

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
Employee Performance Management System (EPMS) Policy

THE LANGUAGE USED IN THIS DOCUMENT DOES NOT CREATE AN EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT BETWEEN THE EMPLOYEE AND THE AGENCY. THIS DOCUMENT DOES NOT CREATE ANY CONTRACTUAL RIGHTS OR ENTITLEMENTS. THE AGENCY RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REVISE THE CONTENT OF THIS DOCUMENT, IN WHOLE OR IN PART. NO PROMISES OR ASSURANCES, WHETHER WRITTEN OR ORAL, WHICH ARE CONTRARY TO OR INCONSISTENT WITH THE TERMS OF THIS PARAGRAPH CREATE ANY CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT.

GENERAL INFORMATION

All performance appraisals will be completed by the employee's supervisor (the rater) who has direct experience or knowledge of the work being performed. The next higher-level supervisor (the reviewer) will review the appraisal, unless the rater is the Agency head, prior to the appraisal being discussed with the employee. The reviewer may attach additional comments to the appraisal, and in the attachment may take exception to any of the rater's appraisal points. In addition, the reviewer has the authority to change the appraisal completed by the rater. If the reviewer elects to change the rating, the change and the associated justification should be noted on the appraisal document. Whenever an employee's job responsibilities significantly change, the appraisal document should be revised to reflect that change. The final appraisal must bear the signature of the rater, the reviewer and the employee, if possible. If any party refuses to sign the appraisal, a notation of such shall be made on the performance appraisal. If possible, a witness should sign to acknowledge that the party refused to sign the appraisal. The appraisal will be keyed into HR Suite by the rater or his/her designee.

All performance appraisals will become a permanent part of the employee's official personnel file. Upon request, the Agency will furnish the employee a copy of the performance appraisal, with copies of all pertinent attachments including the form completed at the time of the planning stage and the final appraisal form.

The provisions of this policy address the appraisal process of both probationary and covered employees. Although not mentioned specifically in this policy, employees exempt from coverage under the State Employee Grievance Procedure Act shall also be given annual performance appraisals.

TRAINING

EPMS training is encouraged for all employees within the Agency. New employees will be briefed on the performance appraisal system during the Agency's orientation session(s).

DEFINITIONS

Established Review Date – The employee’s review date as established in accordance with State Human Resources Regulations.

Universal Review Date- The date prior to which all employees’ performance reviews are due. March 17 will be the universal review date for the Agency. (Exceptions: “probationary” employees and “trial” employees).

Short Year Planning Stage – An EPMS planning stage document covering a period of time less than twelve (12) months. (Exception: “trial” period planning stages)

Short Year Review – A performance appraisal that evaluates an employee’s performance for a period of time less than twelve (12) months. (Exceptions: “trial” period reviews and “warning notice” reviews)

IMPLEMENTATION

Once an employee reaches his/her Established Review Date, the employee will receive a Short Year Planning Stage and Short Year Review in order to move the employee from the Established Review Date to the Universal Review Date.

LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE

There will be four levels of performance to rate each performance requirement and objective and to rate overall performance:

1. Substantially Exceeds Performance Requirements (SE)
Work that is characterized by exemplary accomplishments throughout the rating period; performance that is considerably and consistently above the criteria of the job function
2. Exceeds Performance Requirements (E)
Work that is above the criteria of the job function throughout the rating period
3. Meets Performance Requirements (M)
Work that meets the criteria of the job function
4. Below Performance Requirements (B)
Work that fails to meet the criteria of the job function

Performance Characteristics must not be rated by the four levels of performance, but must be given a rating of Pass or Fail.

1. Pass
Meets requirements
2. Fail
Fails to meet requirements

Effective March 17, 2014

The Agency will convert its four levels of performance ratings to the three levels of performance ratings prior to entering into the Central Human Resource Data System as follows:

Agency Performance Level	Performance Level to be entered into the Central Human Resource Data System
Substantially Exceeds Performance Requirements	Exceptional
Exceeds Performance Requirements	
Meets Performance Requirements	Successful
Below Performance Requirements	Unsuccessful

PLANNING STAGE

Each employee must have a planning stage conducted at the beginning of each rating period. This should occur no later than six (6) weeks after the completion of the most recent performance review. The employee’s performance requirements and standards, objectives, and performance characteristics for the next rating period will be discussed at this time. The rater and the employee should participate in drafting the planning stage document. The reviewing officer and the rater should discuss the requirements for the coming year prior to the planning stage. A rater may incorporate a team activity into the planning stage document. The team performance being evaluated could constitute a job function, an objective, or one criterion for a particular performance standard or objective. A rater may also link the employee’s training plan to the planning stage document.

PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS/STANDARDS

The rater and the employee will determine the performance requirements and standards for employees’ job duties and objectives. In those instances where the rater and the employee cannot agree upon the performance requirements and standards, the rater’s decision will be final. The statement outlining the performance requirements and standards should include descriptive information about the performance standard required of the employee. The descriptive statement should specify the expectations of the rater for the employee to meet performance requirements. Each performance requirement and standard must be rated in the evaluation stage based on the four levels of performance.

To reduce subjectivity in the evaluation, a weighted system will be utilized. Each performance requirement and standard will be assigned a weighted factor. This value, or percentage, will represent the impact the requirement has on successful performance of the job. Performance requirements and standards (which are established for both job duties and objectives) will contribute to the overall performance rating and the percentages assigned must equal 100%.

Performance Requirements and Standards - Job Duties:

Performance requirements and standards related to employees' job duties will be established by reviewing the employee's position description. If the position description is not up-to-date, or if there is no position description, one must be prepared and submitted for approval.

It is mandatory for all managers and supervisors to be rated on the performance requirement of "promoting equal opportunity." (Promoting equal opportunity includes such areas as hiring, promotion, or placement; level of personal and organizational commitment to equal opportunity; progress toward achieving a fully integrated and representative work force; and contribution toward minority programs and other social/economic equal opportunity goals.)

It is mandatory for all raters to be evaluated on the timely completion of each employee's annual performance evaluation

Performance Requirements and Standards - Objectives:

Objectives are optional for all employees. An objective should be included when the employee is assigned a special, non-recurring, project or assignment that is not included on the employee's position description.

PERFORMANCE CHARACTERISTICS

A list of performance characteristics and their definitions is provided in the planning stage document. Each performance characteristic must be discussed during the planning stage and rated as "Pass" or "Fail" in the evaluation stage. The performance characteristics section will be used as a communication tool to emphasize those performance characteristics that are important to success in performing the job functions and objectives included in the planning document. The performance characteristics section must not be weighted in the determination of the overall performance rating. In the event that a rating of "Fail" is given on a performance characteristic, the rater must address the issue in the "Summary and Improvement Plan" section of the EPMS form.

EMPLOYEE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Each year, in conjunction with the development of the employee's EPMS Planning Stage, an Employee Professional Development Plan will be developed. Supervisors and their respective employees will identify at least three (3) professional development activities to be successfully completed during the upcoming year in an effort to assist the employee in acquiring requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities to satisfactorily perform the requirements of his/her job as well as to prepare for career advancement. Professional development activities may include courses (both classroom-based and e-learning), On the Job Training (OJT), On the Job Learning (OJL), job-related conferences, seminars, workshops, etc., as deemed appropriate by the employee's supervisor(s). Agency-required courses may count toward the requirement of at least three (3) professional development activities that an employee is required to complete annually. Professional development activities will not be assigned a weight and are not factored into the final numerical score.

ONGOING PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

To facilitate communication and provide periodic feedback to employees regarding their performance, the Agency has instituted the Mid-Year **Feedback Form**. This form must be completed by September 30th of each year and should document the employee's performance for the period of March through September. This form should be kept on file by the rater.

In addition to the **required** Mid-Year Feedback Form, a rater should provide performance feedback to employees throughout the review period and may conduct unofficial appraisals more frequently than required in this policy.

PROBATIONARY PERIODS

Each new employee in probationary status must be rated prior to the completion of a twelve-month probationary period. **The performance review date marks the beginning of a new review period. If that employee does not receive a performance appraisal prior to the performance review date, the employee will receive a "Meets Performance Requirements" rating by default and obtain covered status as a State employee and permanent status in the class.** The probationary period cannot be extended. After satisfactory completion of the probationary period, the employee may receive a short year planning stage and a short year review in order to move the employee to the universal review date.

If an employee is not performing satisfactorily during the probationary period, the employee will be terminated before becoming a covered employee. Until an employee has completed the probationary period and has a "Meets Performance Requirements" or higher overall rating on the employee's evaluation, the employee has no grievance rights under the State Employee Grievance Procedure Act; therefore, an agency is not required to follow the "Substandard Performance Process" to terminate a probationary employee.

TRIAL PERIODS

Each covered employee who has been demoted, promoted, or reclassified must be evaluated prior to the completion of a six-month trial period in the position. The performance review date marks the beginning of a new review period. **If an employee does not receive a performance appraisal prior to the performance review date, the employee will receive a "Meets Performance Requirements" rating by default and obtain permanent status in the new classification.** Once an employee has completed a successful trial period and obtained permanent status in a class, the employee retains permanent status in the class throughout the employee's continuous service. The six-month trial period may be extended up to 90 calendar days upon written notice to the employee prior to the end of the six-month trial period. The employee's performance review date must be advanced for the time period such extension is in effect. After satisfactory completion of the trial period, the employee may require a short year planning stage and a short year review in order to move the employee back to the universal review date.

The "Substandard Performance Process," Form HR-25, is not required to demote or reclassify downward an employee in trial status to the same class from which promoted, if the demotion or reclassification occurs within the trial period. The "Substandard Performance Process", Form HR-25, is not required to demote or reclassify downward an employee in trial status to a class in an equal or higher pay band from which promoted, if the demotion or reclassification occurs within the trial period. The employee in trial

status cannot grieve such demotion. The employee in trial status cannot be terminated or demoted to a class in a lower pay band than that from which promoted for performance reasons without following the “Substandard Performance Process,” Form HR-25.

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

All employees must be given an annual appraisal no more than 90 calendar days prior to the employee’s performance review date. The employee on approved leave with or without pay for more than 30 consecutive workdays may have the performance review date advanced up to 90 days after those first 30 workdays. A covered employee who receives a “Warning Notice of Substandard Performance” within 30 calendar days of his/her performance review must have the performance review date advanced up to 90 days.

The performance review date marks the beginning of a new review period. If an employee does not receive an appraisal prior to the performance review date, the employee will receive a “Meets Performance Requirements” rating by default. A covered employee cannot be issued an overall “Below Performance Requirements” rating at any time during the annual review period without following the “Substandard Performance Process,” Form HR-25. If the review date is advanced and the employee receives a “Meets Performance Requirements” or above rating, a short year planning stage and a short year review period may be required in order to move the employee back to the universal review date.

SUBSTANDARD PERFORMANCE PROCESS FOR COVERED EMPLOYEES

A covered employee is entitled to adequate notice of substandard performance and the opportunity to improve the substandard performance before receiving a “Below Performance Requirements” rating and being removed from the position. To ensure this occurs, the following procedures must be followed:

1. A rater must issue a “Warning Notice of Substandard Performance,” Form HR-25, prior to issuing a “Below Performance Requirements” rating to a covered employee. During the performance period, if an employee’s performance is considered “Below Performance Requirements” in **any** essential job function or objective which significantly impacts performance, the rater must prepare a “Warning Notice of Substandard Performance,” Form HR-25, for review by the Human Resources Office. The warning notice must provide for an improvement period of no less than 30 calendar days and no more than 120 calendar days. The warning notice may be issued at any time during the review period. Ordinarily, the warning period may not extend beyond the employee’s review date. However, if the warning notice is issued less than 30 calendar days before the employee’s review date, the performance review date will be advanced up to 90 calendar days. If the review date is advanced and the employee receives a “Meets Performance Requirements” on all essential job functions/objectives which significantly impacts performance, the employee may require a short year planning stage and a short year review in order to transition the employee back to the universal review date.
2. The rater and the employee should participate in drafting a work improvement plan. The work improvement plan should include a list of ways to improve the deficiencies and other appropriate performance related recommendations. In instances where the rater and employee cannot agree on the content of the work improvement plan, the rater’s decision will be final.

Effective March 17, 2014

3. During the warning period, the employee and the rater must have regularly scheduled meetings to discuss the employee's progress. Documentation is required for verification of the counseling sessions. Copies of this documentation must be placed in the employee's official personnel file and another copy given to the employee upon request.
4. If the employee's performance is rated "Meets Performance Requirements" or above, on all essential job functions/objectives which significantly impact performance, noted in the warning notice by the end of the warning period, employment will continue. If, during the warning notice period, the employee is rated "Below Performance Requirements" on any essential job function or objective which significantly impacts performance as noted in the warning notice, the employee must be removed from the position immediately (i.e., reassigned, demoted, or terminated).
5. Once a time frame for improving substandard performance has been given, the employee must receive a written appraisal prior to the end of the warning period or the employee will receive a "Meets Performance Requirements" rating by default.
6. If an employee has been issued two (2) "Warning Notices of Substandard Performance," within a 365 calendar day period and performance drops to a substandard level on any essential job function/objective, which significantly impacts performance, for a third time within the 365 calendar day period, the employee must be removed from the position upon the third recurrence of such substandard performance by issuing the "Below Performance Requirements" appraisal. A "Warning Notice of Substandard Performance," is not required on the third occurrence.

WARNING NOTICE OF SUBSTANDARD PERFORMANCE

The requirements of a "Warning Notice of Substandard Performance" are:

1. The notice must be in writing, addressed to the employee, labeled as a "Warning Notice of Substandard Performance," and signed by the employee (witnessed, if employee will not sign).
2. The notice must list the job function(s) and/or objective(s) included on the employee's planning document that are considered "Below Performance Requirements," with an explanation of the deficiencies for each job function and/or objective.
3. The notice must include the time period for improvement and the consequences if no improvement is noted (i.e., terminated, reassigned, demoted).
4. The notice must include a plan for meetings to discuss employee progress during the warning period.

| A copy of the notice must be given to the employee and placed in the employee's official personnel file.

Model Weighted System

		<u>Range</u>
Substantially Exceeds Performance Requirements	(SE) – 4	3.5 and Above
Exceeds Performance Requirements	(E) – 3	2.5 to 3.4
Meets Performance Requirements	(M) – 2	1.5 to 2.4
Below Performance Requirements	(B) – 1	1.4 and Below
Pass (P)		
Fail (F)		

During the planning stage, the rater and employee will determine a weight for each individual job duty/objective. Performance characteristics will not be given a numerical score, but will be given a rating of Pass/Fail.

Model System - Example

	<u>Weighted Factor</u>	<u>Rating</u>	<u>Numerical Score</u>
4 Duties	30%	E	$30 \times 3 = 90$
	20%	M	$20 \times 2 = 40$
	15%	E	$15 \times 3 = 45$
	5%	M	$5 \times 2 = 10$
2 Objectives	15%	SE	$15 \times 4 = 60$
	<u>15%</u>	M	$15 \times 2 = \underline{30}$
Total	100%		275
3 Characteristics		P	
		P	
		P	

Divide the total numerical score, 275, by the total weight factor, 100, and you get 2.75 which will give the employee an overall performance appraisal rating of Exceeds Performance Requirements.