

Employee Evaluation and Assessment

Index Code: 301.2

Effective Date: 1/5/2024

PURPOSE

The purpose of this directive is to improve the reliability of the evaluation system and to define the roles and responsibilities of the evaluators by ensuring that there are standards adhered to when completing the Office of the Sheriff performance evaluation known as the Queen Anne's County Performance Planning and Assessment System evaluation. This directive details the duties and expectations of the evaluator and identifies the information to be considered before making a determination for each rating. Compliance with these directions will assure that each evaluator focuses on the same set of performance behaviors in determining each rating.

POLICY

It shall be the policy of the Office of the Sheriff for Queen Anne's County that all evaluations be conducted in a fair, impartial and in an objective manner consistent with this directive.

I. Required Action

This system is reliant on the supervisor's documentation of relevant observations of the subordinate's performance and abilities. Evaluators are required to maintain or access a job observation file of the employee, as well as incorporate other supervisor's observations in the rating of their subordinate's.

- A. Performance evaluations will be conducted annually on each full-time employee beginning twelve months following the employee's date of hire. Additionally, all new employees will be evaluated at the end of their first six-months with the exception of newly hired sworn employees attending a police academy. These evaluations will be maintained in the employee's personnel file and with the County Human Resources Department. Excluded from required performance evaluations are the Sheriff and any employees classified as Professional and Executive Service.
- B. Other considerations and provisions for probationary employees:
 - 1. Newly hired sworn employees are required to attend an approved Maryland Police Training Commission entrance level curriculum (police academy) and will serve a probationary period of two years from their date of graduation from that academy. All lateral employees will serve a probationary period of two years from their date of hire. (Index Code 703).
 - 2. Newly hired and newly promoted non-sworn employees, except contractual employees, will serve a probationary period of one year from their date of hire or promotion. Probationary periods may be extended with cause in six-month increments. Probationary periods do not pertain to contractual employees. (Index Code 703.1)
 - 3. Newly promoted sworn employees will be on probation for 12 months and will be evaluated every 4 months from the promotion date. This four-

month evaluation will be more concentrated on the newly promoted employee's progression and abilities in their new roles. During this probationary evaluation period, recommendations for improvement plans and additional guidance may be needed to help the employee in their career progression. Those not meeting required levels of proficiency may be reinstated back to their most recent prior rank. That reinstatement may not be appealed and will last one year after which the employee may participate in the promotional process again.

4. The probation period for newly promoted employees may be extended for 90 days by that employee's immediate supervisor with notifications and approvals through the chain of command. Probationary periods may be extended due to special assignments, injury, illness or to allow for additional observation of an employee whose job performance is considered marginal and who may otherwise not successfully pass his/her probationary period.
 - A) The employee must be advised that their probationary is being extended prior to the expiration of the normal probationary period.
 - B) Extensions for performance concerns, shall be accompanied by an improvement plan, indicating areas of concerns
 5. Probationary officers, upon completion of the Field Training and Evaluation Program, will be evaluated for their progress in the Field Training Programs as required by Maryland Police Training Commission. This is NOT the same evaluation as an annual review. These evaluations will be documented, and a copy will be maintained in the employee's training and personnel file.
 6. The probationary period for newly appointed sworn employees will be for 24-months from their date of graduation from entry-level classroom training when employees are granted permanent status. Certified Deputies who are hired laterally will be on probation for a 24-month period from date of hire.
- C. Evaluations are only to cover a specified time-period. The actual dates for the evaluation will appear on the face of the Queen Anne's County Performance Planning and Assessment System evaluation and the performance of the employee prior to the given rating period should be excluded. Only information during the specified period shall be used, including the final results of any previously open investigations.
 - D. The criteria used for performance evaluations are to be specific to the employee's assignment during the rating period.
 - E. Employees shall be verbally counseled prior to their formal evaluation if their performance does not meet expectations and shall include what actions the employee must take to improve their performance. That counseling will be followed by written advice if improvements are not noted and can be given to the employee at the time of their evaluation which may prompt a 90-day improvement plan. At any time that deficiencies are recognized and rise to the level of concern by supervisors, a 90-day improvement plan may be initiated. All efforts shall be

documented and forwarded through the chain of command to the agency Administrative Division and Human Resources Section.

- F. Drafted evaluations will have multiple levels of review and examination prior to being presented to the employee. This will ensure that the supervisors are applying ratings defensibly, justly and reasonably. These levels of review will be clearly indicated and acknowledged on an attached "Performance Evaluation Routing Sheet."
- G. Supervisors shall substantiate their ratings in all categories of the Performance Review and will give specific reasons for the ratings through a narrative.
- H. Employees will receive counseling at the conclusion of the rating period to discuss the prepared evaluation and reasoning for their ratings. Areas to be included are: results of the performance evaluation just completed; level of performance expected; rating criteria or goals for the new performance period; and career counseling relative to topics such as advancement, specialization or training.

A supervisor may conduct career counseling activities at any time throughout the year and should ensure that all counseling is documented.

- I. Each supervisor who prepares performance evaluations will be evaluated by their own supervisor regarding the quality of their subordinate evaluations, ensuring uniformity and equality.

II. Procedures for the Use of the Evaluation Form

- A. This form is designed to serve the purposes of both assessing employee performance, including identifying possible deficiencies, as well as helping employees to improve their performance and plan for a successful future.
- B. This form is to be completed by an employee's immediate supervisor, that is, the first person in the employee's chain of command officially designated as a "supervisor", not necessarily designated by a specific rank but an individual that has direct oversight of the daily functionality of the employee. Performance assessments shall be conducted within two weeks before an employee's anniversary date, or within the designated time frame assigned by the Division Commander.
- C. All completed assessments and evaluations will be certified as being completed by the signature of the assessor and a secondary reviewer, typically but not necessarily, in the employees' direct chain of command.
- D. The rater should familiarize themselves with the assessment scale, used to define a range of performance dimensions to be evaluated. Assessors shall evaluate carefully each aspect of an employee's usual and customary performance. While isolated accomplishments or deficiencies may be included in the assessment, they should only be considered if they are of a significant magnitude to note a deviation from the employee's normal behavior.

- E. The rater should familiarize themselves the standards for that category beginning with "Unsatisfactory" behavior. Then by comparing job observations with the standards, the proper rating must be chosen. Where the choice is not readily apparent, the rater must evaluate the "pluses and minuses" in the job observations. Both the frequency and consequences of action, positive or negative, must be evaluated. Attention is directed to the phrases and questions that illustrate and clarify each category.
- F. The rater shall develop functional performances by using four (4) of the most critical job functions identified in the employee's current performance improvement plan and/or job description. The assessor shall evaluate the employee's performance using the performance assessment scale. The supervisor is required to provide a minimum of two justifications/examples for the "Assessment Level Score" of each of the four functions.
- G. The rater shall prepare the written summary of the job observations to explain the rating given. The written justifications must be specific and relevant to the category. Ratings of "Exceeds Expectations" must include appropriate examples of exceptional performance such as public or internal recognition and any other documentation that would justify the employee's overall rating.
- H. All employees will be assessed on their workplace demeanor. This evaluation is a more general assessment of the employee's abilities, conformance to agency procedures, personal and work attributes that affect the employee's general attitude and behavior.
- I. The employee will provide a self-assessment of their own abilities in addition to the supervisor's evaluation. This self-assessment can be used in comparison to the evaluator's assessment when providing feedback, career development suggestions and creating realistic expectations.

While traditional statistical data is frequently used to support the productiveness of the employee, supervisors should consider a wide variety of other measures that should be enumerated when supporting ratings. Examples could be the employee's exemplary community interactions, public and agency recognitions, and any outstanding achievements during the course of the year. Any possible deficiencies during the year should also be noted.

- J. Supervisors must provide managerial comments and goals when completing evaluations for employees. These comments are provided for general, work-related, remarks by the assessor which may be intended to either qualify the earlier, numerical assessments or provide specific recognition to the employee and identify future objectives. Supervisors shall provide defensible justifications for ratings of unsatisfactory or exceptional work.

The supervisor shall, in conjunction with the employee, identify specific functional aspects of the employee's assigned duties, responsibilities and workplace demeanor

to help to identify future goals regarding advancement, specialization, and training appropriate to employee's position.

- K. Supervisors, who in turn are evaluated, will also be assessed on their abilities to perform personnel management/supervisory responsibilities. They shall be assessed in terms of the management/supervisory skills, pre-established within this evaluation. The supervisor shall evaluate the employee's performance using the performance assessment scale

III. Overview of Standards

- A. Use of the assessment scoring system requires the supervisor to review each category very carefully. Raters may assess an employee from "0" to "2" in ½ point increments. The assessor may use a 0.5 or a 1.5 score should the employee's performance be slightly above one category yet not proficient enough for the next higher rating.
- B. Supervisors will prepare the evaluation based on the performance assessment scale. A rating of "2" "exceeds expectations" should be reserved for top performers. A rating of "1" "meets expectations" should be used for performance that conforms to standards. A rating of "0" "does not meet expectations" Should be used for performance that did not conform, on average or to a significant degree in limited amount of time, to quality, quantity or behavioral standards. Supervisors may use half scores of "0.5" and "1.5" based on the situation. Note that one score of less than 1 in the functional performance section or three scores of less than one on the entire evaluation results in an unsatisfactory performance assessment. In this case, a 90-day evaluation is required, and an improvement plan must be outlined in the Goals section with specific, measurable objectives.
 - 1. Training will be coordinated through the Administrative Services Division and Training section. The training will include, but may not be limited to, a review of this policy, review of an approved County Human Resources training PowerPoint, and any other relevant resources.
 - 2. Supervisors may receive training on the performance evaluation system during specified in-service training or as a separate training course.
 - 3. Any newly promoted supervisor who did not receive the performance evaluation training, shall receive that training from their supervisor or commanding officer.
- C. Unsatisfactory Evaluation: An employee who "Does not meet Expectations" and receives one score of less than 1 in the functional performance section or three or more scores of less than 1 on the entire evaluation will be placed on a 90-day improvement plan.
 - 1. The employee will receive no pay for performance increase in salary.
 - 2. The employee will be counseled as to the reasons for the evaluation which does not meet expectations; a 90-day work improvement plan will be

developed with specific, measurable objectives and the plan will specifically inform the employee that he/she may be terminated.

3. The employee will be provided a copy of the work improvement plan.
 4. At the conclusion of the work improvement plan, the supervisor will reevaluate the employee. If the employee achieves the objectives set out in the plan, he/she may receive a pay for performance salary increase. If the employee fails to achieve all of the objectives outlined in the plan, the supervisor and agency may reconsider all options up to and including termination.
- D. If, during the rating period, an employee is transferred to another shift, Unit, Section or Division, the employee's new current supervisor will complete the evaluation for that period. Because supervisory observations were made prior to the end of this evaluation period, the previous supervisor(s) will provide a supplemental report to accompany the prepared evaluation. This supplemental report will be detailed and will allow for a more comprehensive and equitable assessment of the employees viewed abilities and attributes during this period.

IV. Review:

- A. Upon completion of the initial assessment appraisal evaluation draft, whether the initial six month or annual assessment, the supervisor will submit the evaluation, ratings and supporting documentation through the chain of command to the agency Administrative Services Division. This submission will be considered the "Draft Review" and reviewed by the chain of command prior to being returned to the supervisor for either amendments or presentation to the evaluated employee.

The supervisor will not present or share the draft evaluation with the evaluated employee while in draft format and under review.

1. Initial Review/Draft Review:

- a. Assessor- The supervisor who prepares and rates the evaluation being submitted.
- b. Reviewer- The reviewer is the next level of supervision that reviews the content and supporting documentation to ensure all sections are accounted for and completed in accordance with this policy and procedures of Queen Anne's County.
- c. Division Commander- Division Commanders are the reviewers for all personnel in their command.
- d. Operations Commander- The Commander of the Field Operations and Support Services Divisions.
- e. Sheriff- The Sheriff will be the final review in both the draft and final stages of this process.

2. Final Review- The final review process of this evaluation will be completed by the chain of command. The purpose of this final review is to ensure that the approved evaluation has been reviewed with the employee by the supervisor and any comments added are noted.

3. Following the final review, the agency Human Resources section will forward the signed final copy of the evaluation to the Queen Anne's County Human Resources Department to be filed, while also maintaining a copy in the agency personnel files.
- B. Reviewers have a key role in this evaluation process; they are enforcers of the standards. Reviewers must critically read the justifications provided for each rating and compare it to agency standards. Additionally, the reviewers must evaluate the job observation data provided to determine if it is properly applied.
 - C. At any time in the review process and any level of review, the reviewer can make comments on the evaluations and assessment provided by the supervisor.
 - D. At any time during the review process, a reviewer may return the evaluation back to the supervisor, through the Division Commander, to request clarification of any concerns and discrepancies in ratings, challenge perceived deficiencies and/or to request additional support and justification to support given ratings.
 1. If the supervisor receives these requests for clarifications but fails to address these concerns, the supervisor and the Division Commander or his/her designee shall review the entire evaluation collectively. If the supervisor still does not provide additional justification for the ratings given, then the Commander or his/her designee will conduct a brief supervisory inquiry detailing the circumstances and inconclusive result. If no resolution is reached during this inquiry period, the evaluators supervisor, next in the chain of command, will review the provided performance assessment, and may replace the originally submitted assessment as appropriate.
 - E. When the Performance Review is complete, it will be reviewed and signed by the employee's supervisor who will then give it to the employee for review. A Performance Review between the supervisor and the employee is required at which time the employee should be given the opportunity to read and sign the Performance Review. The signature will indicate that the employee has read the report and does not imply concurrence.

The employee will be given the opportunity to make written comments on the completed performance review. The employee will receive a copy of the Performance Review.
 - F. The completed Performance Review will then be forwarded to the Agency Human Resources for appropriate paperwork and submission to the County.

V. Supervisor and Commander Responsibilities in the Evaluation Process

- A. Supervisors and commanders shall be responsive to subordinates, peers, superiors, and agency needs and priorities at all times.
- B. They shall lead by example and ensure that all employees perform at an exemplary, lawful and ethical level, in line with agency and county policies, as well as local, state and federal laws.
- C. They shall constantly monitor their subordinates' job performance and offer fair and equitable guidance with constructive feedback and attainable goals.
- D. They shall prepare six month or annual Performance Evaluations that thoroughly and fairly appraise a subordinate's professional conduct over the past time period with goals and objectives set for the future.
- E. Scores must be justifiable and consistent with agency evaluations as a whole.
- F. The evaluations must be submitted in a timely fashion, allowing for the agency review process to be completed, prior to delivery to County Human Resources before the due date.
- G. Supervisors and commanders shall promote a positive image and work environment at all times that is professional and free from any bias, harassment and/or unethical behavior.
- H. Evaluations must thoroughly and fairly appraise a subordinate's professional conduct over the past time period with attainable goals and objectives set for the following year.
- I. Ratings must be justifiable and consistent with agency evaluations as a whole.
- J. Following the approval of the draft evaluation, the agency Human Resources manager shall return the approved evaluation to the initial evaluator for their presentation to the employee.
- K. In the event that a supervisor/commander determines that an evaluation does not thoroughly and fairly appraise an employee's job functions, their own goals, and in comparison, to other employees, that supervisor/commander will interact with the evaluator with the goal of reaching a mutual agreement on submitting an appropriate evaluation.
If an agreement cannot be reached, the supervisor/commander may override the initial evaluation and prepare a new evaluation. Counseling should be offered to the initial evaluator to ensure that future evaluations comply with agency goals.

VI. Supporting Narrative

- A. Supporting narrative should accompany all evaluations to accurately qualify the supervisor's general and work-related assessment of the employee, supporting the numerical assessment, and recognize the employee and identify future objectives as indicated in the assessment itself.
 - 1. Written justification shall support exceptional and marginal scoring, allowing the reviewers, at all levels, a means of acceptable explanation and understanding of the scoring provided by the rater.
- B. Specific functional aspects of the employee shall be identified.

1. The supervisor shall identify specific functional aspects, duties and responsibilities, demeanor of the employee to identify future goals for career development and advancements.
2. The supervisor is encouraged to identify and capitalize on all aspects of the employee's assessment and ratings and encourage a continued specific career growth. This is the same for employees that do not perform to acceptable levels. If acceptable levels are not attained during the rating period, supervisors must outline these deficiencies and develop an improvement plan as outlined in this policy.

VII. Review and Appeals

A. Appeals

1. Employees, supervisors and reviewing officials should attempt to resolve disagreements over the Performance Review through informal meetings and discussions, taking the time to clarify the employee's performance history during the period. These points of clarification may be added to the evaluation. The supervisor may or may not determine it appropriate to act on this information with regards to the current evaluation.
2. Should informal resolutions not be reached, employees choosing to appeal their Performance Review reports must do so within ten calendar days following receipt of the completed Performance Review Form. The appeal must be in writing, must be in detail, must indicate the specific categories that are contested and must provide specific justification why the category rating is inaccurate.

B. Appeals will be forwarded through the chain of command to the Chief Deputy.

C. The Chief Deputy may choose to hear only these categories properly documented. The Chief Deputy **will not** adjust ratings on the specific categories appealed. The Chief Deputy may ask for justification from the rating supervisor on the specific categories appealed. Based on the material provided, the Performance Review may be sent back to the supervisor who prepared the review for reconsideration.

D. The Sheriff will make the final determination if an appeal remains unresolved.


Sheriff Gary Hofmann

Accreditation Standards 32.2.10, 34.1.7, 35.1.1, 35.1.2, 35.1.3, 35.1.4, 35.1.5, 35.1.6, 35.1.7, 35.1.8, 35.1.9, 35.1.10, 35.1.11, 35.1.12, 35.1.14