

VILLAGE OF WALDEN
POLICE DEPARTMENT
ONE MUNICIPAL SQUARE
WALDEN, NEW YORK 12586

Jeffry Holmes
Chief of Police

GENERAL ORDER

NO: 11:16

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Subject: Performance Evaluations	
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Issuing Authority: Chief Jeffry Holmes	

PURPOSE:

To achieve its objectives, a law enforcement agency must be able to depend upon satisfactory work performance from its employees. Performance evaluations are a measurement of the employee's general competence and on-the-job performance of assigned duties. The purpose of this directive is to establish such an evaluation system for all employees', which will serve the interests of both the employee and management. Essentially these are to:

1. provide an objective and fair means for recognition and measurement of individual performance,
2. maintain and improve employee performance,
3. provide a median for personnel counseling,
4. allow for fair and impartial personnel decisions,
5. facilitate proper decisions regarding probationary employees,
6. identify training needs.

I. PROCEDURE:

- A. Annual performance evaluations will be required of each employee. Bi-monthly evaluations will be required on all probationary employees. All evaluations will be conducted by the employee's immediate supervisor, who shall measure performance based upon personal observations and information related to him by other supervisors.
- B. The rating period shall be from January 1st through December 31st of each year. However, if the employee's supervisor determines that the performance of a particular employee is below an acceptable level, performance evaluations of a greater interval may be conducted. Evaluations are to be based only on the rated employee's performance during each rating period.
- C. Evaluations of employee's will be related to the skills, abilities and knowledge required for the particular job description and the employee will receive either a satisfactory or unsatisfactory rating in each category. Raters who evaluate employees are to be evaluated by their supervisors regarding the fairness and impartiality of the ratings that are given to employees. Raters must be able to carry out their role in the performance evaluation system.

- D. Each rater will receive instruction in rating procedures and rater responsibilities, as a precondition of such involvement. Raters are to become familiar with sec III of this policy which is an Evaluation Manual which contains the accepted standards for evaluation and explains the best procedures for evaluating personnel.
- E. Employee's will be counseled by their immediate supervisor at the beginning of each rating period concerning the tasks of the position, level of performance expected, and the evaluation rating criteria. A supervisor shall advise employees in writing whenever an employees performance is deemed unsatisfactory. This written notice should define actions that could be taken to improve performance. The written notice should be given at least 90 days before the end of the evaluation period in order to allow time to recognize improvements. Should unsatisfactory performance continue, this information must be included in the evaluation report.
- F. The supervisor shall make written comments for unsatisfactory performance, as well as, comments concerning the employee's prior and future performances. Upon the supervisor's completion of the evaluation, the supervisor will interview the employee and review the specifics of the rating. The supervisor shall also discuss the levels of performance that are desirable in the future and career counseling covering topics such as specialization, advancement, and training appropriate for the employee's position.
- G. Upon completion of the interview between the supervisor and the employee, the employee shall sign the evaluation. The signature indicates only that the employee has read the report and does not imply agreement or disagreement with its content. The employee may make written comments on the report if he/she so desires.
- H. If an employee wishes to contest the evaluation, he/she may appeal in writing, within ten (10) workdays of receiving the evaluation to the rater's supervisor, explaining fully the reasons for such request. The rater's supervisor will act on such request, and discuss the evaluation with the parties involved and make a decision on the appeal.
- I. If any employee is not satisfied with the first appeal, he/she may then appeal within ten (10) workdays to the Chief of Police. The Chief will then act on such request, and discuss the evaluation with the parties involved and make a decision on the appeal. If the employee still disagrees with the evaluation, he/she may appeal within ten (10) workdays of receiving the Chief's decision to the Village Manager. The Village Manager or his designee will set a meeting between all parties and make a decision. The decision of the Village Manager shall be final.
- J. The rater will forward the completed evaluation report to his supervisor and the rater's supervisor will review and sign the evaluation report.
- K. Completed performance evaluation reports shall become part of the employee's personnel file. Such reports will be retained for a period of three (3) years. A copy of the completed evaluation report may be provided to the employee, if he/she so requests.

II. Personnel Early Warning System

The Village of Walden Police Department has a responsibility to its employees and the community to identify and assist employees that demonstrate symptoms of job stress and performance problems. Although no particular set of criteria can determine these traits, it is important that certain “risk indicators” be reviewed routinely as possible indicators of behavior patterns. The Chief of Police shall annually review the items contained in this section in addition to reviews initiated by the supervisory staff.

The following list represents examples of risk indicators that may be indicative of job stress or performance problems when demonstrated in a pattern by an employee:

1. Disciplinary Problems
 2. Internal Affairs Complaints
 3. Vehicle Pursuits
 4. Civil Litigation
 5. Vehicle accidents involving department vehicles
 6. Negative performance evaluations
 7. Civilian complaints
 8. Excessive sick leave usage
 9. Worker’s compensation claims
 10. Adverse or extreme personality changes
 11. Other personal issues
 12. Use of force incidents
- A. It shall be the immediate supervisor’s responsibility to ensure that a review is initiated when certain patterns of behavior including but not limited to those outlined above are exhibited by the employees he/she supervises. Although there are no specific sets of criteria that delineate when a review should be initiated, it is imperative that the immediate supervisor uses discretion and initiate a review when necessary to avoid the escalation of more serious problems and to assist the employee as soon as practicable.
- B. A supervisor who deems it necessary to initiate a review of an employee shall notify the Chief of police or his designee in order to explain the behaviors and/or incidents demonstrated by the employee. In order to ensure that a fair and meaningful assessment is made, it is important that all appropriate material is evaluated during the review. The Chief of Police or his designee shall make a determination and or recommendation which could result in one or more of the following alternative measures:
1. Assessment that no problem exists, terminating any further action.
 2. Counseling by the immediate supervisor
 3. Remedial training
 4. Referral to employee assistance program(s) for counseling
 5. Referral to drug testing
 6. Referral to psychological or medical fitness for duty examination(s)
 7. Other corrective or disciplinary action as deemed appropriate

- C. Any remedial actions that are deemed necessary shall be documented and filed in the employees personnel file by the Chief of Police. The documentation shall remain on file for a period of three years.
- D. It shall be the duty of the Chief of Police or his designee to annually evaluate the Personnel Early Warning System to ensure that the system is operating efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of the Department.

III Training

The following training manual has been incorporated into this general order to assist raters in understanding the basic principles of a successful performance evaluation system.

EVALUATION MANUAL

OVERVIEW

This guide is intended to assist Department supervisors in conducting performance evaluations of their subordinates within the guidelines of G.O. 11.16. While the subject of personnel performance evaluation is an exhaustive subject, this manual has been designed only as a brief and concise reference focusing on objectives and pitfalls.

OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of each member of the Department is to contribute, with maximum efficiency, toward the successful accomplishment of the Department mission and goals. Their members achieve this accomplishment through the success of each division, which depends on the maximum application of skills and effort. It is the primary objective of the employee evaluation process to assess and appraise those member skills and efforts in order to perceive deficiencies or misdirection, and to identify superior performance by members.

ADVANTAGES OF EVALUATION

A successful employee evaluation system serves to identify problem areas in the Department, to make adjustments or reassignments as needed, to implement training and to assess the quality of supervision extent. Such a system improves communications among the ranks, alerts the Department to otherwise undetectable problems, and ultimately improves morale. Evaluations may be used as a basis for promotions, training, and disciplinary action.

IMPLEMENTATION

In order for a system of performance evaluation to be successful, the process must be fully understood by both the rater and the subordinate, and a sincere and honest effort must be made to rate accurately and objectively. Whether utilizing forms or narrative type reports, it is essential for the rater to consider all areas of an employee's responsibilities and conduct, consider any mitigating circumstances involved, refer to all documentation pertaining to a particular evaluation, whether reports originated by the subject or other reports that concern the subject's conduct or professional activity. It is essentially important for supervisors to be cognizant of the concept of performance evaluation as an on-going process, wherein subordinates are aware of what is expected of them, knowledgeable of their evaluator, invited to an open communication with that rater/supervisor regarding questions and guidance, and a supervisory system of follow-up in areas of subordinate skill deficiency. Rating forms and evaluation reports must be considered only as the annual documentation of what must be a daily process.

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PROBLEMS WITH PERFORMANCE RATINGS

Performance ratings may not totally reflect the actual performance of members for several reasons:

1. Supervisors may not be aware of, or have clearly thought about, each of the areas on which they are asked to rate their subordinates.
2. Supervisors may feel that command personnel may perceive them poorly if they appear to have members with noticeable deficiencies or weaknesses.
3. Supervisors may wish to rate their subordinates accurately, but inflate these ratings, believing that other supervisors may tend to overrate their staff and in turn the first supervisor's staff will appear less competent.
4. Some supervisors tend to be extremely lenient while others tend to be extremely critical. Each interprets the rating form from his/her own frame of reference.
5. Supervisors may be hesitant to rate an employee down, realizing that the member will eventually see the rating form and may question the reasonableness of the rating. This is a likely concern when the supervisor has either not kept a written record of past performance incidents or where the supervisor has not discussed performance problems with the member prior to the time of formal rating.

EVALUATION RATING ERRORS

There are four common errors encountered during the process of performance evaluation. Awareness of these potential errors can help the supervisor to avoid making them, thereby lending to the accuracy and credibility of the ratings:

1. Leniency Error:

This error refers to the tendency to rate members higher than their performance warrants. Supervisors sometimes fall into the "leniency error" trap because of a concern that subordinates will argue against and reject a more accurate and perhaps lower performance rating. To avoid such arguments or negative feelings, the supervisor rates the member higher than the supervisor actually believes performance merits.

One of the negative results of this type of error is that outstanding employees are not recognized or rewarded in a system where the majority of members receive above average or outstanding ratings based on "leniency error".

2. Halo Error:

This error refers to the tendency of a supervisor to rate a subordinate high on most or all characteristics based on performance in only one or a few criteria. Such ratings usually are evidenced by all 4s or 5s on a 5-point scale. An opposite, but similar effect is called the Horns error. In this case, a supervisor rates a subordinate low on most or all criteria based on that member's poor performance in a few or even a single area.

3. Recency Error:

This type of error occurs where a supervisor rates a subordinate based on the member's most recent work performance. It tends to focus, in an annual performance appraisal, on the most recent several months' performance. Where the supervisor does not keep records of either outstanding or deficient performance throughout the year, this error is most likely to occur.

4. Central Tendency Error:

This occurs when a supervisor rates subordinates down the middle, giving them all "Average" ratings. It can also be found where supervisors rate all subordinates as a "4" level, giving everyone the same above-average rating.

These errors can be avoided by a conscious effort to rate each member accurately and objectively in each area to be measured on the performance report. The process correctly requires a written record of both positive and negative performance throughout the year for each member supervised. These records need not be lengthy memoranda to file, but should indicate date, performance noted and follow-up action taken, if any. Such records help to identify a pattern of behavior or a recurring performance problem, should one exist.

FOLLOW-UP TO EVALUATIONS

Where performance evaluations spotlight skill deficiencies, the supervisor should attempt to provide counseling or recommended training, where feasible, to the subordinate to assist in correcting mistakes and to strengthen weaknesses.

When a genuine interest on the part of the supervisor exists to assist the subordinate to enhance his/her performance, as evidenced through concrete suggestions and willingness to follow-up and work with the subordinate, the tendency to reject superior input about deficiencies is reduced.

When a member has generally positive evaluations, supervisors should attempt to develop the member's potential by assigning more complex and challenging tasks where additional work skills can be learned or experiences gained.

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FEEDBACK

One of the hallmarks of a good performance evaluation system is timely and frequent feedback to staff. If a member is performing in a less than satisfactory manner, he/she should be informed as soon as the performance is noticed. If this doesn't happen, the member, who may not recognize that he/she is doing something incorrectly, will be reinforcing poor performance. Where feedback is provided as soon as inappropriate behavior is noticed, the poor performance will not have had an opportunity to be reinforced and will therefore be easier to change.

Feedback should not just be of a negative nature. We are all motivated by both the carrot and the stick. All too often negative feedback is provided and positive or good performance goes unrecognized. It is therefore just as important to praise or recognize desirable behavior or performance when that performance is observed. The best research to date indicates that frequent and timely feedback, both negative and positive combined, results in the greatest improvement in staff performance.

THE EVALUATION INTERVIEW

Subordinates tend to be defensive when scheduled for a performance evaluation interview and rarely assume that they are about to be praised, but rather expect that they are about to be told of their deficiencies. Where a supervisor intends to indicate areas of poor performance on the part of a member, in order to maximize the likelihood that the member will accept the feedback, it is important first to provide positive feedback in areas where the member is performing acceptably or above standard. By doing so, the supervisor reassures the subordinate that he/she is doing some things right and this correct performance is recognized. It also reduces the member's sense of anxiety and apprehension, resulting in his/her greater openness to feedback about areas of deficiency.

The interview should not be punitive in nature, but rather should focus on constructive criticism to assist the member in understanding his/her weakness or misdirection and to help the member improve work performance.

RESISTANCE TO INTERVIEW

Supervisors sometimes resist the evaluation interview for a number of reasons, including the following:

1. Dislike of criticizing subordinates.
2. Lack of concrete examples of poor performance.
3. A dislike of being argumentative.
4. Mistrust of the performance evaluation system.
5. A lack of skill in conducting the performance evaluation interview.

SUGGESTIONS FOR INTERVIEW SUCCESS:

1. Avoid a negative approach to a subordinate, begin an interview by describing the member's positive attributes and potential to become (or to continue to be) an asset to the Department.
2. Avoid dwelling on comparisons with the member's peers, who may be superior in performance to the interviewed member, such comparisons tend to cause defensiveness and negate the positive effect of the interview.
3. Utilize a "problem-solving" approach -- attempt to gain the assistance of the subordinate in focusing on performance problems, and give the impression that supervisor and subordinate ought to be united in seeking resolution to the member's work problems.
4. Do not blame or berate the subordinate.
5. Do not allow criticism of job performance to turn into criticism of the person -- keep the interview focused on the member's work.
6. If criticisms of the subordinate's job performance are offered, the supervisor must be prepared to back up such criticisms with facts.
7. Have available concrete suggestions for improvement -- attempt to elicit the member's own suggestions for self-improvement.

SOME DO'S AND DONT'S ABOUT EVALUATION INTERVIEWS

DO'S:

1. Conduct the interview in private.
2. Establish a friendly atmosphere.
3. Let the subordinate talk.
4. Listen to the subordinate's ideas -- this may be his/her only opportunity to express his/her own complaints and suggestions.
5. Gain his/her trust, assure him/her of confidentiality, and encourage cooperation.
6. Exhibit to the subordinate a willingness to learn from him/her.
7. Allow sufficient time for the interview - don't rush and don't appear impatient.

DON'TS:

1. Don't argue with the subordinate.
2. Don't interrupt with too many questions.
3. Don't "cross examine."
4. Don't get angry.
5. Don't have all the answers.
6. Don't refer to other members as examples of superior performance.
7. Don't impose on the subordinate to agree with your ideas.

SETTING PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

Setting reasonable objectives to be achieved within specified time frames helps ensure that the subordinate will focus on the performance deficiency and that he/she knows that there will be a follow-up on the part of the rating supervisor.

Relegating performance evaluation to a once a year process does not ensure this form of follow-up. Although the completion of performance reports may be conducted annually, follow-up with subordinates should be more frequent. Where this is done, the supervisor reinforces the positive, developmental aspects of the performance evaluation process.



Jeffrey Holmes,
Chief of Police

VILLAGE OF WALDEN POLICE DEPARTMENT

Evaluation Program

POLICE OFFICER EVALUATION FORM

Officer's Name: Officer

Evaluation period:

SGT

Supervisor Completing Evaluation (Please Print)

P = PASS

F = FAIL

OUTLOOK

- | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| P <input type="checkbox"/> | F <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 - ABILITY TO ACCEPT CRITICISM: VERBAL / BEHAVIOR |
| P <input type="checkbox"/> | F <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 - OUTLOOK TOWARDS POLICE WORK AND DEPARTMENT |
| P <input type="checkbox"/> | F <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 - OUTLOOK TOWARDS ALL CITIZENS |
| P <input type="checkbox"/> | F <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 - OUTLOOK TOWARD OTHER OFFICERS AND COMMAND PERSONNEL |

APPEARANCE

- | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| P <input type="checkbox"/> | F <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 - UNIFORM APPEARANCE/NEATNESS |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|

KNOWLEDGE OF AND ABILITY TO APPLY

- | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| P <input type="checkbox"/> | F <input type="checkbox"/> | 6 - DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES |
| P <input type="checkbox"/> | F <input type="checkbox"/> | 7 - STATE LAWS APPLICABLE TO POLICE WORK |
| P <input type="checkbox"/> | F <input type="checkbox"/> | 8 - TRAFFIC CODES/VILLAGE ORDINANCES |
| P <input type="checkbox"/> | F <input type="checkbox"/> | 9 - AREA CHECKS AND AREA PROBLEMS |
| P <input type="checkbox"/> | F <input type="checkbox"/> | 10 - JOB FUNCTIONS |

PERFORMANCE

- | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| P <input type="checkbox"/> | F <input type="checkbox"/> | 11 - DRIVING SKILLS |
| P <input type="checkbox"/> | F <input type="checkbox"/> | 12 - SELF INITIATED/ AVAILABILITY FOR CALLS/BACKUP |
| P <input type="checkbox"/> | F <input type="checkbox"/> | 13 - ORIENTATION / RESPONSE TIME TO CALLS |
| P <input type="checkbox"/> | F <input type="checkbox"/> | 14 - FIELD PERFORMANCE: NON-STRESS CONDITIONS |
| P <input type="checkbox"/> | F <input type="checkbox"/> | 15 - FIELD PERFORMANCE: STRESS CONDITIONS |
| P <input type="checkbox"/> | F <input type="checkbox"/> | 16 - INVESTIGATIVE SKILL/ FOLLOW UP ON INCIDENTS |
| P <input type="checkbox"/> | F <input type="checkbox"/> | 17 - INTERVIEW / INTERROGATION SKILL |
| P <input type="checkbox"/> | F <input type="checkbox"/> | 18 - OFFICER SAFETY |
| P <input type="checkbox"/> | F <input type="checkbox"/> | 19 - PROACTIVELY POLICES ASSIGNED AREA |
| P <input type="checkbox"/> | F <input type="checkbox"/> | 20 - SELF INITIATED FIELD ACTIVITY |
| P <input type="checkbox"/> | F <input type="checkbox"/> | 21 - CONTROL OF CONFLICT |

- | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| P <input type="checkbox"/> | F <input type="checkbox"/> | 22 - ADHERES TO LEAVE POLICY |
| P <input type="checkbox"/> | F <input type="checkbox"/> | 23 - ABILITY TO WORK WITHOUT SUPERVISOR |
| P <input type="checkbox"/> | F <input type="checkbox"/> | 24 - PROBLEM SOLVING / DECISION MAKING |
| P <input type="checkbox"/> | F <input type="checkbox"/> | 25 - RADIO SKILLS / PROFESSIONALISM |

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION SKILLS

- | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| P <input type="checkbox"/> | F <input type="checkbox"/> | 26 - ROUTINE FORM ACCURACY / COMPLETENESS |
| P <input type="checkbox"/> | F <input type="checkbox"/> | 27 - REPORT WRITING: ORGANIZATION / DETAILS |
| P <input type="checkbox"/> | F <input type="checkbox"/> | 28 - REPORT WRITING: GRAMMER / SPELLING / NEATNESS |
| P <input type="checkbox"/> | F <input type="checkbox"/> | 29 - PROPER USE / COMPETENCE W/ COMPUTER REPORTING |

Length of time officer has worked for supervisor completing evaluation YRS _____

Officer's strongest area or areas of performance: Category number _____

Explain:

Officer's weakest area or areas of performance: Category number _____

Explain:

Officers Remarks:

Date completed: _____, 20____ _____
Signature of Supervisor Completing Evaluation

 Officer's Signature Date _____ / _____ / _____

 Chief's Signature Date _____ / _____ / _____

 Village Manager's Signature Date _____ / _____ / _____