

MINNESOTA NATIONAL GUARD
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STATE OF MINNESOTA
DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY
AFFAIRS
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MINNESOTA NATIONAL GUARD
PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

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1. AUTHORITY.

The authority for this regulation is CFR 430. This manual contains the regulatory requirements of the State of Minnesota National Guard Technician Performance Management System. It is consistent with the requirements of the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 (Public Law 95-454) and Office of Personnel Management (OPM) regulations. It also contains general guidance to be used by managers, supervisors and employees in the proper use of the performance report system.

2. BASIC REQUIREMENTS:

- a. A written Performance Plan with critical job elements must be established for all positions.
- b. Technicians must be informed of the critical job elements within 30 days of employment, reassignment, promotion, change to lower grade, position change, transfer, etc.
- c. Technicians must be periodically provided feedback throughout the performance period on how well they are performing in comparison with the critical job elements. One progress review is required during each appraisal period. To the maximum extent possible, progress reviews shall be informative and developmental in nature and shall focus on how to improve future performance. All counseling sessions will be recorded on the NGB Form 904-1 or a form specified by union contract.
- d. The results of the performance report will be used as a basis for training, incentive awards, reassignments, determining pay increases, within grade step increases, promotions, reductions in grade, removals, and as a basis for assisting technicians in improving unacceptable performance.
- e. Actions to reassign, reduce in grade, or remove based on unacceptable performance may be taken only after the technician has been given a thirty day written notice.
- f. A State Review and Appeals Board be established to review and resolve disagreements over performance reports.

3. DEFINITIONS:

- a. Performance Report. The continuing process by which the technician is kept informed of how his/her performance compares against the established critical job elements and performance indicators in a final performance report at the end of the performance period.
- b. Report period. The period of time, normally one year but not less than 120 days under a single supervisor, for which the technician's performance will be appraised. For all technicians, the report period will close on 31 March of each year.

c. Rating Official. The individual most responsible for the technician's performance, for establishing critical elements and performance indicators, for counseling the technician on the critical elements of the job, and for appraising the technician based on the preestablished mutually understood critical elements and performance indicators. Usually, the technician's immediate supervisor.

d. Approving Official. A manager or supervisor in the technician's chain of command who is at a higher level than the rating official. This individual is the approving official for the performance appraisals of superior and unacceptable, and may recommend personnel decisions and actions resulting from the report.

e. Critical job element. Any component of a technician's job that is of sufficient importance that performance below the minimum standard established by management requires remedial action and denial of a within-grade increase, and may be the basis for removing or reducing the grade level of that technician. Such action may be taken without regard to performance on other critical job elements.

f. Performance Indicators. A statement of the performance expectations or requirements necessary for achieving the critical results of the position. Performance indicators include quality, teamwork or customer service measures.

g. Performance Plan. Written critical elements and performance indicators for each employee of the agency.

h. Progress Review. A discussion among rating official and employee held six months into the report period to review the employees progress toward achieving critical elements, make any necessary revisions and consider any developmental needs or performance improvements required.

i. Summary Rating. The rating (Unacceptable, Successful, Superior) assigned to describe the employees overall performance.

j. Unacceptable Performance. Performance of a technician that fails to meet performance indicators in one or more critical job elements of the technician's position.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES:

a. The Adjutant General is responsible to ensure that all aspects of this State's performance management system are within the guidelines of OPM, National Guard Bureau (NGB) and Department of Defense (DOD). The Adjutant General has delegated the responsibility to manage the program to the Human Resources Office.

b. Human Resources Office is responsible for:

(1) Administering the report system within the State.

(2) Providing advice and assistance to supervisors and managers during the appraisal process.

(3) Ensuring that all supervisors of National Guard technicians complete and forward Critical Elements/Performance Indicators on all employees to the Human Resources Office (HRO).

(4) Ensuring that all supervisors of National Guard technicians complete and forward a Performance Report at least annually on each employee.

(5) Reviewing completed reports for timeliness, completeness, and conformance with regulatory requirements of this system.

(6) Insuring that necessary personnel actions or decisions based on the performance evaluation are carried out.

(7) Appointing a State Review and Appeals Board when necessary.

c. Supervisors (Rating Officials) will:

(1) In cooperation with their employees, establish written critical job elements for each position. These standards and critical elements should be consistent with the duties and responsibilities covered in the technician's position description. A copy of the established critical job elements and performance indicators will be provided to the technician and the Human Resources Office whenever changes are made.

(2) Personally inform technicians of the level of performance required for a successful performance report.

(3) Appraise performance on a continuing basis and keep technicians informed as to how their performance compares to the established performance standards/performance indicators.

(4) Give guidance and assistance to each technician as necessary on how performance can be improved.

(5) Ensure that each National Guard technician receives a performance report annually, and in a timely manner.

(6) Coordinate the performance report with the approving official for signature, if required prior to discussion with the technician.

(7) Ensure that employees are informed of their appeal rights and the process for filing an appeal based on performance. Also ensure that each employee receives a copy of the critical job elements/performance indicators and the performance report.

d. Approving Officials are responsible for:

(1) Making a comprehensive review of the technician's performance plan, and discussion with the supervisor (rating official) if necessary.

(2) Approving or recommending personnel actions and decisions resulting from performance reports in

accordance with established procedures.

(3) Approving unacceptable and superior summary ratings.

e. Technicians are responsible for:

(1) Participating in the development of critical job elements and performance indicators.

(2) Advising their supervisors of the need, if necessary, to revise performance indicators and critical job elements during the report period.

(3) Requesting clarification of any element/performance indicator of the job if not clearly understood.

(4) Identifying work problems and cooperating with the supervisor in resolving any problems, advising the supervisor on special factors and circumstances that should be considered in the report process, and discussing objectives for improving job performance.

(5) Participating actively with the supervisor during discussions of performance throughout the report period.

5. PERFORMANCE PLAN:

a. At the beginning of the report period, each supervisor will, with technician participation, identify critical job elements and performance indicators. Although technicians will participate in this process, final determinations will be made by the immediate supervisor with the concurrence of the approving official (if required). Written critical elements need to be as precise as possible. Critical job elements will be updated to reflect significant changes in a position at anytime during the report period. A completed copy of the performance plan will be given to the technician at the beginning of the report period, and as changes occur. A copy of the Performance Plan must also be sent to the Human Resources Office (HRO) for the Employee Performance File (EPF).

b. Identification of Critical Elements. Identification of critical job elements is accomplished through an analysis of the duties and responsibilities of each technician's job. Organizational goals and objectives are first identified, then specific duties and responsibilities are selected. Important project assignments that contribute to the goals and objectives for which the technician will be held responsible, should be included. These are considered critical elements. Sources of information that may be helpful in identifying critical elements are: job descriptions, mission and function statements, inspection reports, and locally developed performance requirements. As a minimum, the official position description will be used. Job elements may be added, deleted, or changed in consultation with the technician during the appraisal period. A copy must be sent to HRO when changes occur.

c. Performance Indicators. Performance indicators are generic: quality, teamwork, and customer service. These indicators must be identified and applied to critical elements. Performance indicators tell the rating official and employee what is important to successful performance in each critical element. Performance indicators may apply to more than one or all critical elements. Additional performance indicators, with explanations, may be added in the space provided at the end of each performance indicator section. At the end of the report period, the rating official must evaluate how well the employee performed in all three areas (quality, teamwork, and customer service) and incorporate that information into the overall rating for each critical element.

d. The performance plan should be realistic and attainable and should present a challenge to the technician. To attain this objective, the plan needs to be consistent with the grade level and duties of the position. When the plan cannot be expressed in terms of quality, customer service and teamwork, they may be stated in terms of expected results or method of performance.

e. Requirements for Supervisors and Managers. Critical elements and performance indicators for supervisors and managers should reflect organizational as well as individual duties and responsibilities. Furthering Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) will be identified as a critical element for all supervisory technicians responsible for appraising the performance of one or more technicians. See Appendix C for the EEO element that should appear as the critical element. There are additional elements, that are required for some management positions in the Army and Air National Guard. Supervisors/managers will also have the requirement for internal controls and safety included with the EEO statement as one critical element.

6. PERFORMANCE REPORT:

a. At the end of the report period, the supervisor will review the technician's performance in relation to the critical job elements and performance indicators. In Part I of HRO Form 430, after each critical element circle or check the appropriate rating level for that element. In the event the employee did not have an opportunity to perform a critical element, no rating should be assigned, and the words "NOT RATED", should be written in the appropriate space. NOTE: Regardless of the overall rating, an individual element rating of unacceptable on any critical element will result in an overall appraisal of unacceptable and remedial action will be required. Once critical elements are rated, complete Part III of HRO Form 430 by assigning the overall rating. The summary rating will be the lowest of ratings in Part I. If superior summary rating is reached, a justification as to how the employee exceeded the minimum required standard for his/her position is required. Part IV of the summary plan must be completed. Signatures should be obtained in the order on the HRO Form 430, rating official first, approving official (if required) second, and employee last. Supervisors are required to give the employee a copy of the completed performance report and send a copy of the report to the HRO for the Employee Performance File.

b. Performance Counseling. Supervisors will counsel their employees at a minimum of twice each year. One counseling will be a formal counseling, which will be performed at the annual close date of 31 March. Members of the bargaining unit will be counseled IAW existing Union contracts. Supervisors should informally counsel as often as possible. ALL counseling sessions will be documented with the date and substance of the counseling on the NGB Form 904-1, to include the employees initials after the counseling statement. Supervisors should explain the appeal process to all technicians during the annual performance counseling. Supervisors will limit the subjects covered during performance counseling to performance issues. Should a discipline issue impact on an employee's performance, the supervisor must limit the discussion to the performance portion of that issue. A separately scheduled session will be held to discuss the discipline matter. Disciplinary issues are addressed in TPR 752.

c. Trial/Probationary Period Report. New technicians must be carefully observed and appraised during the trial/probationary period to determine whether they have the qualities needed for permanent Government service. During this period, supervisors should provide specific training and assistance to new technicians. Supervisors of technicians serving a trial/probationary period must, no earlier than the end of the 4th month and no later than the end of the 10th month, submit through supervisory channels to the HRO, the HRO Form 430 with Part IIA completed. The immediate supervisor will check the appropriate block to recommend or not recommend retention as a federal employee. Conduct a counseling session with the employee, give the 30 day notice letter of non retention if appropriate, and annotate the NGB Form 904-1, obtain the employee's signature and date and rating officials signature and date on the HRO Form 430. Forward a copy to the HRO, give employee a copy and retain a copy for the supervisor work folder. This evaluation is not considered an official performance appraisal for the purpose of appeal rights. There are no appeal rights in the first year of employment. If retention is not recommended, the supervisor will contact the Human Resources Office to initiate the removal. A removal action can be initiated anytime during the trial/probationary period. A technician serving a trial/probationary period will not be given an official performance appraisal until after completing the required 12 months of Federal service. i.e., (Hired July 1, probationary report is due 30 April (10th month) full performance report due 30 June and the next performance

6.c.(cont'd) report will be due 1 July thru 31 March). After the 12 month performance report, she/he would then be given an official performance appraisal in accordance with the established appraisal period (closing date of 31 March of the following year).

d. Progress Reviews. One of the primary objectives of the performance management system is to improve communications between the rating official and the employee concerning performance expectations and results. This portion of the form is to record and document the performance discussions between the supervisor and the employee which occur during the rating period. This progress review is in addition to the initial meeting to develop the performance plan and the annual rating discussion. This is a six month review which is required for all technicians. This does not eliminate the use of, and documentation on, the NGB Form 904-1.

e. Submission of Performance Plan & Results Report. All National Guard technicians should receive an annual performance plan and results report. This is an entitlement and is not at the discretion of a supervisor. Performance plan and results reports will be closed out as of 31 March each year. The reports will be due in the Human Resources Office not later than 30 April of each year. If an extension is necessary, please contact HRO-ER for approval of such actions.

f. Employees that move from one position to another will have a closeout report prepared by the losing supervisor. Supervisors who move from one position to another will be required to closeout all technician performance reports and will develop new performance plans for their new employees. Losing and gaining supervisors must monitor their employees to ensure compliance with the closeout report system. Closeout reports may be used for justification for a Quality Salary Increase (QSI), or a Sustained Superior Performance Award (SSP), if the report meets the regulatory requirements for the type of award requested.

g. Performance Reports While on Detail. When a technician has been officially detailed to another position either to the same or to a different supervisor for a period covering 120 days or more, a written performance plan will be established for this position, and the technician's performance while on the detail will be appraised, when the detail is completed.

h. Postponement of Annual Performance Reports. Annual performance reports may be postponed for not more than 90 days in circumstances when the immediate supervisor has not had enough time to observe the technician's performance in her/his present assignment because (1) the supervisor or the technician is newly assigned; (2) the technician has not been performing regularly assigned work because of extended details or absences; or (3) the technician's performance is temporarily unacceptable because of illness, alcoholism, or drug abuse rehabilitation. This 90-day postponement may be extended if circumstances warrant.

i. Records. Official performance records are available for review by the technician concerned. These include, but are not limited to, performance standards, performance reports, certifications in connection with within-grade increases, incentive awards determinations, merit promotion material, trial/probationary period certification, and other related personnel management documents. Only individuals directly in the technician's chain of command and those with an official need to know in the performance of their assigned duties will be permitted to review performance reports. This applies even after the final action has been accomplished.

7. PERFORMANCE REPORT PREPARATION:

a. Preparation of performance reports is a continual process. Supervisors should keep notes and documents that show how the employee is functioning. Employees should keep records of special achievements or other actions that clearly show their level of performance during the current rating period.

b. The rating official assigns a summary rating level of Superior, Successful or Unacceptable. A summary rating of successful means the employee has met the performance expectations for each critical element. Narrative comments are not required for this rating but may be included in the space provided on the form.

c. A summary rating of superior means that the employee has exceeded the expectations of ALL identified critical elements. A narrative paragraph is required at this level.

d. A summary rating of unacceptable means that the employee has not met the performance expectations. Summary ratings of unacceptable require a written explanation specifically describing the performance deficiencies. If more space is needed, attach a sheet of plain paper to the performance report. The requirement for the 90 day warning letter and the performance improvement period have not changed. Reference (Para 9.b.1).

e. The certification must be signed and dated at the conclusion of the report period. The rating official will coordinate and acquire a signature on the performance report by the approving official (if required) before discussion of the appraisal with the employee.

f. The employee's signature does not indicate concurrence with the summary rating only that the employee has received a copy of the summary rating. If an employee declines to sign and date a summary rating, that fact will be noted in the signature block by the rating official and a witness statement will be required IAW this regulation, paragraph 8.,e.

8. PRESENTATION:

a. Supervisors will select a suitable location for the performance counseling. If it is possible, a separate room that is not open to public view should be used. Only the rating official and the employee will be present.

b. The following procedures will be used when presenting an employee with their annual performance report:

(1) Discuss the employee's general performance for the rating period.

(2) Discuss the specific issues covered by the performance report.

(3) Allow the employee time to read the report.

(4) Allow the employee an opportunity to ask questions.

c. When all issues are reviewed, the employee should sign the report. The employee and supervisor should review the HRO Form 430 performance plan and a new performance plan /critical elements will be submitted for the next rating period. A copy of the new performance plan will be given to the employee and one sent to the HRO for the official Employee Performance File (EPF).

d. Union officials should not attend the performance counseling.

e. If an employee refuses to sign the performance report, supervisors should explain that the signature on the form acknowledges receipt of and discussion about the report. The signature does not indicate concurrence. Supervisors should explain the appeal process to all employees during the performance counseling session. If the employee continues to refuse to sign the report, the supervisor should suspend the discussion until a witness to the presentation of the report can be summoned. Once a witness is present (selected by the supervisor) the supervisor should:

(1) Indicate to the employee that the person present is only there to witness the presentation of the performance report.

(2) State that a discussion took place between the supervisor and employee regarding the performance report.

(3) Ask the employee to sign the performance report.

(4) If the employee refuses to sign, explain the appeal process indicated in this regulation.

(5) Conclude the session and prepare a statement showing that the supervisor presented the performance report and the employee refused to sign. This statement should be signed and dated by both the supervisor and the witness, and any unusual or special circumstances should also be noted. The following is an example:

"I presented SGT John Q. Public, XXX-XX-XXXX his performance report for the period of XXFEBXX to XXMARXX on (date). SGT Public refused to sign the report. We the undersigned made and witnessed the presentation of this appraisal.

Issuing Supervisor: William F. Swift
MSG
Shop Foreman

Witnessed by: Jane J. Johnson
SSG
Electronics Foreman

f. Supervisors will prepare a performance report on each of their subordinates each year with the ending date to be 31 March.

g. Employees that move from one position to another will have a closeout performance report prepared for them by the losing supervisor. Closeout reports will be completed if 120 days has passed since the last performance report.

If 120 days has not passed, no closeout report will be required, and the gaining supervisor will include that period when rating the employee at the end of the rating cycle.

9. UNACCEPTABLE PERFORMANCE:

a. **Actions Based on Unacceptable Performance.** Technicians will be periodically reminded of the critical job elements and performance indicators for their positions, and will be informed when their performance is unacceptable in any element of the job. Technicians will be assisted in improving areas of marginal/unacceptable performance by counseling, and a written performance improvement period (PIP) which will include increased supervisory assistance, and additional training, etc. These efforts should be in writing and should be documented on the NGB Form 904-1 during a counseling session. However, if the technician's performance in any critical element continues to be unacceptable despite efforts by the supervisor or manager to improve performance, the 90 day warning letter of unacceptable performance should be issued. If improvement does not occur, the unacceptable appraisal should be rendered at the end of the 90 day period. Before initiating an action to reduce in grade or remove a technician based on unacceptable performance, consideration should be given to reassignment to another position for which the supervisor feels the technician is qualified. No personnel action based on unacceptable performance may be initiated until critical job elements and the performance indicators have been identified in writing, the technician has been given a copy of this performance plan, and the technician has been given an opportunity to improve his/her performance.

b. **Requirements.** An action to reduce in grade or remove from employment may be initiated by the technician's supervisor if the technician's performance continues to be unacceptable in one or more critical job element. The supervisor does not need to wait until the end of the appraisal period to initiate these actions. A technician against whom such an action has been initiated is entitled to:

(1) A minimum 30 day advance written notice of the action to be taken (reduction in grade, reassignment or removal), which identifies the critical job element(s) and instances of unacceptable performance on which the action is based. This 30 day notice is after the improvement period and the 90 day warning letter which is provided to the employee. The 30 day written notice must be concurred with by an official who is in the next level of the chain of command of the immediate supervisor. This is not a proposed notice, but is to be considered as a final notice of the 9. b (1) (cont'd) action to be taken, because before this final step, the technician would have been given adequate assistance and time to improve performance.

(2) Technicians are entitled to the opportunity to answer orally or in writing to the supervisor or appeal to the State Review and Appeals Board. At the discretion of the State, the effective date of separation or a reduction in grade may be extended awaiting final decision of the Board.

(3) If a technician submits a request to his/her supervisor to change an unacceptable performance report, the supervisor will carefully review this information and advise the technician in writing whether the unacceptable performance report is sustained or will be changed. A request submitted to the State Review and Appeals Board will be handled in accordance with the instructions in paragraph 10.c.

c. Records. When an action is not initiated, all documentation relating to the unacceptable performance report will be assembled and placed in the technician's Employee Performance File (EPF).

10. APPEAL OF PERFORMANCE REPORT:

a. Filing an Appeal. A technician desiring to file an appeal of a performance report, other than for unacceptable performance, may file an appeal to the State Review and Appeals Board not later than 30 calendar days after the technician receives the performance report. An appeal based on unacceptable performance must be filed within the 30-day advance written notice period outlined in paragraph 9.b.1. In reviewing performance report appeals including unacceptable performance, the board by majority vote will recommend to the Adjutant General to change the appraisal as requested by the technician or sustain the appraisal without change. The Adjutant General will make the final decision. When it reviews unacceptable performance reports, the board will only be concerned with the performance report; it will not review the personnel action taken as a result of an unacceptable report. All members of the board must be present at all times during the hearings and must participate in deciding on a recommendation. A technician has no appeal rights beyond the State Adjutant General.

b. Bargaining Unit Members must follow any procedures regarding performance appeals which have been negotiated into the appropriate union contract.

c. Appeal Processing. An appeal is submitted to the Human Resources Office, ATTN: Labor Relations Specialist. The appeal must be received in this office no later than 30 calendar days after receiving the performance report. The written request should be in a military letter format and should contain the following information:

(1) Name of the Technician

(2) Organization

(3) The report being appealed (dates of the report)

(4) Why the appraisal should be changed (if necessary address each job element and indicate what the discrepancies are).

(5) Date the technician received the notice (date the technician signed the performance report) or (the date the technician received notice of unacceptable performance).

(6) A copy of the performance report that is being appealed.

When all the necessary information is not available, the technician should submit what is available, and state why the other information is not available.

d. The Labor Relations Specialist will review all appeals before presentation to the Review and Appeals Board. If there is a possibility for an informal resolution to the appeal, an informal meeting between the Labor Relations Specialist, supervisor and the employee may be held. Adjustments may be made in the overall appraisal as

recommended by this meeting. Any resolution of an appeal decided at this meeting must be agreed to by management and the employee. Changes will be implemented and will require the technician to withdraw the appeal. If a resolution can't be achieved, valid appeals will be forwarded to the Review and Appeals Board.

e. A Review and Appeals Board will be appointed and consist of at least three members. No member of the board will be in the appellants chain of command. No member of the board will be in a lower graded position than the Appellant. The senior ranking member of the board will act as the board chairperson. A member of the board will be appointed by the chairperson to act as reporter.

f. Board Procedures. During the proceedings, the board may admit oral evidence from the technician or the technician's immediate supervisor. Within 15 calendar days, the board will review and submit their recommendations directly to the Adjutant General. The technician and the technician's representative (if desired by the technician), and the representative of the Adjutant General will submit information the board deems pertinent. Such information may be presented orally, by presentation of witnesses, or in writing. In the submission of evidence, both oral and written information may be considered to reach a decision, as long as the technician, the technician's representative, and the representative of the Adjutant General are given the opportunity to hear, examine, and reply to the information submitted by the other parties and are given an opportunity to question the witnesses. If any of these individuals are absent during the oral presentation, the absentee(s) must be furnished in writing any evidence admitted during their absence. The board may not use any written information to render a recommendation until the technician, the technician's representative (if any), and the representative of the Adjutant General have had an opportunity to examine and reply to it. Board members must serve as impartial judges and review each case objectively. They must give consideration to the merits of each case and secure all necessary information. The board may not receive or consider information not directly related to the matter being considered.

The proponent agency of this regulation is the Human Resources Office. Users are invited to send comments and suggested improvements to The Office of The Adjutant General, ATTN: MNAG-HRO, Veterans Service

Building, St. Paul, Minnesota 55155-2098.

BY DIRECTION OF THE GOVERNOR:

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The Adjutant General

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APPENDIX A.

IDENTIFYING CRITICAL ELEMENTS, PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND CONDUCTING THE PERFORMANCE COUNSELING

A-1. The appraisal process is more than a once-a-year meeting between supervisor and technician during which performance over the past year is evaluated and recorded on the Performance Report form. The National Guard Technician Performance Report System requires that the supervisor and subordinate jointly, at the beginning of the report period, review the requirements of the technician's job, identify critical job elements, and identify performance indicators. During the report period, the technician should be kept informed as to how he or she is doing in regards to the established expectations. The final step, the overall performance report, should be of no surprise to the technician. The following are the major components of the report process:

- a. Reviewing the job. The technician's job and organization or mission requirements are reviewed and critical job elements are established.
- b. Setting performance indicators. Specific expected results are identified for each job element.
- c. Communicating the performance plan. Each technician should understand exactly what is expected of him or her during the report period. This necessitates periodic review of the technician's performance and a discussion of how he/she is doing in regards to the previously agreed upon performance plan.
- d. Appraising technician performance. At the end of the report period, performance is discussed with the technician, and the summary rating is entered on the report form (HRO Form 430).
- e. Recommending personnel actions. The performance report may require certain personnel actions.

A-2. SETTING THE PERFORMANCE PLAN.

- a. Gathering information. The technician's position description should be the basic source of information for identifying critical elements of the job. From this and the supervisor's knowledge of workload priorities and mission requirements, the elements of the job can be identified. Job elements are the observable results or end products of the job and not the steps or activities taken to achieve them.
- b. Listing the critical elements of the job. After the technician's significant areas of responsibility have been identified, they should be written in Part I of HRO Form 430 as illustrated in example 1. The appropriate performance indicators should be assigned to each job element.

c. Assuring suitability of job elements. To assure that job elements are suitable, supervisors should be able to answer yes to the following questions:

- Are the elements all inclusive and understandable? Is the total job covered?
- Do the elements refer to work activity under the technician's control?
- Are the elements appropriate for the technician's series and grade?
- Are the elements clear and specific?
- Are the elements derived from the overall mission of the organization? Are they compatible with and supportive of results assigned to other organizations in your directorate or branch?

d. Determining critical elements. A critical element of the job is one that is so significantly important that performance below the minimum established standard for the job element outweighs successful or better performance on other elements and requires remedial action and denial of a within-grade-increase. It may be the basis for removing, reassigning or reducing the grade level of the employee.

e. Assuring critical elements are critical. As a means of checking whether critical elements are really critical, supervisors should be able to answer yes to the following questions:

- Are you willing to recommend the removal or demotion of the technician if the performance plan for this element is not met?
- Will substandard performance of this element really affect mission accomplishment?
- Is there at least one critical element established for this job?

f. Identifying Performance Indicators. After the technician's critical elements have been established, performance indicators must be identified. Performance indicators are generic quality, teamwork, and customer service performance measures. Performance indicators tell the rating official and employee what is important to successful performance in each job element. Additional performance indicators may be added with an explanation. Performance indicators may apply to more than one or all critical elements.

g. Assuring completeness of the Performance Plan. To assure completeness of the performance plan, supervisors should be able to answer yes to the following questions:

- Are tasks clearly and simply stated, and do they cover all critical duties?
- Does the performance plan clearly state how well (quality), how soon (timeliness), and in what manner each task should be performed? Where feasible, are work units used, and do they allow a reasonable margin or tolerance?
- Does the performance plan truly reflect successful performance? Are they attainable? Can they be exceeded?
- Will adequate performance as shown in the performance plan produce the required results?
- Does the performance plan clearly reflect management's requirements in terms of observance of rules and regulations and safety responsibilities?
- Is the performance plan written so that unacceptable performance can be identified and remedial action justified?
- Is the performance plan written so that superior can be clearly distinguished from successful performance and an incentive award nomination substantiated.
- Were all tasks and performance indicators discussed with the technician(s) before arriving at a decision? Has the performance plan been discussed with the next level of supervision to insure that they are in line with other office or units in the organization?
- Does the performance plan for supervisory jobs reflect such required factors as leadership, decision making, planning and organizing, managing positions, selecting and assigning technicians, training/developing subordinates, using incentives, maintaining technician management communications, administering constructive discipline, administering leave, and promoting safety and EEO?

A-3. CONDUCTING THE PERFORMANCE REPORT.

a. Performance Counseling. Supervisors should frequently praise and encourage technicians who are meeting objectives, and assist technicians who are not. Supervisors should never wait until the formal performance report (end of the report period) to tell a technician that performance was not acceptable; the technician should be told of a problem as soon as the supervisor is aware of one.

Performance counseling should:

- Focus Discussion on Behavior Rather Than the Person. It is important that supervisors discuss what the technician does rather than what the technician is.

- Focus Discussion on Observations Rather Than Opinions. Observations refer to what you can see or hear in the behavior of the technician ("You hesitated for several minutes before making your presentation" as compared to the opinion that "You don't seem to know your subject"). Opinions and/or conclusions about a technician contaminate observations, thus clouding the feedback. When an opinion is offered, and it may be valuable to do this sometimes, it is important that it be identified as an opinion.

- Focus Discussions on Behavior Related to a Specific Situation, rather than the "here and now". Everything people do is related in some way to time and place. Discussion will be most meaningful if you give the feedback as soon as the performance is observed and tie it to the specific situation observed.

- Focus Discussion on the Sharing of Ideas and Information. By sharing ideas and information, the supervisor leaves the technician free to decide how to use the ideas in light of his or her own objectives. On the other hand, when the supervisor gives advice, the technician is told what to do with the information. In effect, the technician's freedom to determine the right or appropriate course of action is taken away. If the technician is able to choose his or her own proper course of action (i.e., "ownership"), more commitment to achieving success will usually result.

- Focus Performance Report Discussion at the Appropriate Time. Because receiving and using feedback may involve possible emotional reactions, it is important for the supervisor to be sensitive to the right time and place to give an evaluation. Successful performance information given at an inappropriate time may do more harm than good.

b. Performance Report discussion. The goal of the performance report discussion is mutual understanding of actual performance results by the technician (in comparison with the supervisor's expectations as stated in the established performance plan) and future actions for future improvement. These include: specific efforts to improve performance in areas of identified weakness; identification of training and developmental activities, both short-term and long-term, to remedy deficiencies and/or expand skills and knowledge for career growth. Review of job elements and performance indicators to insure currency and to establish performance goals for the next year. There are four basic requirements for a successful performance report discussion:

- (1) Adequate Preparation. This should be a natural result of the performance report process and the establishment of a record of performance history throughout the appraisal period.

- (2) Adequate Time. The discussion should be scheduled in advance, far enough ahead to enable the employee to be adequately prepared for the discussion. Also, there should be enough time allotted for the meeting so that an unhurried discussion can take place. (Remember - the outcome of this meeting could be very important to the employee's career).

(3) Privacy. The only persons present at the discussion should be the supervisor and the technician being rated, and the supervisor should insure that the meeting is not interrupted by visitors or telephone calls.

(4) Objectivity. Clearly, no one is or can be absolutely objective - but the use of a well-developed performance plan should greatly aid the supervisor in this regard. The greater the degree of objectivity in the performance report, the greater the degree of acceptance by the technician. Knowledge of the performance objectives to be achieved and of current performance in comparison with desired performance objectives will enhance objectivity.

APPENDIX B HRO FORM 430

EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE PLAN & RESULTS REPORT

(The electronic version of this form is available on your workstation in Jet Forms.)

APPENDIX C.

GUIDELINES FOR APPRAISING SUPERVISORS

AND MANAGERS ON THEIR PERFORMANCE IN EEO

C-1. Performance Plans for furthering equal employment opportunity are appropriate to the technician's position and should be stated in terms of visible affirmative efforts. Therefore, the following guidelines should be used when appraising managers and supervisors on their performance in EEO:

- a. Has the manager/supervisor communicated to all subordinates in writing his/her commitment to EEO and what is expected from each member of the work force?
- b. Has the manager/supervisor discussed the State EEO affirmative employment plan with subordinates and solicited recommendations for implementation, modification, or improvements?
- c. What specific actions has the manager/supervisor taken to identify and eliminate barriers to the employment and advancement of minorities and women?
- d. Does the managers/supervisors have a written plan, including goals and timetables, to address identified problem areas within his/her work force?
- e. Has the manager/supervisor conducted a survey among the work force to identify those unused/underused, mission-related skills that would qualify the technician for a higher level position or a position with known potential for advancement?

f. Does the manager/supervisor maintain a current file of the unused/underused skills among the work force?

g. Does a review of the manager's/supervisor's decisions relative to selection, training, and awards indicate that full consideration is being given to all employees, including minorities and women?

h. What actions has the manager/supervisor taken to provide upward mobility opportunities for eligible technicians in the work force?

i. Has the manager/supervisor ensured that the complaints processing poster (NGB Form 713-4) has been posted on the bulletin board?

j. What specific affirmative steps, including setting a personal example, has the manager/supervisor taken to assure the acceptance of all technicians, including minorities and women?

k. Does the manager/supervisor maintain records that show formal EEO training of all subordinate managers/supervisors including both initial and updated orientation?

l. Does the record indicate that the manager/supervisor assigns like penalties for like offenses regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or other nonmerit factors?

C-2. The task for supervisors/managers Performance Plans has been written by the State Equal Employment Manager. The following task will appear as in Part I of the HRO Form 430 as a critical task:

"Communicates to subordinates the commitment to EEO and what is expected of each employee. Corrects situations that may create complaints of discrimination and eliminate barriers to the advancement of women and minorities."

This task, and the task for Safety and Management Controls will be included in the Part I of the HRO Form 430.