

Employee Performance Management & Discipline

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Framework for Performance Management

COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION
Strategic Alignment	Link employee goals to organizational objectives
Quantifiable Metrics	Use measurable indicators like service delivery times
Regular Reviews	Annual and probationary evaluations mandated
Documentation	Maintain detailed records for compliance and improvement
Continuous Feedback	Encourage coaching and mentoring throughout the year

Strategic Alignment

- While many organizations have a strategic plan and follow it for many of their business actions, many municipal governments are not as diligent in using the plan to guide their actions, especially when it comes to employee performance management.
- What is the next best practice?
 - Supervisors should be familiar with the basic purpose of their department or division.
 - Using this basic understanding should provide enough to ensure that employees are meeting the performance needs of the department or division.
 - Example: a water distribution division's purpose is to ensure the distribution of water is maintained to citizens.
 - What is the basic knowledge, skills, and abilities that an employee needs to have to meet division performance standards?
- This information should be captured in the employee's job description. It is always recommended that supervisors periodically review job descriptions to ensure evaluations are conducted in accordance with them.

Quantifiable Metrics

- It is imperative for proper documentation of the employee's performance that supervisors use measurable indicators.
 - Here are some examples:
 - Work orders completed per month.
 - Average time to complete work orders.
 - Preventive maintenance tasks completed on schedule.
 - Emergency response jobs completed within the target time.
 - After-hours call-outs responded to within X minutes.
 - Lost-time accidents.
 - Training completion rate.
 - Tardiness

Important Note!

- In order for supervisors to be able to input specific measurable indicators into an employee's performance evaluation, there will need to be notes made throughout the review period for the supervisor to remember.
- It is highly suggested to make notes on employee's performance throughout the review period for the supervisor to review at the time of the review.
- Many current performance management systems, have the ability for supervisors to make notes in the system for a specific employee.

Regular Reviews are Necessary

- At least an annual review is recommended.
- Other recommended reviews include:
 - Probationary review
 - Check-in review
 - These are helpful to keep employees on track with timelines and other job-related requirements.
 - It also provides additional documentation that the supervisor is actively managing performance.
 - Check-ins do not need to be lengthy and can last as little as 10 minutes.
 - Example: an employee needs to complete a certification. The supervisor has a ten-minute conversation with the employee about their progress and asks whether anything is needed. Supervisor documents the conversation, and it is done.

Documentation

- Document
- Document
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- If it is not documented, it did not occur.
- Documentation will save headaches, time, and money.



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Continuous Feedback

- Performance management is an everyday process.
- Do not hesitate to provide feedback when performance, or lack of, requires it.
 - Consult with HR immediately to develop the proper approach and process to address performance issues as they develop.
 - Failure to address performance issues **will** affect morale eventually.
 - Immediate attention to performance issues can provide supervisors with documentation to support future personnel decisions
- The purpose of performance management is to communicate expectations and requirements and provide an opportunity to coach employees to success.

Employee Evaluation Processes and Legal Considerations

BEST PRACTICE

PURPOSE

Job-Related Criteria

Ensure fairness and relevance to role

Regular Intervals

Maintain consistency and predictability

Employee Acknowledgment

Confirm receipt of evaluation

Quantifiable Measures

Provide objective performance data

Legal Compliance

Prevent discrimination and protect employer

Job-related Criteria

- Supervisors are strongly encouraged to use job-related criteria to evaluate employees.

- Supervisors should refrain from using language that may seem opinionated.

Example of an opinionated statement:

The employee wastes time in the morning, and this supervisor feels the employee could manage their time better.

Example of a job-related and specific performance-based statement:

Throughout the review period, the employee has been coached on improving their morning routine to prepare more efficiently for daily activities and tasks. These check-in sessions were held in May, July, and August. Since the last check-in session, there has been no improvement in the employee's routine, and it continues to affect the employee's ability to initiate tasks efficiently. *It is also beneficial to identify specific behaviors that are preventing the employee from preparing efficiently.*

Regular Intervals

- Check-ins are crucial to document the supervisor's response to poor performance.
 - It shows that the employee was made aware of the performance issue.
 - It shows that the supervisor provided an opportunity for coaching.
 - If more than one check-in is needed, it shows a trend of poor performance.
 - If performance improves, it provides documentation of successful performance management.



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Employee Acknowledgement


- During the annual review process, it is imperative to get employee acknowledgement.
 - The acknowledgement will be key if further disciplinary action is needed.
- Formal employee acknowledgement is not necessarily required but always consult with your HR department to ensure compliance with your organizations performance management policy.



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Legal Compliance

- The key to maintaining general compliance with employee evaluations is to be consistent among all employees when it comes to performance.
 - In other words, if one employee is rated as needing improvement for a certain issue, all employees with a similar issue also should be rated equally.
- Refrain from using any language that refers to the employee's age, race, ethnicity, religion, or other legally protected status.
- Focus on performance, as stated in standard operating procedures, employee manuals, and job descriptions. Use objective observations.
- Annual performance reviews should not be the first time an employee hears about a performance issue.
- When in doubt, consult with your HR and legal to ensure legal compliance. 

Using Training and Goals to Steer Performance

- Review the quality of on-the-job training employees receive.
- Is there an opportunity to use a tuition reimbursement program?
- Is there a mentor who can assist the employee?
- Are you providing regular feedback and direction?
- Are we working with employees to develop goals and develop S.M.A.R.T. objectives with each goal?
 - S.M.A.R.T. objectives are:
 - Specific – Clearly states what is to be done
 - Measurable – Can be quantified or verified
 - Achievable – It is realistic given the employee's role and available resources
 - Relevant – It is tied to the employee's job duties and departmental goals
 - Time-bound – It has a defined deadline.

Performance Management in a Nutshell

- Performance management is a two-way street.
 - Employees and supervisors must work together to provide growth for the employee, which is intended to result in better service to our communities.
- The annual evaluation is the “employee plan” for how they will meet the needs of the organization and excel in the organization.
- Check-ins provide continuous feedback.
 - Check-ins can be to address poor performance or to praise for excellent performance.
- Performance management is a day-to-day process and not just something we do once a year.

city of
**Employee Disciplinary
Actions**



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Legal Framework in Texas

- It is imperative that employers follow state and federal employment laws, including discrimination and termination rules.
 - It is recommended that prior to performing disciplinary action towards an employee, consultation with HR and/or legal should occur.
- Progressive discipline is recommended:
 - Warnings/counseling
 - Probation
 - Suspension
 - Demotion
 - Discharge
- Depending on organizational policy, there are instances where progressive discipline is not required. Consultation with HR is strongly recommended in these situations.

Examples of Progressive Discipline

- Oral or written warnings/counseling sessions.
 - Sessions should be documented, with employee acknowledgement.
- Performance improvement plan with clear expectations and timeframes.
- Suspension with or without pay.
- Demotion or reassignment.
- Final warning prior to involuntary termination.



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Documentation Requirements

- All actions must be given to the employee and a copy placed in the personnel file.
 - If an employee refuses to sign the document, there is no need to force the employee to sign. A “refuse to sign” comment can be made to the employee’s signature line.
 - The supervisor should let the employee know that refusal to sign does not stop this from being placed in the employee’s file.
- Include dates of incident, date of disciplinary action, policy that was infringed, details of the incident, expected improvements, and possible consequences if improvements are not made.
 - It is also recommended to indicate how long the disciplinary action will be considered in the event other actions are taken.
- Always follow your organization’s disciplinary policy.

Best Practices

- Apply discipline consistently to avoid discrimination claims.
- Ensure regular training for supervisors, especially new supervisors.
 - Training should include proper documentation and legal compliance.
- Do not delay disciplinary actions once a violation is observed.
- Maintain confidentiality and professionalism during the disciplinary process.



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Employee Discipline in a Nutshell

- These types of employee interactions are difficult.
- Addressing issues as soon as possible will prevent more issues down the road.
- Attempt to focus on the improvement of the employee and relay the desire to assist the employee to improve.
- Document, Document, and Document.
- Consult with HR, often to ensure compliance with organizational policy.



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Wrap-up

- Adherence to federal, state, and organization policy is paramount.
- Employee performance management and employee discipline often occur together.
 - Each one should be performed with the intent to improve the employee and give the best opportunity for success.
- Documentation is key to ensuring the supervisor provides a complete picture of the employee's performance or need for disciplinary action.
- Evaluations and discipline actions should be carried out consistently.
- The use of objective information assists in providing an unbiased description of the employee
 - S.M.A.R.T. goals assist in the development of the employee in a best practice manner.
- Consultation with HR is recommended to avoid legal issues.

Questions

