



POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

MONTGOMERY COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES

NO. 523

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DATE

October 10, 1989

TITLE

DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES
PERFORMANCE PLANNING AND APPRAISAL

DIRECTOR APPROVAL

SECTION 1: GENERAL GUIDELINES

PURPOSE

- 1.0 To set forth policies, responsibilities and procedures for employee performance planning and appraisal in the Department of Fire and Rescue Services for all merit system employees and for such non-merit employees as determined by appropriate elected officials whose period of employment will exceed 180 days duration.
- 1.1 To assure that the Department of Fire and Rescue Service Performance Planning and Appraisal Procedures conform to Montgomery County Government Administrative Procedure #4-12 (1983) entitled Performance Planning and Appraisal and Montgomery County Government Personnel Regulations (1986) Section 8. In areas not covered by these procedures, Administrative Procedure #4-12 will take precedence.

DEFINITIONS

- 2.0 Acceptable Performance - For Operations personnel covered by BARS, acceptable performance will be considered a score of 51 or above. For other personnel, for whom a numerical score is not calculated, overall acceptable performance will be indicated as an overall rating of fully satisfactory or above.
- 2.1 Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scales (BARS) - A type of appraisal process whereby most major duties, functions, or responsibilities that are part of a given position or job are identified. Specific levels of achievement that illustrate varying degrees of performance in a given performance standard are then established.
- 2.2 Conduct - Job related behavior which has an indirect impact on the quality or quantity of work (e.g. timely and regular attendance, attentiveness to work during duty hours, courtesy and professionalism in personal work contacts; or, on the other hand, repeated tardiness, frequent personal telephone calls or conversations during working hours, rude or abusive treatment of others).
- 2.3 Immediate Supervisor - The individual(s) responsible for assigning and evaluating an employee's work.
- 2.4 Major Tasks or Responsibilities - That portion of a performance plan which states the principle kinds of work the employee is expected to accomplish. This may be the BARS standards or goals established by the employee's supervisor(s).



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- 2.5 Performance - An employee's progress on, or accomplishment of, assigned work.
- 2.6 Performance Appraisal - One or more supervisors' written assessment of an employee's performance in relation to the expectations in the employee's performance plan.
- 2.7 Performance Guidelines - That portion of a performance plan which describes the qualities or characteristics of work (major tasks and responsibilities) performed at a fully satisfactory level.
- 2.8 Performance Plan - The document which records an employee's major responsibilities and performance expectations as established by his/her supervisor in consultation with the employee. The performance plan is the basis for assessments of the employee's performance. The plan may be unique to the individual, standardized for a specific classification or be made up of BARS Standards.
- 2.9 Performance Planning and Appraisal - The total process of developing work and performance objectives, observing, reviewing and appraising individual work performance, recognizing outstanding and superior performance, identifying areas for improvement, and working with employees to improve their effectiveness and efficiency and to make the best use of their knowledge, skills and abilities.
- 2.10 Performance Review - One or more supervisors' verbal assessment of an employee's performance in relation to the expectations in the performance plan. (A performance review is distinguished from supervisory conferences which may use the performance plan as a point of reference, but which are generally focused on one or more particular issues; see definition 2.13 below.)
- 2.11 Probationary Period - A continuation of the employment examination process which commences upon promotion or appointment to a full time or part time merit system position and provides an opportunity for the employee to demonstrate satisfactory performance.
- 2.12 Reviewing Official - The individual(s) responsible for reviewing and commenting on an employee's performance appraisal.
- 2.13 Supervisory Conference - Any discussion between an employee and his/her supervisor(s) about the employee's conduct or performance.



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POLICIES

- 3.0 The performance planning and appraisal program is directed toward the accomplishment of the following objectives:
- A. To encourage employees to work toward his/her own self development and fulfill his/her highest potential.
 - B. To help the Department of Fire and Rescue Services identify employees capable and willing to assume greater responsibilities.
 - C. To identify employees whose work performance is deficient.
 - D. To help the supervisor analyze the work of subordinates in order to assist them in overcoming any weaknesses.
 - E. To improve two-way communications between the employee and management.
- 3.1 Employees shall have a written appraisal at least once in every 12 month period no later than 60 days prior to the increment date. Review shall take place at the midpoint of the appraisal year.
- 3.2 Additional review sessions may be held at any time with the employee if needed to:
- A. Reevaluate objectives and goals.
 - B. Discuss any problems that either the employee or the supervisor(s) deems important to the employee's performance.
 - C. Give praise or discuss marginal or inadequate performance.
- 3.3 There will be no pre-established quota system for the distribution of expected performance levels.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.0 The Director, Department of Fire and Rescue Services, shall maintain a formal procedure to ensure timely submission of Planning Performance and Appraisal (PPA) forms, and notify supervisors when related PPA activities are due.
- 4.1 Each level of supervisor who reviews an appraisal is responsible for the operational aspects of the program including consistence, equity, and overall qualities.



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- 4.2 The immediate supervisor(s) is responsible for conducting the planning, the review, and the appraisal.

PROCEDURES

5.0 Performance Planning

A. Responsibility - The immediate supervisor(s) is responsible for initiating the performance planning process, providing an opportunity for employee input and, where applicable, deciding on the final content of the performance plan, or amending performance plans. Where more than one individual directly supervises an employee, each should participate fully in the process.

B. Initiation of the Appraisal Process - The initiation of an appraisal period will occur in conjunction with the end of the previous appraisal period and the completion of the previous appraisal document. Initiation shall occur early enough so that the evaluation process will be completed 60 days prior to the employees increment date. This will allow time for administrative processing to be completed by this date, which will allow for proper action on the Personnel Action Form (PAF), if applicable.

The exception to this rule is for new employees. New employees should be thoroughly familiarized with the appraisal system within 30 days of employment.

New employees assigned to the Operations Bureau (recruits) should be thoroughly familiarized with the BARS appraisal system once they are assigned to a station following satisfactory completion of recruit school.

The Chief and/or President of each fire and rescue corporation may provide, for consideration, written input into the performance planning process of the Senior Career Officer assigned to their Corporation.

C. Applicability - A performance plan is to be established for any period of employment which will exceed 180 days duration.

D. Frequency and Timing of Performance Planning - Performance plans should be established within 30 days after an employee begins work in a given position, and a new plan is to be established at least annually thereafter.



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[Signature]

New employees assigned to the Operation Bureau (recruits) will have performance plans established within 30 days after assignment to a station following satisfactory completion of recruit school.

E. Substance of Performance Plans

1. Each employee's performance plan is to state all major tasks or responsibilities for the job, and all significant performance guidelines for each major task or responsibility.
2. Performance guidelines other than Behavioral Anchored Rating Scales (BARS) are to describe a satisfactory level of performance in terms which are explicit and permit reasonably objective assessment.
3. Performance guidelines for Fire Fighter I, Fire Fighter II, Fire Fighter III, Master Fire Fighter, Sergeant, Lieutenant assigned to the Operations Bureau are listed in Section 3 of this manual, Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scales (BARS).
4. The performance plan of every supervisor shall include performance planning and appraisal for subordinates as a major task or responsibility.
5. Performance plans shall be consistent with Departmental work programs and position descriptions.

F. Performance Planning Process

1. Employees are encouraged to participate in this process as much as possible, particularly when developing goals. Employees should feel free to ask their supervisor(s) for feedback, steps for corrective action and advice on how to further develop their skills.
2. Performance plans are formally established by signature of the supervisor and the employee. The employee's signature indicates only that he/she has seen the plan. It does not indicate agreement.

If an employee refuses to sign a performance plan, the plan shall be referred to the Bureau head or designee for review and consultation with the employee and the supervisor(s). If the employee refuses to sign the plan following this consultation and any resulting changes by the supervisor(s), a notation on the plan by the supervisor(s) indicating the employee's refusal to sign will be accepted in lieu of the employee's signature.



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3. Performance plans are subject to amendment or revision at any time at the initiative of an employee, with the concurrence of the supervisor, or at the initiative of the supervisor. All amendments must be documented with the signatures of the employee and the supervisor.
4. Additional information specifically related to BARS can be found in Section 3.

G. Documentation of Performance Plans

1. Employees shall receive a copy of their performance plan, and any amendments or revisions within 14 calendar days after the plan or amendment is established. All Fire Fighter I, Fire Fighter II, Fire Fighter III, Master Fire Fighter, Sergeant, Lieutenant assigned to the Operations Bureau shall also receive a copy of the Behavioral Anchored Rating Scales (BARS) standards goals assigned them.
2. Two copies of performance plans for each employee are to be kept in the Department of Fire and Rescue Services operating files for a period not to exceed two years. One copy is the Department's record, the other copy will be used in any assessment of Departmental procedures and practices conducted by the County. Access to employees' performance plans is limited to officials of the County Government on a need to know basis in accordance with Montgomery County Administrative Procedure #4-8, (1982) "Review of Employee Personnel Records". Only hard copies are to be retained for the record. Retention in an automated system provides insufficient security against loss or unauthorized review and does not provide a record of required signatures.

5.1 Performance Reviews

- A. Responsibility - Performance review is the responsibility of the employee's immediate supervisor(s). Where more than one individual directly supervises an employee, each should participate in the performance review. The supervisors should share this responsibility in a manner consistent with their roles in directing the employee's work.

Prior to either the mid year performance review or the yearly performance review, the employee should be encouraged to submit information to their supervisor for consideration in the review.



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B. Applicability - All employees subject to a performance plan are to receive performance reviews.

C. Frequency and Timing of Performance Reviews - Each employee is to receive two performance reviews in each twelve month period. One performance review is to take place concurrently with the performance appraisal. The other performance review is to take place at the mid point of the appraisal year.

Probationary employees (recruits) assigned to the Operations Bureau shall have a performance review at the 7th and 10th month of their probationary year. The 10th month review shall be the annual review.

D. Substance of Performance Reviews - The performance review shall encompass all major tasks assigned in the performance plan, including strategies for resolving performance problems or providing career or skill development opportunities. The review shall also include consideration of the need to amend the plan, and follow through as appropriate.

If the employee is experiencing conduct problems, these issues should be discussed in conjunction with the performance review.

E. Documentation of Performance Reviews - Each performance review shall be documented by signature of both the employee and the supervisor and the date of the performance review on the appropriate form. Copies will be given to both the employee and the supervisor. The substance of the performance review shall be documented if the discussion includes any changes to the performance plan or the identification of specific performance issues for further attention.

5.2 Performance Appraisal

A. Responsibility

1. Performance appraisal is the responsibility of the employee's immediate supervisor(s). Where more than one individual directly supervises an employee, each should participate in the performance appraisal. The supervisors should share this responsibility in a manner consistent with their roles in directing the employee's work.

Prior to the final performance appraisal, the employee may submit information to their supervisor for consideration in the appraisal.



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- X The employee's second level supervisor shall review each employee's performance appraisal. After this review, it shall be forwarded to the employee for signature. The employee's performance appraisal shall then be forwarded through the Division/District Chief, to the Bureau Chief for final review and filing. The original copy will go in the employee's Department personnel file and a copy given to the employee. Any subsequent comments shall be provided to the employee.
2. For Fire Fighter I, Fire Fighter II, Fire Fighter III, Master Fire Fighter, Sergeant, and Lieutenant assigned to the Operations Bureau, the second level supervisor shall be the employee's supervising senior career officer. The employee's performance appraisal shall then be forwarded to the District Chief for final review. After this review, it shall be forwarded to the employee for signature. The original copy will go in the employee's Department personnel file and a copy given to the employee.
3. An employee's second level or higher supervisor may not change an appraisal or order the immediate supervisor to change an appraisal. However, the immediate supervisor may be asked for additional supporting documentation for the appraisal under highly exceptional circumstances and with full documentation, withdraw authority to appraise performance from the employee's immediate supervisor and establish a new performance appraisal for the employee. In such cases, the Director is to be notified immediately of the action taken.
- B. Applicability - A performance appraisal is to be completed for any period of work or significant work assignment of 180 days or more.
- C. Frequency and Timing of Performance Appraisals
1. Employees who have completed probation shall receive at least one written performance appraisal in every 12 month period.
 2. Where an employee's position or supervisor in the Department changes, and the employee has worked under a performance plan for a period of less than 4 months prior to the change, a performance appraisal does not have to be completed by the employee's previous supervisor, unless directed by the Senior Career Officer or Bureau Chief.
- Where an employee's position or supervisor in the Department changes, and the employee has worked under a performance plan for a period of 4 or more months prior to the change, a performance appraisal is to be completed within 30 days following the change by the employee's previous supervisor.



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If this change occurs within 4 months of the end of the appraisal year, this appraisal will constitute the yearly appraisal.

Probationary employees (recruits) assigned to the Operations Bureau shall receive performance appraisals at the 7th and 10th month of their probationary year. The appraisal at the 10th month is their first annual appraisal.

D. Substance of Performance Appraisals

1. A performance appraisal shall record the accomplishment of tasks or responsibilities in relation to performance guidelines and or performance standards established in the performance plan. Compliance with general standards of conduct may be addressed outside the context of the performance planning and appraisal process as provided in the Personnel Regulations, Section 27 (1986) unless conduct issues are included in the performance plan. To the extent that conduct problems significantly affect the employee's performance, they should be addressed in the performance appraisal.
2. Where one or more tasks and responsibilities were assigned and completed satisfactorily, but not made a part of the performance plan, their accomplishment should be assessed as part of the performance appraisal.
3. Performance appraisals must include narrative remarks which address actual performance in relation to performance guidelines in the plan except where guidelines are expressed in quantitative or other absolute measures for which narrative comment would be inappropriate.

For employees covered under the Behavioral Anchored Rating Scales (BARS) appraisal system, the performance guidelines are delineated in Section 3 of this manual.

E. Performance Appraisal Procedures

1. Employees are to be given a reasonable time in which to demonstrate performance in accordance with a performance plan prior to a performance appraisal.
2. Immediate supervisors and reviewing officials are to provide an opportunity for the employee to sign and comment on the appraisal and each reviewing official's remarks which are attached thereto. The employee's signature indicates only that he/she has seen the appraisal or comment; it does not indicate agreement.

SECTION 1



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3. The individual being evaluated should be informed at least three days prior to the appraisal interview. Almost all individuals, when informed of this fact, go through an informal self-evaluation process. Because most people have a fairly accurate view of their strengths and weaknesses, this should ensure a smoother appraisal interview process than if it were to come as a surprise to an individual who has not had a chance to prepare himself. The individual should also be asked to review the current performance plan he/she is working under. This will enable him/her to accurately assess and discuss his/her evaluation during the appraisal interview. Advance notice of the interview will also allow the individual to give some thought to what his/her goals should be for the next appraisal period. Employees are encouraged to provide their supervisor with a list of accomplishments for the previous year to be discussed during the performance appraisal session.
4. The evaluator should then complete the appraisal document for the ending appraisal period. This will involve the final review of the individual's achievement of the goals set for the ending period, and other accomplishments for the period. The evaluator shall also initiate a new appraisal form for the coming appraisal period, as the goals for that period will be based in part on the results of the current evaluation.
5. If an employee refuses to sign a performance appraisal it shall be referred to the Bureau Chief or designee for review and consultation with the employee and the supervisor(s). If the employee refuses to sign following this consultation and any resulting changes by the supervisor(s), a notation on the appraisal or comment by the supervisor(s) will be accepted in lieu of the employee's signature.

F. Uses for Performance Appraisals

1. Performance appraisals are to be considered in decisions on granting merit system status and merit increases, and for demotion, removal or other adverse administrative actions to resolve performance problems.

Prior to taking any action specified in Section 27 "Disciplinary Actions" of the Personnel Regulations which is based solely on the employee's performance in relation to a performance plan or any amendment thereto, the supervisor must be able to demonstrate that the work and applicable performance guidelines have been known to the employee for a reasonable time.



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2. Performance appraisals are an appropriate basis for decisions to grant performance awards. At a minimum, where a performance award is recommended for an employee, the recommendation and relevant aspects of the employee's most recent performance appraisal are to be consistent.
3. Performance appraisals may not be used in any competitive selection procedure (including RIF) unless this use has been reviewed by the Employment Division of the Personnel Office and approved by the Chief Administrative Officer. The requirements for use of performance appraisal in making decisions about which employee(s) will be affected by a RIF are found in paragraph 3.23 of the Administrative Procedure #4-19 (1981) (Reduction in Force).
4. The substance of a performance appraisal may not be the subject of a grievance (see Section 8.5, Personnel Regulations, 1986 as amended). Employees may use the grievance process to only examine alleged procedural irregularities in performance planning or appraisal.

G. Documentation of Performance Appraisals

1. Performance appraisals which assign to a substantial portion of an employee's performance either the highest or lowest possible rating in accordance with Department's procedure must be supported with a specific description or copies of the work which demonstrate the reasons for the appraisal.
2. One copy of the performance appraisal is to be kept in the employees' official records for a period of five years. Two copies of performance appraisals for each employee are to be kept in Departmental operating files for a period not to exceed two years. One copy is the Departments record. The other copy will be used in any assessment of Departmental procedures and practices conducted by the County. Access to employees' performance plans is limited to officials of the County Government on a need to know basis in accordance with Administrative Procedure #4-8, (1982) "Review of Employee Personnel Records". Only hard copies are to be retained for the record. Retention in an automated system provides insufficient security against loss or unauthorized review and does not provide a record of required signatures.



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SECTION 2: GUIDELINES FOR USE OF INDIVIDUALIZED PERFORMANCE PLANNING AND APPRAISAL (PPA)

APPLICABILITY

- 1.0 This section and the form contained within this section shall be applicable to Operations Bureau personnel above the rank of Lieutenant and all other Department of Fire and Rescue Services personnel, both uniform and civilian. In addition, it may be used for Operations Bureau personnel below the rank of Captain when the Bureau Chief deems it more appropriate than the BARS system in Section 3.

PROCEDURES

2.0 Performance Planning Process

- A. The immediate supervisor is to initiate the performance planning process by completing the following areas on the Performance Planning and Appraisal (PPA) Form. Where appropriate the employee should contribute to the development of the major work responsibilities and performance guidelines.

A1 - Form Content

1. Name of Employee
2. Class Title
3. Class Code
4. Supervisor's Name
5. Bureau/Division
6. Section
7. Location/Shift
8. Review Period - The period covered by the plan
9. Type of Appraisal



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10. Performance Plan/Date/Initials - Plan is initialed after it is discussed with the employee. Initials of both the employee and supervisor are needed.

11. Major Work Responsibilities

12. Performance Guidelines

Information on performance planning, substance of performance plans, the performance planning process, and the documentation of performance plans are contained in Section 1, Part 5.1.

B. Major Work Responsibilities - Conduct an analysis of the job and determine what are the most significant/major responsibilities. Write short statements to describe these major duties and enter in the first column marked "Major Work Responsibilities".

Most employees will have between 5 and 10 major work responsibilities listed. These major work responsibilities should represent significant components of the individuals job and should be listed in order of descending priority.

C. Performance Guidelines - At least one performance guideline needs to be written for each major work responsibility listed to measure, at the fully satisfactory level, the employee's expected performance on that major work responsibility. These performance guidelines are to be entered in the second column marked "Performance Guidelines".

Performance guidelines should be objective, measurable indicators. Possible measures include quality of work, quantity of work, timeliness, end results expected, and performance against pre established standards.

2.1 Performance Reviews - Two performance reviews are to be held each year. The first will be conducted at the midpoint of the appraisal period and the second concurrent with the final appraisal.

All performance reviews shall be documented with the employee's and supervisor's signatures and date under the section of the PPA form titled mid year progress discussion and annual progress discussion.



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[Signature]

2.3 Performance Appraisal

- A. Responsibility - Performance appraisal is the responsibility of the employee's immediate supervisor(s). Where more than one individual directly supervises an employee, each should participate in the performance appraisal. The supervisors should share this responsibility in a manner consistent with their roles in directing the employee's work.
1. A rating must be given for all applicable major work responsibilities and associated performance guidelines. If a major work responsibility was set up at the beginning of the appraisal period and then not rated enter N/A in column 3 marked "Performance Narrative" with an explanation concerning the change in plan.
 2. A brief discussion is required in the Performance Narrative for all ratings unless the performance guidelines were written in explicit terms which makes the narrative redundant.
 3. The remaining sections of the form should be completed at this time.
 - a. Overall Rating
The overall rating assigned must be reasonable in context of the plan as a whole. It should reflect the quality and quantity of work, accomplishments, and overall contributions and performance. Although the overall rating need not be an arithmetical average of the individual elements, it must reflect a balanced weighting of those elements. Overall ratings above or below the "fully satisfactory" level must be substantiated in the comments section.
 4. Prior to the annual performance appraisal these ratings are considered preliminary. They will be finalized after the supervisor and employee have discussed them and any changes made. The appraisal is finalized after all signatures are obtained.
- B. The employee's second level supervisor shall review each employee's performance appraisal prior to forwarding it through the chain of command to his/her supervisor.



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- C. The individual being evaluated should be informed at least three days prior to the appraisal interview. The individual should also be asked to review the current performance plan he/she is working under. This will enable him/her to accurately assess and discuss his/her evaluation during the appraisal interview. Employees are encouraged to provide their supervisor with a list of accomplishments for the previous year to be discussed during the performance appraisal session.

The evaluator should then complete the appraisal document for the ending appraisal period. In addition, the evaluator shall initiate a new appraisal form for the coming appraisal period.

GENERAL GUIDANCE

3.0 General guidance and training in performance planning, reviews, interviewing and appraisals can be obtained from the Training Section of the Office of Personnel. Additionally, that section has developed the following training handouts which should be reviewed by supervisors before beginning the planning and appraisal process.

1. Developing Performance Plans, dated November 14, 1986
2. Conducting Performance Reviews and Interviewing Techniques, dated November 12, 1987, and
3. Appraising Employee Performance, dated April 25, 1988



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SECTION 3: GUIDELINES FOR USE OF BEHAVIORAL ANCHORED RATING SCALES (BARS)

INTRODUCTION

1.0 The Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scales appraisal program is one component of the Department of Fire and Rescue Services overall performance planning and appraisal program. This component covers Operations Bureau personnel up to and including the position of Lieutenant.

DEFINITIONS

2.0 Explanation of terms that are specific to the Behavioral Anchored Rating Scales (BARS) appraisal system

2.1 Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scales (BARS) - A type of appraisal system whereby most major duties, functions, or responsibilities that are part of a given position or job are identified. These jobs are analyzed for performance criteria to develop examples of specific levels of achievement that illustrate varying degrees of performance in a given standard. Each of these standards is then assigned a weight indicating the relative importance of the standard in relation to the performance of the whole job for each position.

2.2 Standard - A specific area of job performance/major task or work responsibility which is identified as being necessary to evaluate for given positions. Each of these is assigned a specific number and title (e.g., Standard #10 - Response to Supervision).

2.3 Achievement Indicator - A number assigned to a specific level of performance. Most standards have achievement indicators of 1 through 9. The mid-point number of 5 indicates competent performance, or that level of performance which is required and expected of each employee. Achievement indicators 6 through 9 represent progressive levels of achievement above what is expected and required. Achievement indicators 1 through 4 indicate achievement below what is expected and required.

2.4 Performance Criteria - A narrative statement associated with an assigned numerical achievement indicator which specifically identifies examples of actions, behavior or performance associated with a particular level of achievement in each standard area. The performance criteria is equivalent to the performance guidelines which is defined in Section 1 part 2.6. Achievement levels or indicators 1, 3, 5, 7 and 9 contain these specific



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statements. Indicators 2, 4, 6 and 8 have no specific statement but allow the evaluator to assign an achievement level in between the specifically identified performance criteria. This allows for some flexibility and discretion of the evaluator.

- 2.5 Weight - Relative importance assigned to each standard as it relates to each position. These weights are assigned a value of 1 through 5. Those standards which are not relevant to a given position are assigned no weight as indicated by an asterisk (*), and are not used for those positions. It is important to understand that the level of achievement as indicated by the performance criteria is the same for all positions to which it is applied.
- 2.6 Achievement Rating - The specific numerical achievement indicator given an evaluated individual in a specific standard area.
- 2.7 Performance Score - Equals the weight times the achievement rating in a given individual standard area.
- 2.8 Total Performance Score - Equals the sum total of all individual performance scores for a given individual.
- 2.9 Coefficient - A three digit decimal figure which, when multiplied by the total performance score, converts that score to a percentile. This figure has been determined by dividing the maximum score attainable for a given position into ninety, and then rounding up to a three digit number.
- 2.10 Final Score - Equals the total performance score times the coefficient. Represents the final annual appraisal of a given individual's performance expressed in a percentile figure. Final scores are possible in the range of 10 through 90.

GENERAL EXPLANATION OF BARS APPRAISAL SYSTEM

3.0 Behavioral Anchored Rating Scales (BARS).

This part of The Department of Fire and Rescue Services Performance Planning and Appraisal System describes the Behavioral Anchored Rating Scales (BARS) approach to personnel evaluation with an option to establish supplemental and or developmental goals in addition to the BARS standards.

Using this approach most major duties, functions, or responsibilities that are part of a given position are pre-defined in a standardized performance plan. These jobs were analyzed for performance criteria and examples of specific levels of achievement that illustrate varying degrees of performance.



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in a given standard were developed. Each of these standards was then assigned a weight indicating the relative importance of the standard in relation to the performance of the whole job for each position. The primary strength of the BARS system is that it allows for the evaluation of most key actions necessary to job performance.

The BARS system has been applied in this appraisal program by identifying the areas desirable for evaluation for Firefighter I, Firefighter II, Firefighter III, Master Firefighter, Sergeant, and Lieutenant. For each function, a BARS standard has been developed which contains nine (9) levels of performance. (Standards 1, 2, and 15 only have 5 levels of performance). Five of these levels, 1, 3, 5, 7 and 9 contain narrative observable performance criteria or job anchors. Four levels of performance, 2, 4, 6, and 8 contain no narrative statements. These four levels provide the evaluator flexibility for individuals whose performance does not fit into one of the specific performance levels. Additionally, the narrative statements are to be considered ONLY AS EXAMPLES of the behavior necessary to score at the indicated achievement level.

Each of these standards may have a different relative importance depending on the position being evaluated. Therefore each standard has been assigned a different weight of 1 to 5, depending upon the position. These weights have been listed by position at the bottom of each of the standards. It is important to understand that a lower weight does not mean that a lower level of performance is expected or required. It simply means that, with respect to the standard evaluated, its relative importance for that position is less.

The standards provide the following advantages:

- A. Provides specific guidelines to the personnel as to what performance is expected of them, the type of performance that is unacceptable, and how improvements can be made.
- B. Officers as evaluators and supervisors benefit, as they are given specific behavioral criteria with which to appraise and guide their personnel.
- C. The Department of Fire and Rescue Services benefits because it can be assured that all key job functions are being appraised in a consistent manner and against the same standard.
- D. The system also provides flexibility as job dimensions change, are added, or are deleted. BARS standards can be changed, added, or deleted as needed. In the event that an individual is detailed to a special



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assignment, some or all of the standards may not be applicable. If a standard does not apply to the employee, omit it from the rating calculation. Employees should not be rated on tasks for which they have had no opportunity to perform. See 5.6 on page 10 for re calculating the coefficient.

3.1 Supplemental Goals

If the employee has significant responsibilities in an area not covered by the BARS standards for which they should be rated on, supplemental goals should be established at the beginning of the appraisal cycle. These activities should be listed on the appraisal form, and follow the format established in the general Department of Fire and Rescue Services Performance Planning and Appraisal procedure for developing major work responsibilities and performance guidelines. The weight for each Major Work Responsibility should be established in accordance with the importance of the activity as determined by the employee's supervising senior career officer. Supplemental goals are established by the employee's immediate supervisor(s) or the employee's supervising senior career officer.

For either the employee's immediate supervisor(s) or supervising senior career officer to consider a supplemental goal for the employee, the employee should spend approximately 25% of his/her time on that goal. No supplemental goals will be established for any employee without the approval of the employees supervising senior career officer. Also, no supplemental goal will be given a weight greater than 5.

3.2 Developmental Goals

Goals which are established to help the employee achieve developmental objectives, but are not to be rated, may be established. This may include non required training, special short term projects, career development, etc. This excludes training activities that are covered under Standard 15. If goals are to be documented on the appraisal form they should be established at the beginning of the appraisal cycle. No rating should be given to these goals. However, if the achievement of these goals results in a significant benefit to the Department, up to 3 bonus points may be awarded by the supervising Senior Career Officer. These bonus points will be added to the final score.

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPRAISAL FORM

4.0 Page 1 contains the following information for identification information only:



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Employee name
Assigned station, bureau, shift
Class title
Class code
Supervisor's name, title
Appraisal period
Type of appraisal

Signature blocks

Plan Establishment Date and Signature - Lists the appraisal plan's establishment date and documents that standards and goals are known to the employee. Employee and supervisors signatures and date are required at the beginning of the appraisal period.

Mid Year Performance Review Date and Signatures - Documents that employees performance was discussed with the supervisor at midpoint of appraisal year.

Annual Performance Review Date and Signatures - Documents that employees performance was discussed with the supervisor at end of appraisal year.

Final Appraisal Date and Signatures - Finalizes the appraisal. After all input is received and everything is finalized, these signatures close out the performance planning appraisal cycle and the evaluation becomes part of the employees personnel record.

This page also provides for some security of the contained appraisal information. The evaluator must assure that the information contained within this document is kept confidential.

Page 2 - Provides the information necessary to complete the BARS standard evaluation.

Page 3 - Provides space for Supplemental Goals, Developmental Goals, and listing additional accomplishments during the evaluation period.

Page 4 - Provides space for the verbal review session comments. Documents contents of mid year and annual performance reviews. At the mid year performance review, where justifications or circumstances dictate, this review session may also serve as an opportunity to adjust supplemental or developmental goals. If they are changed, it is noted in this section. Employees and supervisors signatures and date required on front of form.



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Page 4 also provides space for written justifications which is necessary when an achievement level of 1, 2, 8 or 9 in any standard is achieved.

While this should only be necessary for unusual evaluations, additional information may be provided on 8-1/2 x 11 plain white paper. This information should be placed inside the booklet form by attaching it to the front of Page 2.

DIRECTIONS FOR USE OF THE BARS APPRAISAL SYSTEM

5.0 Directions for Evaluation of Standards

The evaluator must keep the following points in mind, and must adhere to these guidelines when using the standards and associated achievement levels:

- A. Achievement Level 5 represents the expected level of performance for a competent employee in any given area. A five indicates that the employee is doing his/her job and doing it well. It is also the level at which, on a cumulative basis, the normal increment would be awarded, unless there were significant deficiencies in critical areas.
- B. The narrative statements of each achievement level are only examples of the type of performance that is expected at that level. They are not intended to be all inclusive, although the specific narrative must be considered. There may be other behavior or performance that justifies a higher or lower level of achievement. When this is the case, the evaluator should document the specific performance that influenced the level of achievement.
- C. The standards are progressive in nature. In other words, before an individual can be given a higher rating, substantial compliance at the lower level must be attained.
- D. Each standard should be applied without consideration of the achievement level in any other standard area. While standards of job knowledge may often be affected by achievement in the standard area of training, it is quite possible that, while job knowledge is good, training achievements may be low due to a disruptive influence or other factors displayed by an individual.
- E. Specific additional written documentation containing dates, times, places, and/or references to previous written documents such as awards, commendations, reprimands, etc., must be provided for an achievement level of 1, 2, 3, 7, 8 or 9 in any standard. This written documentation



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is placed on page 4 of the performance planning and appraisal form. If necessary a separate 8 1/2 by 11 piece of plan paper may be used and placed inside the booklet form by attaching it to the front of page 2.

- F. Additional guidance as to level of performance expected of any position may be found in the appropriate Class Specification for the position under consideration. This may be particularly useful for officer or specialized positions. Length of service should be considered when interpreting standards.

5.1 Directions for Computation of scores

- A. Determine the appropriate weight for the position being evaluated and write in space allocated. The relative weights for each position are listed at the bottom of every standard.
- B. Review the achievement indicators and enter number associated with the achievement earned by the employee in the space allocated.
- C. Multiply the weight times the achievement level, and enter the figure in the space marked "Performance Score".
- D. Place the score from any supplemental goals in the space marked "Supplemental Goal Scores".
- E. Add up all the Performance Scores and Supplemental Goal Scores and enter in space marked "Total Performance Score".
- F. Multiply the total performance score by the proper coefficient, which will produce the Final Score on a percentile basis. The proper position coefficients are as indicated for each position being evaluated:

<u>Position</u>	<u>Coefficient</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Coefficient</u>
Firefighter I/EMT	.166	Firefighter I/Paramedic	.131
Firefighter II/EMT	.152	Firefighter II/Paramedic	.122
Firefighter III/EMT	.139	Firefighter III/Paramedic	.114
Master Firefighter/ Rescuer/EMT	.137	Master Firefighter/ Rescuer/Paramedic	.113
Sergeant/EMT	.109	Sergeant/Paramedic	.093
Lieutenant/EMT	.113	Lieutenant/Paramedic	.095

If there are supplemental goals or standards are not used for a particular rank the coefficient must be re-calculated.



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G. If there are any bonus points from developmental goals add them to the final score at this time.

H. Final appraisal scores are possible in the entire range of 10 through 90 and may be interpreted in the ranges as follows:

10 - 30: Employee's performance is seriously deficient in the position currently assigned. Termination or other serious personnel action should be implemented.

31 - 49: Employee's performance is below the acceptable level. Training, counseling, guidance should be implemented to bring performance to an acceptable level. Sustained performance at this level after proper corrective action should lead to termination. Performance at or below this level may result in the withholding of the normal service increment by the Director.

50 - 64: Employee's performance is in the acceptable performance level expected and required. Individual's performance is good throughout the standard areas relevant to his currently assigned position on an averaged basis. At this level and above, the employee should be granted the normal service increment.

65 - 79: Employee's performance on an averaged basis is excellent and above the level expected or required. Individual may be considered for a performance award.

80 - 90: Employee's performance is outstanding and far above what is expected or required on an averaged basis throughout the standard areas relevant to his currently assigned position. Employee may be considered for a performance award.

5.2 Directions for review of Supplemental Goals

Determine performance of each supplemental goal in relationship to pre-defined performance guideline and give rating between 1 and 9. Multiply by weight assigned (maximum is 5) to arrive at performance score. Add to total performance score. See Section 5.6 on recalculating coefficient.

5.3 Directions for review of Developmental Goals

During the final appraisal review, the evaluator should consider the following:



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- A. Were the goals accomplished in a timely manner? A particular goal may be assigned any reasonable completion date that occurs within the annual appraisal period.
- B. Was the level of accomplishment satisfactory?
- C. Were there outside or unexpected influences which inhibited goal achievement? If mid-year review, do these goals need to be adjusted?
- D. How much did the Department benefit? If you feel the Department benefited greatly, make recommendation to Senior Career Officer that bonus points be awarded.

5.4 Additional Accomplishments During Period

The evaluator may use this section to indicate additional accomplishments of a special nature. These accomplishments should be in addition to those covered in the goals area. Education, training, and awards are a few of the areas that may be covered.

5.5 Re-calculating the coefficient

If an employee is not to be evaluated in some standards or supplemental goals are to be established, then the coefficient used to convert the total performance score to the final score has to be re-calculated. To determine this new coefficient:

- A. First determine the maximum "total performance score" attainable. This is done by putting a 9 in the space marked achievement rating for all standards, including supplemental goals, that the employee is to be evaluated in. (Note that in standards 1, 2, and 15 a 5 is the maximum achievement rating that is attainable. So for these standards place a 5 in the space marked achievement rating). Multiply each achievement rating by the appropriate weight for each standard the employee is to be evaluated on. Any standard that the employee is not to be evaluated in is to be marked "NOT EVALUATED." By doing this you will have calculated the highest performance score that can be attained for each individual standard. To get the maximum "total performance score" attainable simply add up all of these performance scores.
- B. Take this number (maximum total performance score), divide it into 90 and round up to a three digit number. This is the new coefficient. An example is demonstrated on the next page.



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C. Multiply the individual's total performance score by this new coefficient to determine his/her final score.

5.6 Example for re-calculating the coefficient

As an example we are re-calculating the coefficient for a Fire Fighter III who is not to be rated in Standards 3, 4, 6, and 8. This employee has one supplemental goal with a weight of 5 as part of his performance plan.



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PART I - EMPLOYEE/SUPERVISOR INFORMATION

Employee Name: _____

Station: _____

Assigned Bureau : _____

Shift: _____

Class Title : _____

Class Code: _____

Supervisor Name: _____

Appraisal Period:

Supervisor Title: _____

_____ To _____

Type Of Appraisal: Probationary Annual Other

PART II - SIGNATURES

PLAN

DATE

Employee Signature: _____

Supervisor Signature: _____

MID YEAR PROGRESS REVIEW

Employee Signature: _____

Supervisor Signature: _____

ANNUAL REVIEW

Employee Signature: _____

Supervisor Signature: _____

APPRAISAL

Supervisor Signature: _____

Reviewer Signature: _____

Employee Signature: _____

Senior Career Officer Signature: _____

Division/District Chief Signature: _____

Bureau Chief Signature: _____

Note: Signing does not indicate agreement, only that the employee has reviewed the plan, appraisal or received a view.



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Employee Name: _____

PART III - APPRAISAL

		Weight	X	Achievement Rating	X	Performance Score
1.	Attendance					
2.	Personal Appearance					
3.	Apparatus Check Out					
4.	Station Maintenance					
5.	Training					
6.	Area Knowledge					
7.	Physical Fitness					
8.	Fire Prev. & Inspection					
9.	Public Education					
10.	Response to Supervision					
11.	Public Relations					
12.	Reports and Records					
13.	Response and Adjustment					
14.	Teamwork					
15.	Safety					
6.	Return to Service					
7.	Driving					
8.	Standard Practices-Fire					
19.	Standard Practices-EMS					
20.	Emergency Care-Pat. Mngt.					
21.	Emergency Care-ALS Skills					
22.	Annual Evaluation & Re-Certification Exam					
23.	Medical Communications					
24.	Incident Comm. Unit Officer					
25.	Communications-Oral					
26.	Written Communications					
27.	Organ./Plan./Assigning					
28.	Supervisory Control					
29.	Decision Making					
30.	Evaluating Performance					
31.	Training & Instructing					
32.	Supplemental Goals	#1				
		#2				
		#3				
		#4				

Total Performance Score _____
Coefficient _____
Final Score _____



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Employee Name: _____

Part IV - Goals and Additional Accomplishments

Supplemental Goals - Ratings required if a supplemental goal is developed for major work responsibilities not covered by BARS.

Developmental Goals - Optional, no rating given.

Additional Accomplishments.



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Employee Name: _____

Part V - Comments and Justifications

Supervisory Performance Review Comments

Mid-Year

Annual

Written Justifications for Standards - Please give standard number for each comment.

Employee Comments