow?

- A. Awards Board process
- B. Non-Awards Board process**

3. If you are nominating a peer or team of peers for a monetary award, you can set the value of that award at \$500 or less. True or **False**