SUPERVISORY GUIDE TO CONDUCTING PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS

I. WHAT IS A PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL?

The performance appraisal is a supervisory tool used to acknowledge an employee’s contributions and achievements, to foster performance in the employee’s present job, and to provide development planning for the future. It is a systematic approach in which a verbal and written review of past performance is made, and plans are developed to improve future performance and to support professional growth.

II. WHY DO PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS?

The performance appraisal is an opportunity to clarify overall job requirements and enables the supervisor and employee to discuss expectations and plans for the employee’s performance. In promoting two-way communication, the appraisal process can positively influence the working relationship between the supervisor and the employee which can increase employee motivation and job satisfaction.

III. THE PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL PROCESS

Completing the appraisal form

- Before completing the appraisal form that was provided by the Human Resources Department, please review past performance appraisals as well as any other notes or documents you may have on the employee. Never focus on one specific incident or on what occurred most recently. It is important to keep in mind that the appraisal is based on performance which spans the past year, or some portion of it if the employee is new to the position.

- Remember, just because an employee performs poorly in one area doesn’t make the employee’s overall performance bad. The same goes for good performance.

- Avoid bias about an employee based on your personal feelings for that individual.

- Don’t overrate a poor performer as a motivational tool.
- Be candid and honest about both negative and positive evaluations.

- Indicate a specific course of action for the employee’s developmental planning. The plan should include both the employee’s and the supervisor’s responsibilities. Indicate milestones and dates for progress checks during the next year.

- Don’t rush through filling out the appraisal. Take your time to record accurate information which truly reflects the employee’s performance. Make sure the form is complete.

Preparing for the Discussion

- Be prepared – know the objectives and goals of the meeting.

- Give the employee advance notice of the meeting.

- Arrange for privacy. Avoid interruptions by the telephone or walk-ins. Find a suitable location if your office is not conducive to privacy.

- Allow adequate time for the session so the desired results can be realized.

- Plan the conclusion of the discussion. When and how would you like the discussion to end and what you expect the next steps to be.

A well prepared performance discussion communicates a message. It lets employees know that they and their work are valued.

Conducting the Performance Appraisal Discussion

- Create a positive environment and help the employee feel at ease.

- Give balanced feedback, both positive and negative; it is recommended to start and end with a positive.

- Focus on the job not the person.

- Ask questions and allow the employee to provide feedback.

- When discussing areas for improvement, discuss methods and objectives for improving.

- If appropriate, discuss possibilities for advancement, the employee’s aspirations and professional development.
- Ideally, the employee should leave the discussion feeling good about the opportunity to get together with his/her supervisor and discuss performance, know where he/she stands, be clear about future expectations, and feel involvement and support from the supervisor.

Following the Discussion

- Allow the employee time to reflect on the discussion and provide his/her comments and signature on the appraisal form. A follow-up meeting for discussion may be desired by the supervisor or employee; the opportunity should be offered to do so.

If you foresee any unusual, difficult, or sensitive situations in appraising an employee’s performance or discussing the appraisal with the employee, you may find it helpful to first review the situation with your supervisor and/or a member of the Human Resources staff.