



Tips and Tidbits
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Question: How does a supervisor document and handle poor employee performance?

One of the first requirements for either a new supervisor or a supervisor with a new employee is to develop a performance plan that outlines the objectives the employee is expected to meet. These objectives, driven by the individual's position description and the organization's strategic goals, should be provided to the employee within the first 30 days of the performance cycle. The objectives should be communicated to and discussed with the employee. During this conversation, performance expectations, work elements, and the relationship between the employee's accomplishments and the achievement of organizational goals should be fully explained.

Accordingly, the employee's work achievements should then be monitored over a reasonable period of time, and all obvious failures to meet the objectives documented. Occurrences of performance deficiencies which include, but are not limited to, missed suspenses, incorrect information in projects, inattention to detail, and improperly staffed actions, should be sufficiently annotated with dates and specifics directly tying the performance issue to the employee's objectives. Supporting documentation, such as factual memorandums, documents with errors, and supervisor observations, will justify the rationale for making a decision on how to help the employee return to success as well as serve as back up for any action taken should the performance not improve.

If it is determined that the employee has fallen short in the performance of duties in one or more of the objectives due to level of knowledge, skills or abilities, **and** the performance standards have been in place for at least 120 days (TAPES) or 90 days (NSPS), a performance improvement plan (PIP) should be issued. The PIP will notify the employee of the standards they are failing, provide dates and specifics of the failure to perform, and outline what must be done to bring performance to a successful level.

A PIP typically lasts from 90 to 120 days, and during this period, the employee receives a combination of training, more frequent discussion concerning performance, and closer supervision. During these discussions with the employee, the supervisor should actively listen to employee concerns and provide advice and assistance in ways to rectify the performance problem. Of course, the nature of the problem will determine the course of action to be taken.

For example, the employee could be referred to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Coordinator to explore drug/alcohol abuse or family problems. Extenuating exigencies which could also be possible causes for the employees' performance problems include lack of training/education, motivation issues, illness, disability, or low morale.

Finally, there may be instances where both performance and conduct issues affect employee performance. In these cases, the supervisor can take action under either avenue or both simultaneously.

Please contact your servicing HR Specialist for additional information or assistance.

<p>This article solely addresses performance issues as they pertain to the inability to perform [as opposed to unwillingness to perform which is typically handled via disciplinary action]</p>

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