

ARKANSAS FORESTRY COMMISSION
PERFORMANCE EVALUATION POLICY & PROCEDURE
§ 125

Required forms: A125.100 and A205.200

Definitions:

Merit increase eligibility date is date of employee performance evaluation date and eligibility date for possible annual merit increase/bonus.

Task is a brief statement describing an observable job activity.

Duty area is the grouping of tasks into essential functions of an employee's job.

Performance standard is a statement of requirements measuring various levels of performance such as quantity, quality, and timeliness.

Performance plan is the tasks, duty areas, performance indicators, associated performance standards and uniform performance evaluation categories for any given rating period.

Level of performance is a level of documented accomplishment as measured against the uniform performance evaluation categories.

Rating supervisor is the official, usually the immediate supervisor, who initially appraises the employee's performance and determines/recommends a performance rating.

Performance rating is the annual official summary of an employee's performance during the rating period (unsatisfactory, satisfactory, above average, or exceeds standards).

Reviewing/Designated Official is the official who reviews recommended performance ratings and approves or disapproves the final rating.

Performance evaluation is the appraisal of an employee's performance measured against the performance standards of the employee's position.

Uniform Performance Evaluation Categories are specified in Ark. Code Ann. § 21-5-1002:

- A. Unsatisfactory – an overall performance of duties that is consistently unacceptable in quality, accuracy, and timeliness;
- B. Satisfactory – an overall evaluation that demonstrates competency in the performance of duties and responsibilities of the job;
- C. Above Average – an overall evaluation which demonstrates performance of the duties and responsibilities of the job at a level which is above the Satisfactory level of performance; and
- D. Exceeds Standards – an overall evaluation that demonstrates performance of the duties and responsibilities of the job and productivity at a level exceeding that of an Above Average evaluation.

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Policy:

Arkansas Code § 21-5-1003 requires that rating supervisors shall evaluate the performance of all regular employees no more than 90 days prior to the employee's merit increase eligibility date and complete the evaluation 30 days before the employee's merit increase eligibility date. Evaluations are based on measurable job standards set by the supervisor and employee at the beginning of a rating period.

Rating supervisors shall complete an exit performance evaluation of all employees terminating employment, promoting to a different position, or transferring to a different AFC Unit or position.

A standards-based evaluation system is used to improve supervisor/employee relationships and to improve the management of human resources. The system allows the employer and employee to monitor job performance progress. Evaluations are made on the basis of actual job performance.

The AFC Human Resources Department will ensure training for supervisors in the purpose and use of the Performance Evaluation Plan by scheduling training through the Department of Finance and Administration Inter-Agency Training course.

Coverage:

Employees occupying positions described in Ark. Code Ann. § 21-5-208 are covered by AFC Policy § 125.

Responsibilities:

State Forester (Director) is responsible for ensuring that performance plans are developed and approved by the Department of Finance and Administration - Office of Personnel Management Division, that the program is effectively carried out, and that employees are informed of the appraisal process and its operation.

Supervisors are responsible for daily operation of the performance evaluation system in their work areas. Supervisors will ensure that all employees are given a full explanation of their importance of performance evaluation, the standards in the employee's performance rating plan, the rating levels used, the significance of their use, and the appeal rights of employees.

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Human Resources Administrator is responsible for monitoring the progress of the performance evaluation program and evaluating its effectiveness. The Human Resources Administrator will ensure that training is provided to supervisors to effectively use the program in managing their workforce. The Human Resources Administrator will ensure that the original copy of the annual performance evaluation is placed in each employee's personnel file.

Performance/Oversight Committee serves at the pleasure of the State Forester and is responsible for reporting to the State Forester on various aspects of the Performance Evaluation System. This includes adequacy of standards and the establishment of uniform standards, monitoring performance evaluation ratings, adherence to the evaluation process, and consistency among raters. The Committee is responsible for hearing all employee appeals concerning performance ratings.

Administration of the Performance Evaluation Plan – Guidelines:

Merit/bonus raises may be paid annually at the discretion of the Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration based on adequate revenues to pay the raises. The date a merit/bonus raise is paid, if approved, is based on individual employees Merit Increase Eligibility Dates.

Employees in regular full time positions hired after October 1, 2006 will have eligibility dates based on their hire date. Example, employee hired on 5/15/07 will be eligible for a merit/bonus increase 5/15/08 (with completed evaluation due to the AFC Human Resources Office by 4/15/08).

Annual performance evaluations will be completed no more than 90 days before an employee's merit increase eligibility date. The completed evaluation form (A125.100) is due in AFC Human Resources Office no later than one month before the employee's merit increase eligibility date occurs. Contact Human Resources Office for form A125.100, Employee Evaluation Form. Form A205.200, Code of Ethics Annual Acknowledgement Statement must also be signed and attached.

The rating supervisor and the employee set standards for fully satisfactory performance at the beginning of an evaluation period, or not later than 30 days after the start of new duties, unless uniform job standards exist.

The rating supervisor and employee will develop standards from a list of essential job functions and will state the standards in terms of observable accomplishments, unless uniform job standards exist.

The rating supervisor will explain the standards to the employee.

The reviewing official or designated official will review the completed standards.

The rating supervisor will give a copy of the reviewed standards to the employee.

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If a rating supervisor is transferred to another unit or terminates employment, performance evaluations must be completed for employees before supervisor's exit date unless an evaluation was already completed within 90 days or less of the exit date.

If at any time during the evaluation period the rating supervisor believes that an employee's performance has fallen below an acceptable standard, the rating supervisor must conduct a performance evaluation and document the performance.

If the rating supervisor determines that the employee's overall performance is unsatisfactory, the rating supervisor will counsel the employee and place the employee on performance probation.

The completed performance evaluation will be reviewed and approved by the reviewing official or designated official.

Employees are allowed to request reconsideration of their performance evaluation. The request must be made to the rating supervisor, then to the reviewing official or designated official.

Probationary Procedures:

If at any time during the evaluation period the rating supervisor determines the employee's overall performance has become unsatisfactory, the rating supervisor will implement probationary procedures. The rating supervisor must document the unsatisfactory performance. The rating supervisor will counsel the employee on ways to improve performance and inform the employee of his/her probationary status. The duration of probation may not exceed 90 calendar days. During probation the rating supervisor will counsel the employee about his progress.

At the end of probation, the rating supervisor will conduct an evaluation. If the employee has met satisfactory performance, the rating supervisor will remove the employee from probationary status.

If the employee fails to improve performance to the satisfactory level, the rating supervisor may fire the employee or extend the probationary period and provide additional counseling. No more than one probationary period extension is permitted during a rating period.

Appeal Procedures:

- A. The employee may appeal a performance rating. If an employee disagrees with the supervisor's evaluation of his performance, the employee may ask the rating supervisor to reconsider the evaluation. This request must be in writing within *ten* calendar days of the evaluation interview, and the employee must state the reasons why he thinks the rating is inaccurate. The rating supervisor will review the reasons

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- for the disagreement and respond to the employee in writing within *ten* calendar days of receiving the request.
- B. If the employee and the rating supervisor cannot agree, the employee may appeal to the reviewing official or designated official using the same procedures. The employee may appeal the reviewing official's or designated official's decision to the Performance Evaluation Oversight Committee. The Committee will review all pertinent documentation and make a written recommendation to the State Forester. The decision of the State Forester is final and binding.
 - C. Appeal information is not kept in the employee's personnel file.

Repeal:

This revised AFC Performance Evaluation Policy § 125 supersedes all earlier versions of AFC Policy § 125 and interpretive memoranda, which are hereby repealed.