Performance appraisals| An evaluation of the Montana Department of Highways

R. Jesse Munro

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PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS:
AN EVALUATION OF THE MONTANA
DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Performance appraisals are tools to assist managers in evaluating employees' work performance. Despite years of experimentation, many organizations are still looking for the perfect system that fits all needs. Trying to develop a perfect performance appraisal system may prove to be an unrealistic goal. As one scholar in the area suggests, perhaps we should "confess that it is pointless to dream of a pure and perfect performance appraisal system."¹ Nonetheless, there is still much that organizations can and should do to improve the effectiveness of their present performance appraisal system.

Statement of the Problem

Improving employee performance is a constant concern of modern managers. Models of managerial effectiveness generally include performance appraisal systems as an essential tool of management. The well-constructed performance appraisal system aids the manager in identifying skill deficiencies, determining appropriate

training, and encouraging workers to develop work skills and advancement potential by providing them with constructive circular feedback. The constructive nature of the performance appraisal system provides for an effective management-labor relationship.

Generally, the management-labor relationship has been a strained relationship. Today, performance appraisal systems function under close scrutiny and criticism. The courts have become involved in settling management-labor disputes regarding performance appraisals. "Lawsuits by current and former employees are becoming commonplace. Jury damage awards are increasing at an alarming rate." ¹

The voice of dissatisfaction with performance appraisal systems is not limited to employees. Managers are voicing concerns regarding performance appraisals. "The number and variety of claims in employment lawsuits that are based on employee evaluations demonstrate that evaluations are of crucial importance to both employer and employee." ²

Even with recognized importance, the process of implementing improvements in performance appraisal systems is slow. Problems generating the dissatisfaction, uneasiness, and lawsuits still exist. Respondents to a 1987

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survey indicate favoritism, subjectivity, inadequate training of reviewers, employees' lack of confidence in their supervisor's judgement, and improper handling of review procedures as reasons for their discomfort. Others criticize performance appraisals for creating a negative work environment. W. Edwards Deming suggests "[Performance reviews] encourage short-term performance, annihilate long-term planning, build fear, and demolish teamwork, while nourishing rivalry and politics, leaving some people bitter, others despondent and dejected, some unfit for work for weeks after receipt of their rating and unable to comprehend why they are inferior."

Performance appraisal systems are still viewed as a valuable personnel tool despite the criticism and uneasiness. Problems with performance appraisal systems are not unique to either public or private sector agencies and corporations. Nor are these problems unique to any one section of the country. The problems appear to be universal with generally everyone searching for that perfect performance appraisal system.

Montana

The Montana Legislature recognized the need for a

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5Altany, 16.
performance appraisal system in 1979. The passage of House Joint Resolution 13 and the authority of 2-18-102, MCA, require performance appraisals be conducted on all full-time and part-time employees in permanent state positions. Responsibility for insuring implementation of a statewide performance appraisal system is vested in the Department of Administration.

The Montana Department of Highways implemented a performance appraisal system following the broad guidelines issued by the Department of Administration. The Department of Highways' current performance appraisal system is functioning, but management believes that dissatisfaction with the system exists. The department holds annual formal individual appraisal sessions with employees in October and November. Management noticed a decline in employee morale during this time period. This has been demonstrated by numerous complaints received by the Director's Office concerning inequities and inconsistencies in the system. Furthermore, several administrators have complained of a decline in employee performance following the appraisal sessions.

Management decided that a study would be useful to determine the causes and extent of the perceived dissatisfaction. The department hopes to use the findings to reduce significantly the sources of dissatisfaction and improve the system. As a result, the department requested
an analysis of its performance appraisal policies and procedures to identify the contributing factors to dissatisfaction and for recommendations to be made for improving the system. In response to the department's request, this paper constitutes an evaluation of the Department of Highway's performance appraisal system and assesses the causes and extent of dissatisfaction with it. Based on the research findings, recommendations are made regarding changes in performance appraisal procedures that will enhance system effectiveness.

Research Method

Before investigating the causes and extent of dissatisfaction with the current performance appraisal system, environmental factors that constrain organizational choices regarding instrument design and appraisal procedures were identified. For example, decisions regarding instrument design and appraisal procedures may be constrained by various legal requirements and organizational policies. State statutes, administrative rules, statewide policies, and Department of Highway's policies were identified as items containing possible internal constraints. Internal constraints are statewide government or legal provisions that restrict the manager or employee in instrument design and procedural process of the performance appraisal system. The analysis for potential internal constraints included state statutes 2-18-101, 2-18-102, and

Specific criteria were developed to evaluate system effectiveness. These criteria were derived from a literature search regarding performance appraisal systems. A model of an effective performance appraisal system was developed from the specific criteria. Comparing the current performance appraisal system to the specific criteria identified sources of dissatisfaction. Evaluation of the Montana Department of Highway's performance appraisal system was based upon the following model of an effective performance appraisal system.

Model of the Effective Performance Appraisal System

Effective performance appraisal systems share the following characteristics:

1. Formal evaluation is required at least once a year.¹

2. Evaluation instruments and procedures follow a fixed format, which is described in organizational policy, and is available to all employees.  

3. The design of the evaluation instrument and the evaluation procedures facilitate constructive circular feedback between employee and reviewer regarding performance deficiencies and how to improve them.  

4. Constructive circular feedback between employee and reviewer is not limited to the formal evaluation process, but is part of management's daily responsibilities. Employees receive immediate constructive feedback regarding observed behaviors that are both positive and negative.  

5. Performance standards are behavior-based, rather than trait-based, and are derived from actual job duties.  

6. Performance standards are clear and measurable.  

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9Altany, 16; Mo Cayer, Dominic J. DiMatta, and Janis Wingrove, "Conquering Evaluation Fear," Personnel Administrator 33 (June 1988): 106; Erdlen, 8.  


7. Rating scales or measurement criteria are behavior-anchored. For example, "excellent performances" are clearly defined in terms of actual job duties. 

8. Employees are consulted regularly about the appropriateness of performance standards and measurement criteria. Adjustments are made where warranted, with approval from the immediate supervisor and next level manager. 

9. The system is designed to allow employees opportunity to record their reaction to the performance appraisal.

10. The system provides an appeal procedure that allows decision makers to make a warranted change in a rating.

11. Supervisors are well trained in the purposes and techniques of performance appraisals.

12. Management is committed to the philosophy of performance appraisals; projects image of commitment; invests adequate time.

12Webster, 118; Barbara A. Brown, 41; James A. Buford Jr., et al, 132.

13Barbara A. Brown, 41; Dan G. Brown, 95.

14Barbara A. Brown, 42; Lee, 99.

15Eyres, 62; Barbara A. Brown, 42.


13. Supervisors rate all employees in an objective, unbiased manner.\textsuperscript{18}

14. Supervisor takes time to conduct evaluation in a deliberate, meaningful manner for all employees.\textsuperscript{19}

15. Evaluation sessions are even-handed to minimize ego-damage. Positive aspects are mixed with negative aspects.\textsuperscript{20}

16. The efficiency of the system is continually reviewed to avoid becoming too complex, too time consuming, and to insure that current policies and procedures are adequate and relevant.\textsuperscript{21}

17. Organization's policies and procedures are strictly adhered to by employees and supervisors; one system for entire organization.\textsuperscript{22}

The research method includes a model of the effective performance appraisal system as a basis for making comparisons to the current system. A survey questionnaire (Appendix A) was utilized to analyze the current performance appraisal system in relation to the criteria in the model. Each employee in the Department of Highways received a copy

\textsuperscript{18}Cocheu, 51; Eyres, 58-62; Webster, 118.

\textsuperscript{19}Kenneth R. Phillips, "Red Flags In Performance Appraisals," \textit{Training and Development Journal} 41 (March 1987): 80-82; Erdlen, 16; McGregor, 69; Cocheu, 55.


\textsuperscript{21}Eyres, 62; Lee, 91-99.

\textsuperscript{22}Cocheu, 51; Lee, 99; Webster, 118.
of the survey questionnaire to complete and return. A self-addressed stamped envelope was provided to each employee with their survey questionnaire. The survey questionnaire was returned to a blind post office box in Missoula, Montana. The cover letter guaranteed confidentiality of employees' responses.

The survey questionnaire was designed using a Likert Scale. The Likert Scale was utilized because 1) it is less sensitive to tampering; 2) it is harder for respondents to lie; and 3) it prevents random responses since the respondent cannot agree with everything. Additionally, the survey asks about sentiment and the Likert Scale is more appropriate for this type of survey. The survey asked thirty-six questions in which employees responded using the Likert Scale, and one open-ended question for respondents to identify sources of dissatisfaction not related to the valuative criteria identified above.

An analysis of the data received identified several causes of dissatisfaction associated with the valuative criteria listed above in comparison to the current performance appraisal system. Subsequent chapters of this paper reflect the results, analysis, and recommendations derived from this review.
Chapter 2 constitutes a report on the results of the review. The sections pertaining to the Montana Statutes, Administrative Rules of Montana, the Highway Department's Supervisor's Guide to Performance Appraisal, and the performance appraisal instrument, contain an analysis in addition to reporting the results. The Survey Questionnaire section is a report on the results. An analysis of the data in the Survey Questionnaire is contained in Chapter 3.

Montana Statutes

A review of Montana statutes indicates that only one section of law grants authority regarding performance appraisals. Montana statute requires the Department of Administration to establish performance appraisals. Under the authority of 2-18-102(b), MCA., the department shall:

- foster and develop programs for recruitment and selection of capable persons for permanent, seasonal, temporary, and other types of positions and for the improvement of employee effectiveness, including training, safety, health, counseling, welfare, discipline, grievances, and evaluation for productivity and retention in permanent status;

This same authority requires the department to develop an "effective personnel administration" and to "develop and
issue personnel policies for the state." The statute does not contain any internal constraint provisions limiting a manager or employee in instrument design or procedural process. An exemption for elected or appointed officials from performance appraisals is granted under 2-18-103, MCA.

Administrative Rules of Montana

The administrative rules pertaining to performance appraisals are contained in Title 2, Chapter 21, of the Administrative Rules of Montana. Refer to Appendix B for context of the rules. These same rules are the context of Policy 3-0115, Performance Appraisals, Montana Operations Manual, Vol. 3, Personnel Policies and Procedures as adopted and implemented by the Montana Department of Administration. The administrative rules address nine of the seventeen criteria in the Model of the Effective Performance Appraisal System in Chapter 1.

Rule 2.21.6402, defines a "performance standard." The rule requires behavior-based job-related performance standards which are specific to the duties of a position. For example, a behavior-based performance standard requires a receptionist to answer the phone by the third ring. It establishes a desired pattern of behavior. The rule prohibits the use of personality or trait-based performance standards. For example, an employee could not be rated based on their ability to be cheerful while being professional. The requirements of this rule correspond with
criteria five, six, and seven of the Model of the Effective Performance Appraisal System in Chapter 1.

Rule 2.21.6403 requires that all full-time and part-time employees in permanent positions are subject to performance appraisals. The objective of the performance appraisal is to "maintain and encourage improved performance." This is consistent with scholars who contend that performance appraisals serve "as a feedback mechanism to foster individual growth and development."[23]

Rule 2.21.6411 describes the requirements of the performance appraisal process. First, performance appraisals are required at least once a year. The appraisal must take place within sixty days after the end of the appraisal period. Second, the rule encourages supervisors to monitor employee performance on an ongoing basis addressing both positive and negative concerns. Third, development of performance standards is a joint effort between supervisor and employee. Fourth, performance standards are adjusted or changed if determined to be inappropriate. Fifth, the employee has the right to respond in writing to the appraisal. These five elements of the performance appraisal process are consistent with criteria one, three, four, eight, and nine of the Model of the Effective Performance Appraisal System in Chapter 1.

[23] Stroul, 70.
Rules 2.21.6413 and 2.21.6414 address the procedures for a review, grievance, or rebuttal. Rule 2.21.6413 provides for a review of the appraisal by the supervisor's immediate supervisor. This individual reviews the appraisal and any written rebuttal or comments attached to the appraisal. The reviewer is prohibited from making any changes in the appraiser's ratings. Additionally, rule 2.21.6414 allows an employee to provide a written rebuttal within ten working days following the appraisal. The rule states which procedural errors are grieveable and the aspects that are not grieveable. These rules relate to criteria nine and ten of the Model for the Effective Performance Appraisal System.

Two additional rules pertain to performance appraisals but have little impact on the process. Rule 2.21.6415 defines the record retention requirements for completed performance appraisals. It requires a minimum retention of three years. Additionally, confidentiality and disclosure provisions are included in the rule. An employee's "work-related" performance may be discussed between state agencies without the employee's permission. Employee's permission is required when their "work-related" performance is being discussed with an agency outside state government. Information regarding an employee's performance may be provided for "administrative or court proceedings." Rule 2.21.6422 provides that negotiated labor contracts may
supersede these rules. These rules are in effect unless negotiated out or amended in a labor contract.

Review of the administrative rules indicates that there are no internal constraints in rules 2.21.6401, 2.21.6402, 2.21.6403, 2.21.6411, 2.21.6415, and 2.21.6422. These rules generally support the respective criteria in the Model of the Effective Performance Appraisal System in Chapter 1. Rules 2.21.6413 and 2.21.6414 pertaining to reviews and grievances contain internal constraints relating to criterion ten in the Model of the Effective Performance Appraisal System. Rule 2.21.6413 states that a "reviewer may not change the ratings or written evaluation by substituting the reviewer's judgement for that of the appraiser." Additionally, rule 2.21.6414 does not provide a mechanism or authority to make changes to ratings contained in the performance appraisal. Barbara A. Brown suggests that agencies establish "a review or appeal procedure that gives decision makers the power to change the appraisal rating, if justified." Failure to provide a change mechanism for ratings provides a potential source of dissatisfaction for employees. Employees begin to view the system as unjust since it fails to address their concerns. Likewise, forcing employees to use a highly structured formal grievance procedure tends to create a division

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14 Barbara A. Brown, 42.
between management and employee. What generally could be settled on a lower level now becomes a matter of principle. It causes stress on both sides and is an inefficient use of time.

Montana Department of Highways
Supervisor's Guide to Performance Appraisal

The Supervisor's Guide to Performance Appraisals developed by the Montana Department of Highways addresses fifteen of the seventeen criteria in the Model of The Effective Performance Appraisal System. Refer to Appendix C for context of the Supervisor's Guide to Performance Appraisal. The guide represents the policies of the Montana Department of Highways regarding performance appraisals. The guide incorporates the procedures established in state statute and the administrative rules. If followed, the guide provides adequate direction to supervisors to conduct meaningful performance appraisals. This includes examples of "correctly" developed performance standards; instructions for preparing the appraisal form; definitions for the rating terms (i.e. outstanding); rules and procedures; and exceptional circumstances. Overall, the guide constitutes an exceptional management and training tool. It emphasizes that supervisors take a realistic approach to performance appraisals and realize that not all employees are perfect. If all employees are rated highly or the same, then the supervisor has failed to invest sufficient time into the
process. Supervisors must realize the uniqueness of each individual employee.

However, the guide contains several internal constraints as sources of potential dissatisfaction for employees. As constrained by the administrative rules, the guide does not allow the reviewer to change a rating. The reviewer's primary purpose "is to see that correct procedures have been followed and that no misapplication of the performance standards have been made." This restraint could be removed if the department negotiated an informal review process in its labor contracts. Administrative rule 2.21.6422 contains a provision for labor contracts to supersede the rule.

The Supervisor's Guide to Performance Appraisal contains one major issue scholars view as a potential source of employee dissatisfaction. The guide combines performance appraisal with disciplinary action. The guide states "a performance appraisal should support any disciplinary procedures" and that "action taken to improve or correct performance ratings ... must conform to the standards of corrective and progressive discipline." This contradicts those that believe performance appraisals and


disciplinary actions are two separate processes. Scholars suggest that the primary purpose of performance appraisals is employee development. Administrative Rule 2.21.6411 suggests there are two distinct systems by stating that "informal or formal disciplinary actions ... are not dependent on the performance appraisal process being completed." Employees generally have a hard time accepting that disciplinary actions result in personal development. It tends to lead employees to view the performance appraisal system as nothing more than a disciplinary process. As one respondent in a 1987 survey suggests "my performance is reviewed whenever my boss thinks about giving me a raise or a chewing out." This potential source of dissatisfaction could be removed by separating the performance appraisal and disciplinary processes.

The Appraisal Form

The performance appraisal instrument used by the Department of Highways is form p148. Refer to Appendix D for the context of form p148. The appraisal form conforms to the criteria suggested in the literature search. First, the form can be used for 1) annual review; 2) midpoint probation review; 3) probation period review; and 4)

\[^{27}\text{Barbara A. Brown, 39; Stroul, 70; McGregor, 69.}\]

\[^{28}\text{Altany, 16.}\]
employee separation or termination. Second, the form contains signature spaces for both the preappraisal and final appraisal sessions. Third, the form allows space for written comments, attached comments, and for review notation. Charles Lee suggests the form design allow its use "not only for documentation purposes, but also to motivate and guide conversation during the performance discussion." The department form is conducive to this requirement if utilized correctly. There are no internal constraints in the design of the appraisal instrument.

The Survey Questionnaire

The survey questionnaire utilized in this review was developed in conjunction with the Model of the Effective Performance Appraisal System in Chapter 1. Questions in the survey correspond to criteria in the model. Refer to Appendix A for the context of the survey. Appendix E is a summary of the survey results reflecting the number of responses for each variable and the appropriate percentages. Each employee in the Department of Highways received a copy of the survey questionnaire. The response was more than expected. Eighteen hundred and ninety-three surveys were distributed and 1011 were returned. This represents a 53.4 percent return. Five hundred twenty-three surveys were distributed to Helena based employees and 326 were returned

Lee, 99.
for a response of 63.3 percent. The remaining 1370 surveys were sent to employees located in five districts across the state of Montana. Six hundred eighty-five surveys were returned from district employees for a response rate of fifty percent. This is a significant return since response of about twenty percent was expected. The percentage of response is an indicator of the employees' concern regarding performance appraisals.

Survey questions twelve, twenty-three, and thirty-two deal with how the evaluation instrument and appraisal process facilitate constructive feedback. Over forty percent of the respondents disagree or strongly disagree they learn how to improve performance at their formal appraisal (21.3 percent agree or strongly agree). In addition, 41.8 percent disagree or strongly disagree their supervisors have documentation to support the ratings they receive (25.2 percent agree or strongly agree). However, 32.2 percent agree or strongly agree their supervisor provides constructive criticism during the formal appraisal (24.2 disagree or strongly disagree). The indication is that while providing constructive criticism, the system fails to provide direction for improvement. This could result from the supervisor's lack of documentation. Employees should expect that improvement be documented on future appraisals.

Survey questions one, eight, twenty-one, and twenty-
nine concern constructive feedback. They address the issue of daily immediate feedback regarding negative and positive performance. While forty percent of the respondents disagree or strongly disagree that supervisors immediately acknowledge positive behavior, forty percent agree or strongly agree supervisors immediately acknowledge negative behavior. The system appears to acknowledge the negative while ignoring the positive. Roughly fifty-nine percent indicated they agree or strongly agree the only time they hear about their performance is once a year at formal appraisal time (15.9 percent disagree or strongly disagree). This corresponds to the 59.1 percent that disagree or strongly disagree their supervisor provides daily input to employees regarding performance (8.4 percent agree or strongly agree). The indication is that little ongoing appraisal is provided and negative behavior usually generates it.

Whether supervisors take time to conduct appraisals in a deliberate meaningful manner is dealt with in questions six, ten, twenty-seven, and thirty-five. Roughly forty-three percent of the respondents agree or strongly agree supervisors take their time rather than rushing to get the appraisal finished (24.2 percent disagree or strongly disagree). Additionally, fifty-three percent agree or strongly agree supervisors conduct the appraisal in an organized manner (13.4 percent disagree or strongly
disagree). If those that somewhat agree are added, the concurrence increases to 75.3 percent. These two indicate supervisors invest the time necessary for meaningful appraisals. However, respondents are split over the issue of the supervisor just "going through the motions." Roughly forty-three percent agree or strongly agree supervisors are just "going through the motions;" another 30.7 percent disagree or strongly disagree. As a group, respondents were not in agreement regarding supervisors commitment to invest time in performance appraisals. Approximately thirty-two percent agree or strongly agree supervisors invest sufficient time; 29.8 percent disagree or strongly disagree; and 37.9 percent either somewhat agree or disagree. Although it appears supervisors are organized and take their time during appraisals, sincerity and commitment to invest sufficient time preparing is suspect.

Mentioning both negative and positive behaviors in the formal performance appraisal is the subject of questions eleven, sixteen, and twenty-five. Over fifty-three percent of respondents disagree or strongly disagree that supervisors emphasize mainly negative aspects of performance during the formal appraisal (17.5 percent agree or strongly agree). As a group, respondents were not in agreement when asked if supervisors emphasize mainly the positive aspects of performance during the formal appraisal. Roughly 26.5
percent agree or somewhat agree that positive aspects are emphasized; twenty-eight percent disagree or strongly disagree; and 45.5 percent somewhat agree or disagree. When asked if supervisors emphasized all aspects of performance, responses were about the same. Those that agree or disagree increased to 31.6 percent; 24.2 percent disagree or strongly disagree; and 44.2 percent somewhat agree or disagree. Employees appear to have no strong feelings in this area. This is interesting since as a group, respondents were not in agreement regarding all aspects of performance being emphasized. This might indicate a strong "so what" attitude towards the entire process.

Survey questions four, five, and thirty-six refer to management's projecting an image of commitment to and willingness to invest time to performance appraisals. Forty percent of respondents agree or strongly agree management is committed to the performance appraisal process (31.6 percent disagree or strongly disagree). This corresponds with 47.7 percent that agree or strongly agree supervisors are well organized when conducting an appraisal (23 percent disagree or strongly disagree). However, the numbers change significantly when asked if supervisors are committed to the appraisal process. Those that disagree or strongly disagree supervisors are committed to the process increase from 31.6 percent to 45.8 percent and 42.1 percent somewhat agree or disagree. It appears that while projecting an image of
commitment by being organized, supervisors fail to convince
the employees of their personal commitment.

Respondents feelings about strict adherence to policy
and procedures along with one system for the entire agency
are addressed in questions thirteen and thirty-four. Over
forty-seven percent of the respondents disagree or strongly
disagree policies and procedures are strictly adhered to by
supervisors (19.7 percent agree or strongly agree). This
relates to the respondents feelings voiced above, regarding
the lack of supervisor commitment. Respondents generally
agree the same appraisal system is used organization-wide.
Some 43.6 percent agree or strongly agree one system is
used, while thirty-four percent disagree or strongly
disagree. The significant fact is that 22.1 percent
strongly disagree, while only 9.3 percent strongly agree.
This indicates employees feel that not all employees
are rated under the same system or by the same policies and
procedures.

Questions seven and thirty-three address the issues of
process complexity and time consumption. Forty-nine percent
of the respondents disagree or strongly disagree the process
is too complex to be understood (15.5 percent agree or
strongly agree). However, as a group, respondents are not
in agreement when asked if the process is too time consuming
to be effective. Thirty-seven percent agree or strongly
agree the process is too time consuming; 35.7 percent
somewhat agree or disagree; and 27.3 percent disagree or strongly disagree. Employees believe the system is not too complex. However, they are not significantly convinced the system is effective timewise. This could be related to what they perceive as lack of commitment timewise by supervisors.

Questions nineteen and thirty-one deal with whether supervisors rate all employees in an objective and unbiased manner. Over fifty-four percent of the respondents report supervisors stick to job related items during the formal appraisal discussion. Respondents appear split on whether supervisors evaluate employees in an objective and unbiased manner. Some 38.3 percent agree or strongly agree while 31.8 percent disagree or strongly disagree. It indicates a significant minority of employees lack confidence in their supervisors. This trend is consistent with most of the discussion regarding responses to the survey questions.

When asked if supervisors could explain the purpose and techniques regarding performance appraisals, respondents as a group were not in agreement. In response to these questions, roughly thirty-five percent agree or strongly agree supervisors can explain the purpose and techniques; thirty-nine percent somewhat agree or disagree; and twenty-six percent disagree or strongly disagree. This lack of consensus indicates employees do not have strong feelings either way.

Questions twenty-four and thirty ask about the appeal
procedures in the performance appraisal process. Some 46.7 percent agree or strongly agree that a formal appeal process is available (23.2 percent disagree or strongly disagree). However, 85.9 percent disagree or strongly disagree that performance ratings are changed when appealed (4.1 percent agree or strongly agree). The significance of this response is employees who strongly disagree comprise 54.1 percent of the response.

Whether employees are allowed or encouraged to provide written responses to the formal appraisal is dealt with by questions three and nine. Forty-five percent of respondents disagree or strongly disagree that supervisors allow them to provide a written reaction to the appraisal (26.4 percent agree or strongly agree). Some 65.5 percent of respondents disagree or strongly disagree that supervisors encourage employees to respond in writing (12.2 percent agree or strongly agree). The issue of meaningful commitment of supervisors is emphasized again by the respondents.

Questions fourteen and fifteen deal with the development of performance standards. Asked if employees are consulted by supervisors regularly regarding whether performance standards and measurement criteria are appropriate to evaluate performance, 66.6 percent disagree or strongly disagree with the statement (6.3 percent agree or strongly agree). Additionally, forty-four percent of respondents disagree or strongly disagree employees have
input into the development of performance standards and measurement criteria (24.9 percent agree or strongly agree). The appraisal system is ignoring employees input regarding development and appropriateness of standards and criteria. The significance is the degree that employees are aware of their own lack of input.

The survey questionnaire contained two questions not directly related to the Model of the Effective Performance Appraisal System in Chapter 1. One question was open-ended and asked for comments or suggestions on how to improve the appraisal system. Of the 1011 responses to the open-ended question, 831 indicated the appraisal system was worthless, meaningless, or should be done away with because it means nothing. This is significant since there were no suggested responses to select an answer from, yet 82.2 percent of the respondents volunteered the opinion stated above. Some 48.4 percent of the respondents indicate they disagree or strongly disagree performance appraisals are worthwhile (23.1 percent agree or strongly agree). The underlying theme is employees tolerate the process but do not believe in it.

Question seventeen implies appraisal procedures are in policy and asks if employees have access to appraisal policies. Some 52.9 percent of the respondents agree or strongly agree employees have access to policies regarding the appraisal process (25.4 percent disagree or strongly
disagree).

Questions two, eighteen, and twenty-six deal specifically with performance standards. Some 54.4 percent of respondents agree or strongly agree performance standards are related to actual job duties (14.1 percent disagree or strongly disagree). Additionally, 59.1 percent agree or strongly agree performance standards are written so employees can understand them (11.7 percent disagree or strongly disagree). Asked if when reading performance standards contained in the appraisal employees can determine what is expected to receive a standard, above standard, or outstanding rating, 37.2 percent disagree or strongly disagree that they can; 29.7 percent agree or strongly agree they can; and 33.1 percent somewhat agree or disagree they can. Employees indicate performance standards are related to actual job duties and they can understand them. However, the numbers suggest employees are not satisfied they can determine what it takes to get a standard or better rating.

The results indicate employees have numerous concerns regarding performance appraisals. The underlying trend of the respondents indicates there is a lack of confidence in supervisors which leads to employees being suspicious of the system. Lacking confidence in the process, employees suggest the system is worthless and should be done away with since it does not address their expectations.
CHAPTER 3
ANALYSIS OF DATA

This chapter constitutes an analysis of the data extracted from the survey questionnaire. A review of the survey results and the policies, administrative rules, and state statutes indicates sources of dissatisfaction exist in the Highway Department's performance appraisal system. This chapter focuses on and highlights these potential sources of dissatisfaction. Based on this analysis, recommendations are provided in Chapter 4. Table 1 on page 30, shows the relationship between the criteria in the Model of the Effective Performance Appraisal System in Chapter 1 and the questions in the Survey Questionnaire, Appendix A.

Department of Highway's employees have misgivings regarding performance appraisals. The formal appraisal process is supposed to develop employees' potential and result in increased performance. However, department employees indicate this is not occurring. Employees are not receiving enough appropriate feedback regarding their performance. Although indications are constructive feedback is given during the formal appraisal, the feedback lacks content. Employees suggest the feedback they receive in their formal appraisal fails to adequately address how to
improve performance.

### TABLE 1

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MODEL CRITERIA AND SURVEY QUESTIONS**

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<td>Open-ended Question</td>
<td>20, 37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One reason the feedback lacks content is the absence of adequate documentation by supervisors. Employees indicate supervisors lack the proper documentation to support the ratings they receive. Generally, supervisors lack proper documentation because they "fail to manage performance on an ongoing basis."\(^{30}\) If supervisors are not committed to the appraisal process, then preparation for

\(^{30}\) Cocheu, 50.
the appraisal is a last-minute occurrence. A supervisor cannot explain how to improve performance to an employee if the supervisor lacks sufficient documentation regarding ongoing employee performance.

Employees indicate the only time they hear anything about their performance is once-a-year at formal appraisal time. Employees expect performance appraisal to be an ongoing process. Respondents to a 1987 survey indicated "that when it comes to evaluations, the more frequent the better."\textsuperscript{31} One scholar states "performance appraisals should not merely be once-a-year, one-hour sessions."\textsuperscript{32} The system's credibility suffers when supervisors fail to provide ongoing performance appraisal. One reason for lack of ongoing appraisals is the system's failure to stress employee development. The survey demonstrates supervisors fail to acknowledge positive performance behavior on an ongoing basis. However, employees indicate negative performance behavior is acknowledged by supervisors on an ongoing basis. This creates a negative image for the appraisal process. Yet even when supervisors acknowledge negative behavior, employees indicate it is not done on a daily basis. Employees have a right to know immediately if their performance is appropriate and have a chance to

\textsuperscript{31}Altany, 16.

\textsuperscript{32}Harper, 53.
correct it if inappropriate.

It is essential that supervisors provide feedback concerning both negative and positive performance behavior when conducting a formal appraisal. Employees indicate supervisors do discuss both positive and negative aspects of performance behavior. This creates a balanced discussion and lessens the chance of damaging an employee's ego. An employee's ego may suffer if only the negative aspects of performance behavior are discussed. Supervisors can enhance the credibility of the appraisal process by balancing all aspects of performance behavior in the discussion. Supervisors must provide meaningful documentation and invest sufficient time to present a balanced appraisal.

Survey data indicates supervisors take their time during the formal appraisal and do not rush to get it finished. Employees suggest supervisors conduct formal appraisals in an organized manner. However, there is concern that supervisors are "just going through the motions." This concern relates to the employees view that supervisors lack commitment to the appraisal process. Employees suggest supervisors take their time and are well organized but lack sufficient documentation, ignore the need for ongoing feedback, and fail to provide meaningful content during the appraisal. These concerns undermine the purpose of appraisal and foster the view that supervisors are "just going through the motions." Supervisors must
improve upon their commitment to the process.

It is essential that management of the agency project an image of being committed to the appraisal process. The appraisal process is stronger when management is committed and it is projected as a priority. Generally, problems within the system are addressed and solution found when the organization has support "from the top." Employees indicate management is committed to the appraisal process. While employees feel management of the agency is committed, they indicate supervisors lack commitment to the process. This trend is present throughout the research results. Employees are not convinced of supervisors' personal commitment.

This lack of commitment is further supported by the indication that policies and procedures are not strictly adhered to by supervisors. A legally defensible appraisal system requires that "once evaluation procedures are established, they should be adhered to strictly."33 Employees agree, not overwhelmingly, one appraisal system is used organization-wide. However, concern is expressed that supervisors are not following the same procedures for appraising all employees. It is essential that supervisors follow a fixed format and adhere strictly to the policies and procedures.

One reason for not adhering to policies and procedures

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33 Webster, 118.
relates to the complexity of the appraisal system. If the complexity of the policies and procedures make them hard to understand, employees might not chastise supervisors for failing to adhere to them. However, employees indicate the policies and procedures are not too complex to be understood. Employees expect supervisors to adhere to the policies and procedures. Strict adherence to policy projects the image that all employees are appraised under the same procedures. This lends credibility to the process. The general view is the system is simple if the procedures are followed. Everyone is treated the same. Strict adherence to policy and procedures may take longer, but the time invested will enhance the process.

Employees as a group, are not in agreement regarding the effectiveness of the system timewise. Survey data suggests employees need convincing that the system is not too time-consuming to be effective. This lack of consensus relates to the notion that the commitment to invest sufficient time preparing for appraisals by supervisors is suspect. Employees indicate the sincerity and commitment on behalf of the supervisors is superficial.

The time commitment factor reflects heavily on the development of performance standards. Scholars suggest employees be involved in the development of performance standards and measurement criteria. This affords the

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34 Barbara A. Brown, 41; Dan G. Brown, 95.
employee some authorship in the development of the appraisal and offers an opening for job-enrichment. Employees strongly indicate they are seldom consulted about the appropriateness and development of standards and criteria. Supervisors are missing an opportunity to communicate with employees in failing to secure input. This lack of input leads to other problems. First, employees view the system as a one-way process, further eroding the system's credibility. Second, although employees indicate the standards are job-related, behavior-based, and understandable, they fail to clearly express what behavior is necessary to obtain a standard or above rating. Third, failure to obtain input supports the employees' feeling that supervisors are not committed to investing adequate time to the appraisal process.

Failing to address the problems caused by lack of commitment can lead to appeals and litigation. Employees are concerned about the appeal process due to lack of employee participation in the development of performance standards and criteria. Although employees indicate their awareness of a formal appeal process, they express concern that ratings are not changed when appealed. Scholars suggest establishing "a review or appeal procedure that gives decision makers the power to change the appraisal
rating, if justified." An informal system allowing for appraisal rating changes might reduce employees' feelings that the system is one-way. It leads to enhanced communication between employees and supervisors. Additionally, it strengthens the image of commitment to the appraisal process.

The trend concerning lack of meaningful commitment continues regarding opportunities to respond in writing to the formal performance appraisal. Survey data indicates supervisors do not allow or encourage employees to respond in writing to the formal appraisal. Scholars suggest the appraisal form design allow for written response. Written response provides the employee with an avenue to express their feelings regarding the appraisal. It can serve to foster communication between supervisors and employees. Additionally, it may ease the feeling that the system is one-way.

In analyzing the data, numerous sources of dissatisfaction were identified. The Administrative rules of Montana and Department of Highway's policies contain internal constraints that promote dissatisfaction. All is not lost. Employees have indicated that some system aspects are not sources of dissatisfaction. However, even

35 Barbara A. Brown, 42; Eyres, 62.

36 Barbara A. Brown, 42; Lee, 99.
acknowledging the positive aspects employees seem hesitant to embrace the system. For example, employees indicate supervisors take time, are well-organized, and provide constructive criticism during the formal appraisal, yet hammer the supervisor for failing to provide meaningful content during the appraisal, failing to provide ongoing feedback, and not being committed to the process. There is an underlying source of dissatisfaction. The major source of dissatisfaction is that employees fail to embrace a "real world effectiveness" for performance appraisals. 37

Studies suggest this is especially true in public agencies. Employees fail to see the effectiveness of an appraisal process which produces no tangible rewards or benefits. Employees do not receive pay increases, promotions, incentive awards, or increased benefits from the system. There is nothing tangible the employee can grasp and state it was a result of the appraisal process. Therefore, employees view the system as meaningless, ineffective, waste-of-time, and suggest it be discarded. Survey data indicates employees do not see the process as worthwhile. There is nothing in it for them. Additionally, over eighty-two percent of the respondents to the survey suggested in one fashion or another that the system should be discarded. Employees are concerned about the process

37Altany, 16.
which is evident considering the large response rate of over fifty-four percent that returned the questionnaire.

There is another possible reading of this data. It may be supervisors are not failing to do the job correctly, but the employees by their responses are reflecting (at least their perception of) the supervisors displeasure with the appraisal system. Although possible, it would take further study to determine if this is the case. It is not addressed in this study.

Employees in public agencies are limited in the benefits they can expect to receive from an appraisal system. Public agencies cannot correct or eliminate all of the potential sources of dissatisfaction existing in the process. However, there is much that can and should be done to improve and enhance the process. Public agencies like the Department of Highways must address the sources of dissatisfaction and strive to develop an effective performance appraisal system.
CHAPTER 4
RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This chapter constitutes a series of recommendations to reduce the potential sources of dissatisfaction with performance appraisals. The Department of Highways will enhance its performance appraisal process by implementing the recommendations. Department employees will recognize agency leadership is committed to the appraisal process. Implementing recommendations based on responses to the survey which were provided by both supervisors and employees will restore credibility to the performance appraisal system.

To restore this credibility, the department must reduce the sources of dissatisfaction existing in the current performance appraisal process. The following recommendations are provided to the department.

RECOMMENDATION ONE - Separating Performance and Discipline.

The department should separate the performance appraisal process from the disciplinary process. This will reduce one of the major sources of dissatisfaction with performance appraisal systems. Employees generally view anything associated with the disciplinary system as negative. The department needs to
promote a positive image for the appraisal process. This is accomplished by creating two distinct processes. The language in the Supervisor's Guide to Performance Appraisal referring to disciplinary actions should be replaced by language stating the department will utilize the performance appraisal process for employee development and utilize the disciplinary process for disciplinary actions.

RECOMMENDATION TWO - Informal Appeal Process.

The department should negotiate an informal appeal process into its labor contracts that allow reviewers to change ratings, if justified.

Current administrative rules and department policies prohibit reviewers from changing a rating given an employee by a supervisor. No informal appeal process is available to employees who feel the rating they received is incorrect. Employees indicate in the survey this is a source of dissatisfaction with the performance appraisal process. Administrative rule 2.21.6422 states that provisions in negotiated labor contracts can supersede the rules pertaining to performance appraisals. The department could develop with employee input, an informal appeal process allowing reviewers to change ratings, if justified. Once developed, the department could negotiate its placement in labor contracts. This would provide an easily accessible appeal process to concerned employees and move to reduce this source of dissatisfaction.
RECOMMENDATION THREE - Employee Input - Performance Standards and Measurement Criteria.

Department supervisors should consult regularly with employees regarding the development and appropriateness of performance standards and measurement criteria.

Employees indicate in the survey that supervisors fail to get their input regarding performance standards and measurement criteria. Employees should have input into the development of these items. During the preappraisal process the supervisor should work with the employee in developing the performance standards and measurement criteria. This fosters communication and gives the employee an indication of what is expected. It can clear up a related source of dissatisfaction. Employees indicate it is unclear how to achieve a standard or better rating by simply reading the performance standard or measurement criteria. Employees will have a clear understanding of how to achieve these ratings when involved in the development of performance standards and measurement criteria.

RECOMMENDATION FOUR - Strict Adherence to Policy.

The department's upper management should monitor the process to insure that policies and procedures regarding performance appraisals are strictly adhered to by supervisors.

The process is currently in place in the department to address this recommendation. It is addressed in the department's Supervisor's Guide to Performance Appraisal. On page 22 it states "the primary purpose of the review is
to see that correct procedures have been followed and that no misapplication of performance standards have been made.\textsuperscript{38} The process is there, it just needs reinforcing. The department can address two sources of dissatisfaction by reinforcing and stressing strict adherence to policy and procedures. First, it reduces the notion supervisors are failing to follow policy. Second, it reduces the notion employees are rated differently depending on whether or not the supervisor is adhering to policy.

**RECOMMENDATION FIVE - Written Reaction.**

Department supervisor's should encourage and allow employees to provide written reaction to the formal performance appraisal.

The process to accommodate this recommendation is currently in place in the department. The appraisal instrument provides space for making comments and a place to indicate written comments are attached. Upper management needs to reinforce the process with its supervisors. This can be accomplished by directive or through training. By encouraging and allowing employees to record their reaction to the appraisal reduces a source of dissatisfaction. Supervisors project performance appraisals as a circular process, not just a one-way process.

\textsuperscript{38}Supervisor's Guide To Performance Appraisal, 22.
RECOMMENDATION SIX - Ongoing Feedback.

Department supervisor's should provide daily ongoing constructive feedback to employees regarding both positive and negative performance behavior.

Through training or directive, department supervisors must develop methods to provide immediate ongoing constructive feedback to employees. Supervisors must immediately acknowledge both positive and negative performance behavior. If an employee does something right, it should be acknowledged. Feedback should not be limited to just negative or wrong behavior. Providing constructive feedback should be a daily routine for supervisors. Problems should not be ignored until formal performance appraisal time. During the formal performance appraisal supervisors must emphasize both what the employee did right and what the employee did wrong during the year. The right must be balanced and emphasized with the wrong. Providing daily ongoing feedback about positive and negative behavior reduces several sources of dissatisfaction with the performance appraisal process. These sources of dissatisfaction relate to employees receiving feedback only once a year and then it concerns only negative behavior.

RECOMMENDATION SEVEN - Documentation and Improvement.

Department supervisors should provide documentation at the formal appraisal to support performance ratings given and to inform employees how to improve performance.

Supervisors need to document employee performance.
When providing constructive feedback it is beneficial to support the issue being discussed. Documentation supports the context of the formal appraisal. Supervisors can better explain to employees how to improve performance by utilizing proper documentation. This reduces other sources of dissatisfaction. It reduces the notions supervisors are not committed to or invest sufficient time in the appraisal process. Employees can see the supervisor has been monitoring their performance by the amount of documentation presented and recognize time was invested to collect it, organize it, and present it. It shows employees that supervisors are interested in their performance.

RECOMMENDATION EIGHT - Reforms

Beyond this study, the entire system could be redesigned. The department should implement other reforms that are possible within the current law.

The data indicates the system should be discarded. Current law requires an appraisal system be in place. Short of changing the law, there is much that the department could do to improve the system design. For example, the department could change its system to allow the performance appraisal to be designed by both employees and supervisors. This would reduce the impression that the system was an "imposed" system. The system would be one of mutual agreement, input, and commitment. Although the same system would be in place, it could be designed to address individual job needs. These reforms could be implemented
and are supported by the data contained in the study.

**Conclusion**

This paper presented an evaluation of the Montana Department of Highway's performance appraisal system. The evaluation identified several sources of employee dissatisfaction regarding the appraisal process. The department can reduce the sources of dissatisfaction by implementing the recommendations. However, eighty-two percent of the respondents indicated the appraisal system be discarded as it has no real world effectiveness. Employees see no tangible benefits from the system. This source of dissatisfaction cannot be addressed by recommendations since state statute requires performance appraisals. There is nothing brewing in the political arena indicating a willingness to change or discard the system. The challenge is left to the departments to improve their appraisal systems. While recognizing the perfect appraisal system is unattainable, departments should continue searching for ways to improve their performance appraisal system. There is still much that can and should be done to improve the effectiveness of the present performance appraisal system.
APPENDIX A
SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

INSTRUCTIONS: Circle the number that best reflects your opinion.

1. The only time I hear anything about my performance is once a year at formal performance appraisal time.

2. The performance standards on my performance appraisal are related to my actual job duties.

3. My supervisor encourages me to express in writing my reaction to the performance appraisal I receive.

4. My impression is that management is committed to the performance appraisal process.

5. My supervisor was well organized when he/she conducted my performance appraisal.
6. My supervisor seemed to be just "going through the motions" during my performance appraisal.

7. The performance appraisal process is too complex to be understood.

8. If my supervisor observes me doing something right, he/she acknowledges it immediately.

9. Following my formal performance appraisal my supervisor allows me to provide in writing, my reaction to the performance appraisal.

10. Instead of hurrying to get it over with, my supervisor takes his/her time during my formal performance appraisal.

11. My supervisor emphasizes mainly the negative aspects of my performance during my formal performance appraisal.

12. I gain knowledge about how to improve performance during my formal performance appraisal.

13. The same performance appraisal system is used in the entire organization.
14. My supervisor consults with me regularly regarding whether the performance standards and measurement criteria in my performance appraisal are appropriate to evaluate my performance.

15. I have input into the development of measurement criteria and performance standards by which I will be evaluated in my performance appraisal.

16. My supervisor emphasizes mainly the positive aspects of my performance during my formal performance appraisal.

17. I have access to the policies and procedures regarding the performance appraisal system.

18. By reading my performance standards I can understand what is expected of me to get a standard, above standard, or outstanding rating.

19. I have constantly been evaluated in an objective and unbiased manner by my supervisor.

20. Formal performance appraisal is worthwhile to me.

21. If my supervisor observes me doing something wrong he/she discusses it with me immediately.
22. My supervisor can explain the techniques used in the performance appraisal process. 1 2 3 4 5 6

23. My supervisor provides constructive criticism during my formal performance appraisal. 1 2 3 4 5 6

24. If I do not agree with the ratings I receive, a formal appeal process is available to me. 1 2 3 4 5 6

25. My supervisor emphasizes all aspects of my performance during my formal performance appraisal. 1 2 3 4 5 6

26. The performance standards on my performance appraisal form are written so that I can understand them. 1 2 3 4 5 6

27. My supervisor conducts my performance appraisal in an organized manner. 1 2 3 4 5 6

28. My supervisor can explain the purposes behind the performance appraisal process. 1 2 3 4 5 6

29. My supervisor provides daily input to employees regarding their performance. 1 2 3 4 5 6

30. I have appealed a performance rating and it has been changed. 1 2 3 4 5 6
31. My supervisor brings items unrelated to job performance into the discussion during my formal appraisal process.  

32. My supervisor has documentation to support the performance ratings I received.  

33. The performance appraisal process is too time consuming to be effective.  

34. The organization's policies and procedures are strictly adhered to by supervisors.  

35. I felt the overall level of ratings I received showed my supervisor invested sufficient time preparing for my performance appraisal.  

36. My supervisor is enthusiastically committed to the performance appraisal process.  

37. In general, how do you feel about the performance appraisal system currently used in the Highway Department? Include ways to improve the system.
APPENDIX B

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2.21.6401 SHORT TITLE
2.21.6402 DEFINITIONS
2.21.6403 POLICY AND OBJECTIVES
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2.21.6411 APPRAISAL PROCESS
2.21.6412 PERFORMANCE STANDARDS (REPEALED)
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2.21.6414 GRIEVANCE OR REBUTTAL
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2.21.6422 CLOSING

2.21.6401 SHORT TITLE (1) This sub-chapter may be cited as the Performance Appraisal policy. (Eff. 07/27/84.)

2.21.6402 DEFINITIONS As used in this sub-chapter, the following definitions apply:

   (1) "Appraiser" means an employee's immediate supervisor or person with the responsibility for assigning, directing, reviewing and evaluating the employee's work.

   (2) "Performance standard" means an acceptable level of performance for a specific duty/responsibility: job-related criteria for measurement, specific to the duties and responsibilities of a position, such as a product to be produced (quantity of quality), result to be achieved or other consequence to be brought about or specific job
behavior to be displayed. Standards may not be expressed as personal traits. (Eff. 07/27/84.)

2.21.6403 POLICY AND OBJECTIVES (1) It is the policy of the state of Montana that there be regular performance appraisal of all full-time and part-time employees in permanent positions.

(2) It is the objective of this policy to:

(a) establish minimum standards for performance appraisal, as directed by House Joint resolution 13 (1979 Leg.), and under the authority of 2-18-102, MCA; and

(b) establish performance appraisal which will maintain and encourage improved performance. (Eff. 07/27/84.)

Rules 04 through 10 reserved.

2.21.6411 APPRAISAL PROCESS (1) The performance of each full-time and part-time employee in a permanent position as these terms are defined in 2-18-101, MCA, who has completed a probationary period shall be appraised during established appraisal periods of not more than 1-year's duration.

(2) The performance appraisal of an employee in a permanent position who has not completed a probationary period shall be completed before the end of the probationary period.
(3) Performance appraisal is at the discretion of the agency for employees in positions designated as seasonal or temporary, as these terms are defined in 2-18-101, MCA, or for employees who work on an intermittent basis.

(4) At the beginning of each appraisal period the appraiser shall inform the employee of the duties and responsibilities for which performance will be appraised, and the performance standards for each. Identifying duties and responsibilities and developing performance standards may be done jointly with the employee or employees.

(5) During the appraisal period, the appraiser shall either directly observe the employee's performance on each specified duty and responsibility or review reports, logs or other work samples. The appraiser should communicate with the employee on an ongoing basis both about observed superior and deficient performance and may adjust the originally-selected performance standards, job duties and responsibilities.

(6) At the end of the appraisal period the appraiser shall determine whether the employee's performance on each performance standard was outstanding, above standard, standard (met the performance standard), needs improvement or was unacceptable. The appraiser may issue the determination using either:

(a) a five-level rating scale of outstanding, above standard, standard (met the performance standard), needs
improvement or unacceptable. Ratings of at least outstanding or unacceptable must be accompanied by written comments from the appraiser; or

(b) an essay evaluation on each standard which must, at a minimum, communicate if performance on each standard met the standard.

(7) Individual agencies may establish policy regarding the method or methods used to issue determinations. The appraisal must be in writing and signed by the appraiser.

(8) The rating of performance shall take place no more than 60 calendar days after the close of the appraisal period, unless a new appraiser is appointed during the appraisal period. Where a new appraiser is appointed, management may extend the appraisal period. When an employee is given a new appraiser, the appraiser shall either establish new performance standards and begin a new appraisal period or review preestablished standards with the employee.

(9) A post-appraisal meeting shall be held privately with the employee to review the written appraisal.

(10) The employee shall be asked to sign a statement on the appraisal document indicating that it was reviewed with the employee. Where the employee refuses to sign, a witness, other than the appraiser, to that fact should sign and date the form.
(11) The employee must be given a copy of the completed appraisal.

(12) The employee shall be advised of the right to submit a written rebuttal to the appraisal.

(13) Informal of formal disciplinary actions initiated in accordance with the Discipline Handling Policy, 2.21.6501 et. seq. ARM., (also found in Policy 3-0130, Montana Operations Manual, Volume III, available from the Personnel Division, Department of Administration) are not dependent upon the performance appraisal process being completed. (Eff. 07/27/84.)

2.21.6412 PERFORMANCE STANDARDS (is hereby repealed).

2.21.6413 REVIEW (1) The performance standards, written appraisal and any employee rebuttal, may, at the agency's discretion, be reviewed by the supervisor's immediate supervisor or other appropriate agency authority for compliance with this policy.

(2) The reviewer may not change the ratings or written evaluation by substituting the reviewer's judgement for that of the appraiser.

(3) The reviewer may attach comments to the appraisal which must be made available to the employee and must be kept in the employee's personnel file. (Eff. 07/27/84.)
2.21.6414 GRIEVANCE OR REBUTTAL (1) If the employee disagrees with the appraisal, the employee has the right to submit, within 10 working days of receipt of the appraisal, a written rebuttal to be attached to the document.

(2) The employee may grieve adverse employment actions taken as a result of performance appraisal in accordance with 2.21.8001 et. seq. ARM, Grievances. (Also found at Policy 3-0125, Montana Operations Manual, Volume III available from the Personnel Division, Department of Administration). The following procedural errors are grievable:

(a) failure of the appraiser to inform the employee of the duties and responsibilities to be assessed and the performance standards for each as provided in 2.21.6411(4) and (8);

(b) failure of the appraiser to make written comments explaining unacceptable or outstanding ratings;

(c) failure of the appraiser to provide the employee with an opportunity to review ratings and supporting comments, when completed;

(d) failure of the appraiser to advise the employee of the right to submit written rebuttal to be attached to the written appraisal, (the notice of the right to file a rebuttal on the employee performance form is sufficient notice of the right to submit a rebuttal);

(e) failure to make a copy of the written appraisal
and any reviewer's comments available to the employee.

(3) No employee may file a grievance based on the content of the duties, responsibilities, standards, ratings or comments of a performance appraisal.

(4) Employees who have not completed a probationary period may not grieve any aspect of the appraisal under 2.21.8001 et. seq. ARM, Grievances. (Eff. 07/27/84.)

2.21.6415 RECORDS (1) A copy of the performance appraisal and rebuttal comments, if any, shall be retained in the employee's personnel file for a minimum of 3 years after the appraisal and for a minimum of 2 years after the last date it was used in an employment decision. The appraisal may be retained for a longer period at the agency's discretion.

(2) Supervisors shall keep appraisal information confidential, except where necessary:

(a) in work-related discussion with superiors;

(b) in work-related discussion with prospective employers of the employee (when other than state agencies, this must be authorized by the employee); and

(c) when disclosure is required in administrative or court proceedings. (Eff. 07/27/84.)

Rules 16 through 21 reserved.

2.21.6422 CLOSING (1) These rules shall be followed unless they conflict with negotiated labor contracts, which
shall take precedence to the extent applicable. (Eff. 12/27/80.)
APPENDIX C

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS

SUPERVISOR'S GUIDE TO PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL
PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL SYSTEM

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STATE OF MONTANA  
DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS  
PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL SYSTEM  

INTRODUCTION  

The Department of Highways has adopted a performance appraisal system for the evaluation of the job performance of all employees.

A performance appraisal system is a management tool. As with any tool, it is not effective unless properly used. If a supervisor does not take the time and effort to properly evaluate his or her employees, then that supervisor is not fulfilling his/her job responsibilities.

The Department of Highways Performance Appraisal System has several purposes:

1) It promotes communication between the supervisor and the employee;

2) It promotes effective management through improved work planning and improved employee/supervisor understanding of job duties and responsibilities;

3) It improves job performance;

4) It identifies employee performance levels and employee training needs;
5) It provides a mechanism for the recognition of outstanding performance; and

6) It serves as a basis for distinguishing between employees for selection and promotion.

7) It establishes functional minimum requirements for implementation of performance appraisal systems as required in House Joint Resolution 13 and 2-18-102, MCA.

The system is one of planning and cooperation between employee and supervisor.

A realistic approach must be taken with performance appraisals. No appraisal system is perfect, and not everyone will be happy regardless of the system implemented.

It is unrealistic to imagine that a supervisor has a situation in which all of his or her employees are perfect, or even all average. If no differences exist between employees, it implies the supervisor has not taken the time to do an in-depth performance appraisal.

The phases of performance appraisal are the planning phase and the appraisal phase. The following pages represent a guideline for conducting performance appraisal. Step-by-step instructions are provided and examples are listed.

RGM:2:ts:204/g3
PLANNING PHASE

Whenever people set out to reach a mutual goal, the chance of success is greater if they begin by planning how the goal will be reached. If a state agency of over a thousand employees is involved, then planning plays a necessary part in reaching agency goals. A large part of the planning that a state agency must do is the planning of the work of its individual employees. Individual work planning helps an agency reach its performance goals by ensuring that each employee knows his or her performance goals. Planning also promotes efficiency among managers and supervisors and an increase in employee performance and productivity. Planning an employee's work provides a means for ongoing communication between supervisor and employee and ensures that both are working toward the same goal.

Planning, then, is the setting of duties, responsibilities, and performance measures by the employee and the supervisor. However, the supervisor has the final responsibility and authority for establishing or assigning job duties, responsibilities, and measures of performance.

Each regular planning phase will be initiated immediately following the completion of the appraisal phase coinciding with the employee's anniversary date. The regular planning phase for the Director's staff and District Engineers may begin on a date designated by the Director. Supervisors will receive a PPP report in advance of each employee's anniversary date as a reminder to begin the process. The anniversary date system will eliminate the problems caused by having to do all employees at the same
time and should also result in more attention being given to individual appraisals.

Performance appraisal planning involves a review of the position description, preparation for the planning meeting, and the planning meeting itself.

POSITION DESCRIPTION REVIEW

Before a plan can be effective both supervisor and employee need a common understanding of the job.

A joint review of the employee job duties and responsibilities using the position description as a guide is suggested before a complete performance appraisal can be accomplished. In doing this, a clear understanding of the duties and responsibilities can be made. This could then be used as a basis for the next performance appraisal period. If any major changes have occurred in the position description, an updated position description must be sent to the Personnel Division.

PREPARATION FOR THE PLANNING MEETING

Once the supervisor and the employee have reviewed the position description and have brought it up to date, they should begin preparing for the actual planning. The supervisor should notify the employee in advance of the planning session. The supervisor may want to give the employee a list of items to consider or the supervisor may want to briefly discuss the
planning process and let the employee prepare a rough plan for the planning meeting.

One of the most important aspects of planning is that it is a joint activity between employee and supervisor. It is important that the supervisor and the employee try to reach an agreement and commitment on the work to be accomplished within the appraisal time period. If agreement is not reached, the supervisor has the responsibility to make the final decision about an individual's duties and responsibilities and incorporate them in the performance appraisal.

In cases where two or more employees in an area have similar duties and responsibilities, it may be desirable to develop a standard plan. Common duties and responsibilities may be identified and discussed in a pre-planning meeting between the supervisor and the group or sub-groups. These common duties and responsibilities will subsequently be discussed by the supervisor and each employee during their individual planning session.

**PLANNING MEETING**

The setting for the planning meeting can have an important impact on its effectiveness. It should be private and free from distracting noise, activities or interruptions. It is the supervisor's responsibility to do the necessary advance planning and coordination to obtain the best possible space for this meeting. Sufficient time should be allotted so that the discussion can be unhurried.
Performance appraisal planning for new employees must be completed within thirty (30) days of the hire date. The initial plan may be written by the supervisor without a planning meeting. Another session will be scheduled midway in their probation period and the employee may have the opportunity to participate in the planning process. (Refer to page B1.)

The first activity in the planning meeting is to identify the duties and responsibilities to be appraised. Not all of the employee's tasks need to be included in the planning process. Include only those three to five key areas which are vital to job success and/or where substantial amounts of time are expended. Planning should concentrate on the areas of the job that are the most important.

Key duties and responsibilities for all supervisors should include the management of the internal affairs of their unit, including the effective supervision of employees, compliance with EEO goals and objectives, and evaluation of employee performance.

At the beginning of the planning session, decide how to describe the key duties or responsibilities. Some duties or responsibilities can best be described as activity-oriented tasks. For these the duty or responsibility would be a general statement describing that particular activity.
Consider, for example, the following activity of a Materials Laboratory Technician II:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Duties or Responsibilities</th>
<th>Measure of Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Performs Tests of Aggregates and Soils Using AASHTO and Materials Manual Procedures.</td>
<td>a) Procedures are followed so error free results are obtained.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Work is performed in order of priority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) Test result reports are on time, accurate and distributed to designated persons or files.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other duties or responsibilities are best described by considering the key results that are expected to be achieved. Management and professional positions are examples of jobs whose duties and responsibilities can often be best described by using the key results approach. Consider, for example, the following key result which could be expected of a Career Executive:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Duties or Responsibilities</th>
<th>Measure of Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3) Manage DOM District Construction Activities.</td>
<td>a) Establish a construction plan by November 1 yearly for the period December 1, 1988 to November 30, 1989.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Monitor activities so that 90% of plan is accomplished within the budget.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some jobs can be described entirely by using activity-oriented duties or responsibilities. Others may be described entirely by key result type duties or responsibilities. Still others may be a combination of the two. The type of approach to be used should be determined by the nature of the position, objective measures available, and the preference of the supervisor.
Once the supervisor and the employee have discussed and identified the key duties and responsibilities of the employee's job, they must next determine what will be measured to indicate an acceptable level of performance. These are called measures of performance and must include an indication of results desired or an acceptable level of performance desired.

When determining the measures of performance, it is not usually sufficient to just specify what it is that will be measured. It will be necessary to discuss and establish a standard for measuring performance. Consider the following examples of measures of performance.

**Materials Laboratory Technician II:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Duties or Responsibilities</th>
<th>Measure of Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Performs Tests of Aggregates and Soils Using AASHTO and Materials Manual Procedures.</td>
<td>a) Procedures are followed so error free results are obtained.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Work is performed in order of priority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) Test result reports are on time, accurate and distributed to designated persons or files.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Career Executive:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Duties or Responsibilities</th>
<th>Measure of Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3) Manage DOH District Construction Activities.</td>
<td>a) Establish a construction plan by November 1 yearly for the period November 1, 1989 to November 30, 1989.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Monitor activities so that 90% of plan is accomplished within the budget.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Under normal circumstances, if one uses only key duties and responsibilities, a performance appraisal only needs to be one or two pages long.

Performance measures should be truly measurable and lie somewhere between boredom (too easy) and frustration (impossible). Measures of performance are to be written using one or more of five means of measuring - time (deadline), quality, quantity, results or procedure. Measures of performance using time or quantity should also include at least one of the other means of measuring.

A measure of performance may involve a completion date which does not really have a measurable quality. In such cases, the measure could be written as in the Career Executive example on p. 8 and be later followed by a memo with task specifications and completion dates.

All of the established measures of performance are important to job success, but a supervisor may wish to emphasize one area more than others. If an area is of such critical importance to measuring job performance that an unacceptable rating in that area would overshadow all other aspects of job performance, then that area should be checked in the critical element column. An unacceptable rating for a critical element means that the employee has failed to fulfill the requirements of the position. For all supervisors and managers, the evaluation of their employee's performance is a critical element. Each employee's performance appraisal plan must include at least two critical elements.
PLANNING EXAMPLES

The following examples illustrate the results of the planning phase in this manual.

Materials Laboratory Technician II:

|-----------------|--------------|--------|--------------------|------------|-----------------------------|

**PERFORMANCE PLAN**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Duties or Responsibilities</th>
<th>Measure of Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Performs Tests of Aggregates and Soils Using AASHTO and Materials Manual Procedures.</td>
<td>a) Procedures are followed so error free results are obtained.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Work is performed in order of priority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) Test result reports are on time, accurate and distributed to designated persons or files.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Operates a Variety of Field and Laboratory Equipment.</td>
<td>e) Demonstrates knowledge of equipment operation and capabilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f) Operates equipment safely within its limits with no equipment damage occurring from misuse or neglect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>g) Follows equipment servicing schedule and makes minor adjustments/repairs to allow for full use of equipment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Trains Field Personnel in Testing Procedures and Equipment Usage.</td>
<td>a) Provides OJT so they can operate equipment correctly and safely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Provides OJT so reporting level improves.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Truck Driver Under 5 Tons:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Duties or Responsibilities</th>
<th>Measure of Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1) Operates a Truck 1/2 Ton and Related Equipment. | a) Routinely demonstrates skill and safety in the operation of equipment.  
  b) Performs walkaround inspection of equipment prior to each use.  
  c) Identifies and reports equipment deficiencies as soon as possible to the supervisor.  
  d) Performs thorough level I service to equipment within 5,000 miles. |
  b) Uses proper signing and traffic control to safely move vehicles through the work area with no accidents occurring due to improper controls.  
  c) Uses proper personal safety equipment at all times. |
| 3) Keeps records of activities by maintaining reporting forms, service stickers, diaries, inventories and time slips. | a) Information is submitted on time with minimal errors and is complete. |
Field Project Manager:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation for:</th>
<th>Sched Review Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midpoint Probation</td>
<td>Separation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From: 11-16-87 To: 11-16-88</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PERFORMANCE PLAN**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Duties or Responsibilities</th>
<th>Measure of Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Supervises Field Preconstruction and Construction Activities.</td>
<td>a) Monitors field work to ensure work is carried out within the established standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Consistently demonstrates a good working knowledge of construction skills and procedures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) Has all plans and supporting data completed and submitted on schedule with thorough documentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d) Consistently demonstrates a good working relationship with the contractors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e) Maintains engineering costs within the limits set for each project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Supervises Assigned Employees.</td>
<td>a) Uses assigned personnel so that efficient use of manpower is accomplished.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Career Executive:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Duties or Responsibilities</th>
<th>Measure of Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3) Manage DOH District Construction Activities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
  a) Establish a construction plan by November 1. 
  b) Monitor activities so that 90% of plan is accomplished within the budget. |
| 4) Manage DOH District Personnel. | 
  a) Establish a personnel needs plan yearly. 
  b) Operate within districts personnel budget. 
  c) Appraise performance of all employees under direct supervision by November 30 yearly. Establish new appraisal plan immediately. 
  d) Ensure that all Department personnel policies are followed by District employees. |
| 5) Manage all Management Information Systems. | 
  a) Analyze semi-annually accomplishments and problems of all systems. Address the problems with recommended changes to make the system more viable. |
When the supervisor and employee have agreed on the plan and have both signed it (form P148), then both have made a commitment to achieve what they planned. The planning discussion, however, should not be thought of as a one-time activity. The supervisor and the employee should use their copies of the plan as an ongoing guide for the employee's activities. **If changes or additions need to be made to the plan they should be made as needed, not just at the beginning of each appraisal period.**

**APPRAISAL PHASE**

The appraisal phase is the period (probationary, annually, semi-annually, etc.) during which the employee's performance is observed by the immediate supervisor. Ongoing communication between the two is essential during this period. This phase also includes the "Evaluation" when the immediate supervisor rates the employee's performance on the duties and standards set in the planning phase and conducts a conference to discuss the rating, accomplishments, and other pertinent data. The evaluation may be reviewed by the supervisor's immediate supervisor.

The appraisal phase follows the planning phase. The activities of the Appraisal Phase are: (1) collect information, (2) discuss performances with the employee, (3) complete the appraisal form and (4) the optional review by the supervisor's immediate supervisor or other appropriate agency authority if applicable.
Collect Information

The immediate supervisor should be observing the employee's duties and responsibilities as agreed upon during the planning phase and evaluating the employee's performance. Observations of performance should be made considering the performance level definitions on page 18. The emphasis should be on results, not on personality traits or attitudes. The immediate supervisor should focus on performance that relates directly to the duties and responsibilities of the employee. The employee must be evaluated against established measures of performance rather than against other employees.

The supervisor monitors work performance to make sure the employee is accomplishing the work as outlined in the planning phase, and corrects performance problems as they occur and initiate immediate feedback. The supervisor may wish to keep informal notes during the information collection period to assist in making decisions.

Discuss Performance with the Employee

The appraisal discussion has to be a frank two-way exchange of facts about each measure of the employee's performance. The employee and supervisor are both encouraged to honestly discuss accomplishments and failures.

Before scheduling the discussion with the employee, the supervisor should review this checklist, examine the Performance Appraisal outline, gather data relating to performance, do a pre-interview rating, then schedule the interview.
1. Place yourself in the position of the employee and determine what sort of reaction you feel the employee will have and structure the interview accordingly.

2. You must be able to support your rating with facts. You must be able to cite instances that back up your rating. Supervisors must supply more detailed information to support the rating whenever an employee is rated Outstanding or Unacceptable for any measure of performance. It may also be desirable to support a rating of Needs Improvement and Above Standard with a comment.

3. What are the good points about which you will want to compliment the employee?

4. Are you prepared to discuss all areas of weakness?

5. What sort of corrective action do you want to take?

The purpose of the discussion is to discuss the employee's performance and determine the rating to be placed on the form for each measure of performance.

Remember these points as you conduct the interview:


2. Let the employee know that you are concerned about the employee and try to create a relaxing atmosphere.

3. Emphasize that the rating is based on performance of specific duties and responsibilities and is not personal.

4. Let the employee know that you are concerned about the way the employee views the job and that you are prepared to change your
rating if supported by additional or new evidence. The supervi­sor may elect to modify a rating when information that substanti­ates the change has been presented by the employee.

5. Listen attentively and politely. Do not dominate or cross-examine.

6. Let the employee do as much talking as he/she is willing to do in identifying areas of self improvement and getting a better understanding of himself/herself.

7. Get away from failures as quickly as possible. Get the dis­cussion into prevention of future failures. Build on Strength.

8. Concentrate on the rating and do not engage in unnecessary conversation.

9. Encourage discussion of any area of difficulty that the employee may have with you as the supervisor.

The supervisor and employee may discuss actions for the employee to take to develop new skills or abilities which might lead to enrichment of the employee's current job or improvement of his/her promotional potential. This provides an opportunity for the employee to discuss goals for self-improvement and for the supervisor to provide suggestions for achieving these goals.

Before terminating the interview, the supervisor should reassure the employee of interest in his/her progress and indicate willingness to resume the discussion at any time. The supervisor and the employee sign the form indicating that the report has been discussed. If the employee declines to sign, this is noted on the form. The employee may attach comments.
Complete the Appraisal Form

With the above information in mind, the immediate supervisor should complete the Performance Appraisal Form No. P148. For specific instructions on completing the form, see Appendix A.

Complete the form at the end of the appraisal process using the following definitions for assessing the level of performance.

OUTSTANDING RATING
Performance of the duties and responsibilities is maintained at an exceptional level and is clearly superior to above-standard performance. This high level of performance is continually maintained and significantly contributes to the achievement of organizational goals and objectives.

ABOVE-STANDARD RATING
Performance of the duties and responsibilities exceeds the standard performance requirements for the position. This performance level consistently contributes to the achievement of organizational goals and objectives.

STANDARD RATING
Performance of the duties and responsibilities meets, but does not exceed, what routinely is expected of the employee in the position.

NEEDS-IMPROVEMENT RATING
Performance of the duties and responsibilities fails to meet what is routinely expected of the employee in this position. Definite improvement is needed in one or more aspects of the duty. Receipt of a "Needs Improvement" could be an indication that more training or supervision may be needed in this area. The connotations involved in receiving this rating should not always be negative, but positive in the respect that it is a goal to work towards in a combined effort between management and staff. It should be noted that supervisors should be monitoring performance on an on-going basis if problems are encountered in any area. A reasonable period of time will be determined by the supervisor for the employee to correct "needs-to-improve" performance. If these key duties/responsibilities are not met, this could lead to an "Unacceptable" rating.
UNACCEPTABLE RATING

Performance of the duties and responsibilities is totally unsatisfactory and completely fails to meet the work requirements of the position or agreed upon job performance. Extensive improvement is needed. Performance of the duties and responsibilities fails to contribute to, or hinders, the achievement of performance goals and objectives.

Outstanding or Unacceptable ratings must be supported with more information. This can be listed in the "comment/suggestion" area or on attached sheet(s). Any of the other ratings may also have comments listed for future reference, but it is not mandatory. This column is also a good place to suggest training. Separate sheets of additional information may be attached to the form.

If any measure of performance on the plan is marked Unacceptable or Needs Improvement, it may be desirable to attempt to improve the employee's performance via training or work assignment.

Unacceptable Performance

An unacceptable rating on a performance appraisal indicates the employee is either unable or unwilling to perform in an acceptable manner. The employee and the agency suffer in either case. The supervisor should discuss the situation with the employee in an attempt to isolate the cause and achieve a solution. Corrective actions may involve, but are not limited to:

- Closer supervision;
- Training;
- Referral for personal counseling;

RGM:2:ts:204/g20
. Reassignment or transfer;
. Use of appropriate leave;
. Reclassification; or
. Demotion
. Termination

Action taken to improve or correct performance ratings that are below standard must conform to the standards of corrective and progressive discipline. The steps in the progressive discipline process are listed in the Montana Operations Manual (MOM), Section 3-0130.

As stated earlier in this guide, any unacceptable performance observed during the appraisal period must be brought to the attention of the employee so attempts can be made to correct the problem before the end of the appraisal period. A performance appraisal should support any disciplinary procedures.

If the employee's performance is not corrected by the end of the appraisal period, it is indicated on the performance appraisal form as "unacceptable." A memorandum is sent to the employee formalizing the oral conversations during the appraisal period, restating the unacceptable performance rating on the performance appraisal form, and stating that the employee has up to 60 days to correct "unacceptable" performance. A statement that further corrective or disciplinary action, which may include termination, will follow if performance is not corrected must also be included in this memo.
A copy of the memo bearing the employee's signature or a note that the employee refused to sign will be attached to the appraisal form. This memorandum and the performance appraisal form corresponds to the written warning phase of the progressive discipline policy.

If performance has not been corrected through the preceding steps, then it will be necessary to either demote or terminate the employee.

Technical assistance is available from the Personnel Division to help in handling cases of unacceptable performance.
The following pages show examples for completing the form in the appraisal phase. These examples cover the same positions that were shown in planning phase, which are: Materials Laboratory Technician II, Truck Driver, Field Project Manager, and Career Executive.
### Measure of Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical Element</th>
<th>Uncorrectable Needs to Improve</th>
<th>Standard Above Standard Outstanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Procedures are followed so error free results are obtained.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Work is performed in order of priority.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Test result reports are on time, accurate and distributed to designated persons or files.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Demonstrates knowledge of equipment operation and capabilities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Operates equipment safely within limits with no equipment damage occurring from misuse or neglect.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) Follows equipment servicing schedule and makes minor adjustments/repairs to allow for full use of equipment.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g) Provides OJT so they can operate equipment correctly and safely.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ACTUAL ACHIEVEMENTS

- Employee suggested changes in report that simplified the distribution and improved accuracy.
- Amount and quality of training was inadequate. The employee attended training in effective presentations and will work with another.
- User needs appropriate OJT techniques.

---

**Employee's signature**

**Supervisor's signature**

**Reviewer's signature**

**Comments or Suggestions**
### Truck Driver Under 5 Tons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure of Performance</th>
<th>Critical Element</th>
<th>Unacceptable</th>
<th>Needs Improvement</th>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Above Standard</th>
<th>Outstanding</th>
<th>Comments or Suggestions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Routinely demonstrates skill and safety in the operation of equipment.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The employee is skilled at operating equipment and performs it properly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Performs walkaround inspection of equipment prior to each use.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Promptly reports problems before they become serious. ATTENTION TO CONDITION OF EQUIPMENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Identifies and reports equipment deficiencies as soon as possible to the supervisor.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Performs thorough level 1 service to equipment within 5,000 miles.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Uses proper signage and traffic control to safely move vehicles through the work area with no accidents occurring due to improper controls.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Uses proper personal safety equipment at all times.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Observed not wearing red hat, not wearing goggles unless using an air respirator, employee was wearing the red hat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Information is submitted on time with minimal errors and is complete.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Critical Element

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure of Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core Competencies:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Consistently ensures all training is up-to-date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Consistently meets all performance criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Consistently demonstrates a good understanding of the training material and procedures, including knowledge of the material to be delivered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Consistently meets all performance criteria, including knowledge of the material to be delivered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) Consistently meets all performance criteria, including knowledge of the material to be delivered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) Consistently meets all performance criteria, including knowledge of the material to be delivered</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Comments or Suggestions

- [ ] Employees signature
date

### Field Project Manager

[Signature]

Field Project Manager
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure of Performance</th>
<th>Critical Element 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unacceptable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Needs to Improve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Above Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ACTUAL ACHIEVEMENTS**

**Career Executive**
Review by the Supervisor's Immediate Supervisor or other Appropriate Agency Authority

The written appraisal may be reviewed by the supervisor's immediate supervisor or an appropriate agency authority. The primary purpose of the review is to see that correct procedures have been followed and that no misapplication of the performance standards have been made. The reviewer may attach comments with a copy to the employee.
APPENDIX A

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PREPARING FORM P148

The following numbers correspond to the spaces numbered on the example form:

1. Enter last name, first name, and middle initial.

2. Enter position number.

3. Enter the employee's class title, such as Engineering Technician-2.

4. Enter pay grade, G-11.

5. Enter employee number as shown on personnel records.

6. Enter area code (Responsibility Center) for the organizational unit as found in the accounting records.

7. Place an X in the appropriate box which indicates the reason for the appraisal.

8. Enter the dates for the beginning and ending of the appraisal period.

9. List the key duties and responsibilities assigned to the employee.
10. Enter the measure of performance in terms of quantity, quality, timeliness, procedure or results which can be measured.

11. If a particular Measure of Performance is critical to the function of this position, then an X should be placed in this box. (See page 10.)

12. The employee and supervisor sign and date the form to indicate that they have met, discussed, and understand the performance plan.

13. After the Appraisal Phase, the supervisor puts an X in the appropriate box for each Measure of Performance rated. A rating must be made for each performance measure. If the measure did not apply, write "NA" in the comment section.

14. The supervisor may enter any explanation which substantiates his/her rating. If the rating is Unacceptable, then the facts must be documented and a plan for achieving a Standard rating may be included. When training or development needs are identified, then they may be noted here. If performance is Outstanding, the reason must be stated here. If additional space is needed, a separate sheet may be attached and indicated in space 14.

15. The employee signs and dates the form to indicate that he/she has seen and discussed the appraisal with his/her supervisor. The employee may indicate whether he/she intends to attach comments by marking the appropriate box. The employee may make comments on an attached sheet, so noting that in space 19.
16. The supervisor signs and dates the form to indicate that he/she has completed the appraisal.

17. If reviewed, the supervisor's immediate supervisor or appropriate agency authority signs and dates the form to indicate he/she has reviewed the appraisal for proper procedure.

18. Enter the number of this page and the total number of pages in the appraisal package. These numbers may be changed through the planning and appraisal period.

19. Check this box if employee comments are attached.
# Montana Department of Highways Performance Appraisal

## Performance Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Duties or Responsibilities</th>
<th>Measure of Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Actual Achievements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employee's signature</th>
<th>date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor's signature</td>
<td>date</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical Element</th>
<th>Unacceptable</th>
<th>Needs to Improve</th>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Above Standard</th>
<th>Outstanding</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reviewer's signature</th>
<th>date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Comments or Suggestions

---

**Sample**: This form is used for evaluating employees in various roles within the Montana Department of Highways. It includes sections for recording performance plans, actual achievements, and areas for employee and supervisor signatures. The form is designed to provide a structured method for assessing job performance and identifying areas for improvement.
APPENDIX B
RULES AND PROCEDURES

Appraisal Periods
1. The performance of each permanent employee must be appraised during established appraisal periods such as the employee's anniversary date or other designated appraisal period. The appraisal period may not be more than one year's duration.

Each District Engineer and Division Administrator will establish the appraisal periods to be followed in their operations. Similarly situated employees should be on the same cycle. For example, all District Maintenance forces should be appraised on their anniversary date, not some employees by anniversary date and others at one time on a common date. Notify the Personnel Division of the appraisal periods established and of any changes to the schedule.

2. The planning phase of the performance appraisal of any probationary employee (new hire, transferred or promoted) must be completed within 30 calendar days of employment or assignment. A minimum of one appraisal must be completed before the end of the six-month probationary period. These appraisals will be used to determine whether new hires will remain with the Highway Department and whether promoted employees will retain their promotion.
Exceptional Circumstances

1. Probationary or transferred employees coming into or leaving a work unit may require an appraisal based on changes in status. To accomplish this, use the following guidelines:

a. Conduct a performance appraisal using item 2 under "Appraisal Periods" above. When the probationary performance appraisal is completed, the supervisor will either:

(1) continue the performance appraisal based on the duties, responsibilities and measures of performance established during the probationary appraisal until the employee's anniversary date or designated appraisal period;

(2) begin a new performance appraisal that will conclude on the employee's anniversary date or designated appraisal period.

b. When supervisors are transferring, they must complete performance appraisals on their employees if more than 90 days have passed since the beginning of the appraisal period. This must be done by the supervisor before transferring.

c. When more than 90 days have elapsed since an employee's performance plan was formulated and a promotion, transfer, or job reassignment of the employee occurs which changes the employee's duties and/or supervisor, it will be necessary for the employee's
current supervisor to complete the employee's performance appraisal.

d. For those employees who are frequently reassigned to other supervisors within a classification throughout an appraisal period, their performance plan should be amended to include their new duties after each reassignment. At the end of the appraisal period, the employee's performance for the entire cycle will be appraised by his/her current supervisor. The current supervisor will be responsible for obtaining the necessary information from the other supervisors of the employee during this appraisal period.

2. Temporary employees scheduled to work less than 90 days need not be given performance appraisals. Performance appraisals are useful, however, in determining eligibility for rehire and promotion, and so should be strongly considered for temporary employees regardless of anticipated employment duration.

Records

1. Appraisal information is a confidential part of an employee's personnel file. It must be kept confidential except in discussion with supervisors, discussion with other prospective state employers, and when disclosure is required in administrative or court proceedings.
2. Whenever sending appraisal forms through internal mail or outside mail, send them in sealed envelopes marked "CONFIDENTIAL." This applies to communications that identify employee performance with names or identifying numbers.
APPENDIX C

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE AWARDS

Recognizing and rewarding outstanding performance by employees is a priority goal of the Department of Highways.

A five person Performance Review Board appointed by the Director will conduct the final screening and selection of outstanding employees. The Board's tenure will be two years. The Board will convene as often as they deem necessary, but the awards will be made on a calendar year basis. Rules of the Review Board are attached in Appendix C.

Employees whose performance is outstanding will have their appraisal forms submitted through their immediate supervisor's supervisor to the review board. At the administrative level, these will be submitted to the review board by the Director.

Outstanding performances must be substantiated; therefore, the immediate supervisor's supervisor must have the necessary documentation to evaluate the appraisal forms. This documentation will also be sent to the Performance Review Board.

Possible rewards for outstanding performance are:

- Savings bonds;
- Plaques;
- Certificates of appreciation;
Recognition dinners;
Gifts or cash of up to $100 value; or
Other appropriate awards.

These will be awarded within the limitations established by the Director or his designated representative.

In addition to the foregoing, performance will be a consideration in personnel decisions, including selection, promotion, and reduction in force.

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE AWARD COMMITTEE
SCREENING PROCEDURE AND CRITERIA

Screening Procedure

+ Each member will be given a like amount of nominees to review.

+ Each member, as part of the review process, will make notes on each nominee reviewed to substantiate his/her position on whether or not an individual should be selected for outstanding performance.

+ Each member will present his/her findings and recommendations to the committee for discussion, further review and approval.
The committee will vote on the recommendations and three votes out of five will constitute a majority. Those nominees approved by the committee will be recommended for an outstanding performance award.

Screening Criteria

- The nominee has to have been recommended for outstanding performance prior to the cutoff date.

- The following minimum documentation will be required:

  ++ A letter, or other justification, for an outstanding performance award from an appropriate supervisor. Such documentation shall be only for the pertinent appraisal period.

  ++ A copy of the pertinent performance appraisal.

- A minimum of two outstanding performance appraisal ratings.
APPENDIX D

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL FORM

Refer to the next page for the performance appraisal form utilized by the Montana Department of Highways.
# Montana Department of Highways Performance Appraisal

## Performance Appraisal Form

**Employee's Signature:**
- **Date:**

**Supervisor's Signature:**
- **Date:**

### Critical Elements

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### Actual Achievements

- **Employee's Signature:**
- **Date:**

- **Supervisor's Signature:**
- **Date:**

**Reviewer's Signature:**
- **Date:**

**Comments or Suggestions:**

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**Notes:**

- Revised 1/84
- Form No. p148
- Stock 3255-1450

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**Page** of **Page**
### APPENDIX E

#### TABLE OF SURVEY RESULTS

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