

# **Performance Standards and Evaluations**

## **Performance Feedback**

Providing performance feedback is one of the single most important ways for changing behavior and developing department members. The primary purpose of feedback is to improve performance. Feedback lets members know where they stand in relation to the job expectations and standards. It is most effective when given frequently, honestly, and in a constructive manner.

Feedback can be either formal or informal. The more formal type is regularly scheduled (annual evaluation), whereas informal feedback can take place at any time. Feedback should explain performance expectations and standards, how the member compares to those expectations and standards and ways to improve for the future. To be truly effective, the standards must be known and understood by both you and those you supervise. Therefore, it is critical to the success of this program you read and understand the position performance standards and you regularly talk to those you supervise about their progress towards meeting those standards.

Most members want to know what is expected of them and how they're progressing in comparison to those expectations and standards. Those who don't will either learn to adapt to a system of accountability or be deselected.

Members generally perform better when they receive face-to-face, open, honest feedback about performance progress and improvement areas. All too often members don't receive any feedback at all or not far enough in advance of the annual evaluation to improve their performance. To get the most from those you supervise, you must provide this information timely. Do not avoid providing feedback at or near evaluation time or not put relevant information in a formal evaluation just because it wasn't previously discussed or brought to the attention of the member. It is not a desired practice to have surprises in an evaluation, but it is almost always better you provide timely feedback, then put it off another year or avoid discussing it at all.

## **Supervision of Members**

Practice supervision by paying personal attention to those you supervise. In other words, get out of your office and into the field or your members work area. Watch and listen to how they are actually performing their jobs. You may get an entirely new perspective of the member and how they are progressing.

Provide immediate feedback. Praise good performance. Don't fail to confront poor performance or fix problems that need to be fixed. Email to a member a day or two after you observe a problem is inefficient and usually ineffective. Personal contact allows two-way communication and generally results in less confusion about the original message.

Teaching and mentoring members is a critical component of your job, which means you may need to have a superior understanding of the basic job duties. This doesn't mean you have to know the technical component of every specialized job, but minimally you need to know how each fits in to the normal day to day work. If the member needs help or training you are qualified to give, take the time to do it personally. Don't confuse this with doing their job either because they refuse to do it or

refuse to learn how to do it. If you don't know how to do the work or task, or don't have the time to do it, find someone who can. Don't avoid or shirk your supervisory responsibilities. A vast majority of members appreciate good leadership and a supervisor who holds all members accountable for doing their jobs.

## **Preparing the Evaluation and Conducting an Effective Evaluation Meeting**

When evaluating performance, remember **it is about the performance and not the person.** Meeting with a member to discuss their performance is not always easy or fast. As the one conducting the meeting, remember you must be fully prepared, and the success of the evaluation meeting relies on your ability to deal positively with the member. Remember, your approach can set a positive or negative tone for the entire meeting. Flexibility is important. You may start out with the intent of only doing a performance feedback meeting, but may end up in a full counseling session instead. It is also perfectly alright to listen to the member and change a written evaluation to more accurately reflect their performance if the written evaluation you prepared contains omissions or inaccuracies. Take the time to fully prepare and decide what you want to accomplish.

The following may help in preparing the evaluation and conducting a performance feedback meeting:

1. **Evaluate the member using the position performance standards:** Consider the timeliness, quality, quantity, and difficulty of the jobs performed. Remember to evaluate this person only. Don't compare them to others in the same unit, unless the standard calls for a comparison to co-workers. Avoid the pitfalls of rater errors and biases. Initially, only consider their performance during this rating period. Avoid the tendency to let past evaluations bias your ratings on the current evaluation. Avoid evaluating personality traits and instead evaluate the member's work behavior and the results they achieve (see attached document on rater biases).
2. **Review and consider the member's history and job assignments:** You should review and consider the member's job skills, training, experience, education, and similar factors in preparing the evaluation. Let the member know, in advance, of when you are preparing their evaluation. Have them review their performance file and, when appropriate, discuss items contained in their file and whether they should be included in the evaluation or not.
3. **Review the member's previous evaluation and goals:** Evaluate whether the member met the set goals and corrected any performance deficiencies from the previous evaluation period. Hopefully this was occurring throughout the entire evaluation period. If the member did not meet their goals, consider asking: Who set the goals? Were the goals realistic and achievable? Were they not met due to something beyond the member's control? Did the member know what the goals and standards were? If there was a performance improvement plan (PIP), did the member meet the requirements of the PIP?
4. **Prepare the evaluation form:** Take the time to do a comprehensive job. Consider possible questions the member might have concerning the marks you give. A rating of "needs improvement" means the member did not meet the set standard, a rating of "acceptable" means the member meets the set standard, and a rating of "superior" means the member not only meets the standards, but far excels in that particular standard. A rating of "superior" or "needs improvement" requires a written comment. Performance that does not meet the expectations should be explained as a performance gap. By calling it a performance gap, it is

very easy to separate behavior from the person and focus should naturally move from to the behavior and not the person.

5. **Select the proper time and place to conduct the meeting:** Make sure the room is private and quiet. Avoid any interruptions by holding calls. Put a “Do Not Disturb” sign on the door. Ensure you schedule enough time for the session and leave a little extra time in case the session goes longer.
6. **Meet with the member:**
  - a. Establish rapport. Put the member at ease to encourage discussion. Although personal talk is nice, try to get to the heart of the matter quickly; most members appreciate it.
  - b. Encourage the member to evaluate their own performance. Listen to what they have to say. Avoid dominating the conversation; this isn’t about you. Use open-end questions, not yes/no type. Encourage positive self-reflection.
  - c. Present the results of your evaluation. Be honest, not hurtful or disrespectful. This is about their work behavior and performance, not about their personality traits.
  - d. If the member disagrees with your assessment of their performance, consider their assessment and determine whether any changes to the final evaluation are needed.
  - e. While the member is expressing their comments, remain in control. They too need to remember this is about their performance, not about yours or their co-workers.
  - f. Set future goals that are clear and not misunderstood; they should be measurable against standards so the member can match performance behavior. Work with the member in establishing the goals; avoid setting their goals for them. If there were areas in the evaluation where the member needs improvement, set goals to assist the member in improving in those areas. Don’t set goals where the member bears little or no responsibility in meeting the goal, i.e., Goal- attend radar school- where there is little likelihood the member will be sent to the school or is not needed in that job function.
  - g. Close the meeting by reflecting on what was discussed.
7. **Follow-up:** A strong follow-up shows your commitment to the member’s development as well as offers a chance for the member to ask questions that may have come up since the meeting. This starts the entire cycle over again.

## Common Rater Errors or Biases

**First impressions:** This occurs when the evaluator makes a snap judgment about someone based on their first impression – whether positive or negative – regardless of subsequent performance.

**Negative emphasis:** This involves rejection of a member or negatively evaluating a member based on a small amount of negative information – a quite common occurrence. Research indicates that interviewers give unfavorable information about twice the weight of favorable information.

**Halo/horn effect:** Rating all aspects of a member's performance based on a single positive event, skill, or behavior. The horn effect is the opposite, rating a member poorly because of a single negative event, skill, or behavior.

**Contrast effect:** Most commonly used. Evaluating a member relative to other members rather than to their actual job performance.

**Similar-to-me-effect (familiarity):** Giving higher ratings to members who are like you and lower ratings to those who aren't.

**Negative and positive leniency tendency:** Rating all members high to avoid conflict or low due to being overly critical instead of true assessment to performance.

**Average/Central tendency:** Evaluating every person as average, regardless of major differences in performance rather than recognizing higher or lower than average performance.

**Spillover effect:** Allowing past performance ratings to influence current ratings unjustly, even though the member's performance has changed.

**Recency effect:** Focusing on only recent events and overlooking past problems or accomplishments.

**Strictness:** Rater evaluates everyone strictly because they are a "tough grader".

**Attributions:** A specific cause, reason, or motive is attributed to the ratee's behavior. The attribution may or may not be the actual cause of the behavior, but it determines the rater's evaluation.

**Stereotyping:** Forming an opinion about how people of a given gender, religion, race, appearance, or other characteristic think, act, respond, or would perform the job – without any evidence that this is the case.

## Performance Standards

A performance standard describes a level of performance in terms or results or behaviors expected of the member.

When preparing the evaluation, avoid describing behavior in terms of personality traits, such as:

1. Good attitude
2. Productive
3. Loyal
4. Mature
5. Team player
6. Professional
7. Enthusiastic
8. Has good judgment

Do describe the member's accomplishments or the results of their behavior:

1. Beat problems identified and resolved.
2. Reports are usable on first submittal 90% of the time.
3. Takes a fair share of calls. A majority of her self-initiated arrests address shift and beat problems as identified or approved by the supervisor.
4. Directs calls to the proper person with few errors.
5. Reports in by end of watch.
6. Received no personnel complaints or discipline during the evaluation period.
7. No avoidable collisions during this period.
8. Follows car stop procedure.
9. Follows Department radio procedure.

Sample Evaluation (a comment is required for a NI or S rating. You may include comments for A, but it is not required).

***Public Relations and Service*** Conduct yourself in a manner that promotes good public relations, service and brings credit to the City and Department

Performance Standard	Rating	Comments
1. Avoid behavior which is likely to produce sustained complaints and claims.	<b>A</b>	Received no formal personnel complaints. Received one informal complaint for "rude conduct" for telling violator to "have a nice day" after issuing a traffic citation. There have been no further complaints of similar reported behavior.
2. Behave in ways to bring credit to the department	<b>S</b>	<b>Jan 15:</b> Received commendation from citizens group for investigation and arrest of arson suspect who was responsible for burning 12 cars. <b>July 12:</b> Received commendation from DA office for handling of sexual assault case resulting in criminal conviction of suspect for 12 felonies.

		<p><b>Nov 2:</b> Represented Department at community meeting for racism and provided panel with input on potential violations of law and reporting requirements.</p> <p><b>Dec 7:</b> Received award from MADD for active role arresting drunk drivers.</p>
3. Your behavior and actions must be consistent with the City and Department's Mission Statement, values and policies. Your interactions with the public will be service-oriented as exhibited by courtesy, integrity, respect, fairness, excellence and professionalism	<b>A</b>	

***Appearance and Grooming*** You are expected to maintain a clean, well groomed, professional appearance. Set the example. Present yourself in a manner most likely to inspire public confidence and respect

<b>Performance Standard</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Comments</b>
1. Comply with the standards set forth in the department uniform and grooming policy. Exercise good personal hygiene. Do not put yourself in a position where a supervisor must remind you that your appearance and grooming need attention.	<b>NI</b>	<p><b>April:</b> Reported for briefing on 3 occasions without shaving. Received documented counseling for 3<sup>rd</sup> offense.</p> <p><b>June 24:</b> Reported for duty wearing uniform pants with hole in knee. Did not have replacement uniform, had to be ordered to go to uniform store to replace uniform.</p> <p><b>Nov 27:</b> During uniform inspection it was discovered member did not have Class A uniform at station, as required by policy.</p>

**SAMPLE PIP**

**DAVIS POLICE DEPARTMENT**

**Memorandum**

**February 1, 2018**

**TO:** Ikan Dobetter, Police Officer

**FROM:** William Great, Police Sergeant

**SUBJECT:** Notification of Unacceptable Performance/Opportunity to Improve

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This memorandum is written confirmation that I am providing you with an opportunity to improve your performance to the acceptable level of a patrol officer. During the last evaluation period (May 2016 to May 2017) I determined there were performance gaps and that a performance improvement plan (PIP) is necessary.

I met with you on June 2, 2017, to discuss the previous year's evaluation and to notify you of my intent to place you on a PIP. During your performance review you were given specific examples of performance gaps and how you could make improvements.

The following is a list of performance standards that you do not currently meet.

- **Standard-** Provide pro-active patrol services to your beat based on the conditions and needs of that particular beat (Beat Management).
- **Standard-** Provide pro-active traffic enforcement in accordance to the needs of your beat (Beat Management).
- **Standard-** Your activity levels should be comparable to your peers in liked conditions as considered over the previous 12 months. (Beat Management).

**Examples of performance gaps include, but are not limited to:**

Officer Dobetter has been assigned to either beat 1 or beat 3 during the past year. In almost all areas of proactive patrol, Officer Dobetter needs improvement. He has not been productive and has not engaged the criminal issues in his beat. Several examples of this are:

- Officer Dobetter has not made a self-initiated arrest in two and a half years. His last self-initiated arrest in RIMS was in January of 2014, shortly after he completed FTO training.
- Officer Dobetter has not written a citation for a speed violation in almost 3 years (August 2013) when he was in FTO training. When asked about this, Officer Dobetter said that he dislikes writing speed citations. This does not address the concerns repeatedly expressed by

community members to the department for additional speed enforcement. He did not issue a bicycle citation during the past year. Officer Dobetter did issue approximately 75 traffic citations last year, but 50 of those (two-thirds) were for stop signs or red light violations. I would like to see him expand the types of violations which he enforces.

- Officer Dobetter has not conducted any residential probation or parole searches.
- During the “Overlap” between Swings and Night shifts, special enforcement activities (i.e. DUI Task Force, Downtown foot patrol, burglary saturation, etc.) are often scheduled. On Swing shift, Officer Dobetter has never volunteered for a special assignment activity.
- Officer Dobetter has not attempted a warrant service at a suspect’s house except for a single time where he assisted another officer with a warrant service.

As part of this PIP, you will receive written monthly evaluations for the next six months from your shift supervisor. The evaluations will specifically cover, but are not limited to, your performance in the performance areas where there is a gap.

You have several years of police experience. It is expected the quality of your work reflect that experience. While this plan specifically addresses only three performance areas, improvement in those areas cannot be at the expense of your performance in all areas. You must meet all performance standards for your position.

At the completion of the 6-month period I will make an overall assessment of your performance using the monthly evaluations. If you meet the standards for your position, the PIP will end.

You must obtain acceptable ratings for all performance standards for one year from the beginning of this opportunity period.

If you have any concerns about this memorandum, need further examples of performance gaps, need re-training, or require additional guidance on implementing the provisions of this plan, please let me know as soon as possible.

Please sign a copy of this memorandum, which serves only to acknowledge your receipt of this notice.

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**Officer Dobetter**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**William Great, Police Sergeant**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**