

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

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All Department and Activity Heads are requested to post this Bulletin in all work places and ensure that all employees have access to this information.

CSC Bulletin 14-03

July 31, 2014

To: All Department and Activity Heads:

Subject: Performance Evaluations (NMIAC §10-20.2 Part 700)

The Director of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has advised the Civil Service Commission that performance evaluations are not being submitted on all Civil Service employees. The Personnel Service System Rules and Regulations (PSSR&R) require that an annual written rating of performance be submitted by the supervisor on the employment anniversary date of each employee. Failure to do so is not only non-compliance with the regulations (NMIAC §10-20.2-710), but it also adversely affects both management and the employee. Consequently, the Commission has directed the OPM to correct this problem by providing guidance and education to the Departments and Activities and exercising greater oversight, following up on all performance evaluations to ensure timely submission.

The annual performance evaluation is a key component of the Government's personnel management system. The evaluation program establishes an employee work performance review system which should be utilized to recognize, evaluate and reward employees for their contributions toward increasing efficiency and economy in the Personnel Service. **Although Within-Grade and Merit Increases are still suspended due to lack of government funding, this does not relieve management from the responsibility to evaluate their employees annually, nor does it negate the purposes and values of the performance evaluation program.**

Performance evaluations can benefit employees and their Department or Activity by clarifying goals and expectations, and creating an environment of open communication. Properly conducted performance evaluations should be counselling sessions that offer both positive and negative feedback and advice for improvement, and typically consist of a conversation between management and the employee.

Performance evaluations help supervisors and employees to identify strengths and weaknesses of employee performance. These evaluations offer an opportunity for supervisors and employees to

discuss the employee's goals for himself, the supervisor's goals for their part of the Department and ways that the employee and the supervisor can work together by further developing skills and strengths necessary to reach these goals.

The best performance evaluations create a link between individual employee expectations and how the employee's work contributes to the larger organization's success. Evaluations clarify expectations that the supervisor has for the employee and help the employee prioritize his duties. Ideally, performance evaluations open the lines of communication between supervisors and employees.

Performance evaluations benefit management as well as individual employees. Evaluations increase rapport between management and employees, increase job satisfaction and improve employees' sense of loyalty toward the Department. Performance evaluations assist the employee in seeing how his or her role in the organization contributes to the Department's overall success, thus increasing employee morale. All of these lead to higher productivity among employees, which improves organizational productivity.

A single annual performance evaluation should not be used as a substitute for consistent, open communication. Nothing should be surprising to the employee during the evaluation meeting. Any performance issues should have been addressed as soon as those issues occurred. After a performance evaluation, the supervisor should check in with the employee consistently to discuss his or her progress toward the goals set during the meeting. This will help keep employees motivated.

As provided in NMIAC §10-20.2-705, the employee performance evaluation is essential to:

- (a) Improve employee effectiveness by:
  - (1) Providing the working atmosphere in which an employee may be motivated to achieve the highest performance potential; and
  - (2) Identifying work performance standards agreed to by both management and employee.
- (b) Strengthen the employee-supervisory relationship by:
  - (1) Establishing a framework for continuing employee-supervisor communications regarding performance standards and development of employee potential; and
  - (2) Guaranteeing employees the opportunity to participate in the establishment of performance standards.
- (c) Provide management with an objective basis for relating employee work performance to a wide variety of pertinent personnel management activities.

Appointing authorities shall ensure that supervisors in their respective jurisdictions reach and maintain a clear understanding with their subordinates of the standards of work performance which must be met in order to successfully accomplish assigned work. The supervisor and the employee, on a person-to-person basis, must understand and agree on the work objectives set, the manner in which these objectives can be reached, and the way the employees' efforts will be evaluated. A review of the employee's position description is necessary, therefore, to assure such understanding of the duties, performance standards and work objectives established.

The regulations also provide responsibilities for all members of the management-employee team:

- (a) The **Director of Personnel** shall be responsible to:
  - (1) Develop, evaluate and improve the Personnel Service annual employee review system and performance rating report; and
  - (2) Provide advice, assistance and supervision in the administration of the system.
- (b) The **Appointing Authorities** shall be responsible to implement, administer and obtain compliance with the purposes of the system, including:
  - (1) Provide assistance to supervisors and employees in developing performance rating report;
  - (2) Provide training to supervisors so they can effectively evaluate employee performance; and
  - (3) Assure that employees understand the provisions, procedures and objectives of the performance evaluation plan.
- (c) **Supervisors** are responsible to:
  - (1) Assure that position descriptions accurately reflect the duties and responsibilities assigned;
  - (2) Determine jointly with each employee the performance standards to be met and keep each employee advised of strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for improvement;
  - (3) Conduct the annual employee performance reviews; and
  - (4) Initiate appropriate personnel actions in cases of continuing unsatisfactory performance.
- (d) The **Employee** is responsible to:
  - (1) Request clarification from the supervisor of any performance ratings, work objectives or duties which are not clearly understood;
  - (2) Advise the supervisor of any fact or circumstance which the employee believes should be considered during the review process;
  - (3) Participate in performance evaluation discussions, in the development of performance standards, and make suggestions for improving performance; and
  - (4) Certify the performance evaluation ratings.

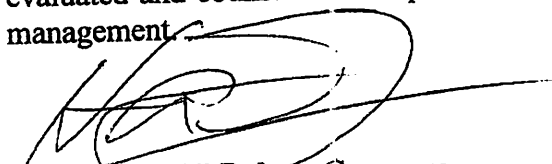
In addition the regulations also provide additional guidance and instruction:

- (a) Employees who believe their ratings are unjust shall be entitled to appeal as provided for in § 10-20.2-282 of this subchapter.
- (b) Non-Commonwealth employees (non-employee contractors, federal advisors, etc.) shall not be delegated the authority to supervise employees of the Commonwealth.
- (c) Supervisors do not have a right to retain an employee in a position in which the employee's overall rating is "unsatisfactory." To permit such a situation would not be in the best public interest and would not be consistent with good management principles. Supervisors must initiate the necessary personnel action to have such an employee reassigned, demoted or separated from the position at the earliest possible date.

The Office of Personnel Management is available to assist the Departments, as requested, with answers to questions regarding the performance evaluation process, or to provide training to management and administrative staff, as needed. One of the major responsibilities of the

Commission is to protect the interests of civil service employees by ensuring compliance with the regulations.

I encourage all Department Heads to take steps to make sure that their employees are properly evaluated and counseled as required by the civil service regulations and the principles of good management.



**Herman "HR" Deleon Guerrero**  
**Chairman, Civil Service Commission**

cc: Governor  
Lieutenant Governor  
All Members of the Senate  
All Members of the House of Representatives  
Public Auditor  
Attorney General  
Director of Personnel