



U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board

SUBJECT: PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL PROGRAM

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1. **PURPOSE.** This order establishes policies and standard operating procedures for appraisal of General Schedule (GS) employees of the Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB). The appraisal program provides for the development and communication of individual performance plans based on the CSB's mission and organizational goals; the periodic appraisal of job performance of covered employees; and the foundation for decisions on awards, promotions, or other actions based on performance.
2. **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This order is effective upon passage. This order supersedes and replaces directive 740, which was issued without authority of the Board.
3. **INTERNAL REVIEW.** The Human Resources Director in consultation with the General Counsel and other Office Directors shall review this order every two fiscal years. Proposed revisions shall be submitted to the Board by November 1 of every other fiscal year, commencing on November 1, 2008.
4. **SCOPE.** This order applies to all employees in the competitive and excepted service. It also applies to senior-level and scientific and professional employees paid under the special authority of 5 U.S.C. § 5376. It does not apply to Presidential appointees, members of the Senior Executive Service, intermittent employees, and temporary employees whose appointments are not expected to exceed 120 days, all of whom are subject to other appraisal requirements.
5. **REFERENCES.** This policy implements relevant portions of Chapters 43, 45 and 53 of Title 5 of the United States Code and implementing regulations found in Title 5 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Chapters 293, 335, 351, 430, 451, 531, and 532.
6. **POLICY.** The CSB's appraisal program is designed to maximize employee and organizational performance; to provide a mechanism for executing basic management and supervisory responsibilities; and to motivate employees to excel.
7. **DEFINITIONS.**
 - a. **Additional Performance Element.** A dimension or aspect of individual, team, or organizational performance that is not a critical or non-critical element and is not used in assigning a summary rating.
 - b. **Appraisal.** The process under which performance is reviewed and evaluated.
 - c. **Appraisal Period.** The established period of time for which performance will be reviewed and a rating of record will be prepared.
 - d. **Critical Element.** A work assignment or responsibility of such importance that unacceptable performance on the element would result in a determination of overall unacceptable performance.

- e. **Days.** All references to days in this order are to calendar days.
- f. **Non-Critical Element.** A dimension or aspect of individual, team, or organizational performance, exclusive of a critical element, used to assign a summary level. Examples of such elements include, but are not limited to, objectives, goals, program plans, and other means of expressing expected performance.
- g. **Minimum Rating Period.** The shortest period in which an employee must serve under established standards to receive a rating. The minimum rating period for the CSB is 60 days.
- h. **Performance.** The accomplishment of work assignments or responsibilities.
- i. **Performance Improvement Plan.** A plan provided to each employee whose performance is determined to be unacceptable in one or more critical elements.
- j. **Performance Plan.** The written document, which includes all critical, non-critical, and additional performance elements, and the standards for those elements that together define expected performance for an established period of time.
- k. **Performance Rating.** The written appraisal of actual performance compared to the established standard for each critical and non-critical element on which there has been an opportunity to perform for the minimum period. The rating may include a summary rating.
- l. **Performance Standard.** The management-approved expression of the performance thresholds, requirements, or expectations that must be met to be appraised at a particular level of performance. A performance standard may include, but is not limited to quality, quantity, timeliness, and manner of performance.
- m. **Progress Review.** The communication during the rating period with the employee about his/her performance compared to the established standards for critical and non-critical elements.
- n. **Rating Period.** The period for which CSB employees will be rated on an annual basis. The period established for the CSB is September 1 through August 31.
- o. **Rating Official.** The official, usually the immediate supervisor, who initially appraises the employee's performance and recommends a rating of record.
- p. **Rating of Record.** The performance rating prepared at the end of an appraisal period for performance of CSB-assigned duties over the entire period and the assignment of a summary level.

- q. **Reviewing Official.** The official, usually the rating official's immediate supervisor, who reviews and concurs with or changes the recommended rating before it is finalized. In the case of any employee who reports directly to the Chairperson, the reviewing official will be another Board Member designated by the Chairperson.
- r. **Work Plan.** A list of specific milestones, tasks, and accomplishments which the employee is expected to achieve during the rating period.

8. **RESPONSIBILITIES.**

- a. The Chairperson is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Performance Appraisal Program.
- b. The Human Resources Director is responsible for providing technical support and guidance to supervisors and employees in the administration of the Performance Appraisal Program and other specific duties as detailed in this Order.
- c. Supervisors are responsible for serving as rating officials for employees under their direct supervision; establishing for their subordinates meaningful performance plans which are clear, concise, and related to organizational goals; providing progress reviews; gathering performance input from employees; evaluating employees fairly and accurately; providing ratings; and taking other actions related to appraisal in accordance with this order.
- d. Second level supervisors and the Board Member designated by the Chairperson are responsible for serving as reviewing officials, reviewing appraisals in accordance with this order.
- e. Employees are responsible for participating in the establishment of performance plans and in other aspects of the appraisal process as appropriate and for accepting responsibility for performing all elements of their performance plans.

9. **PERFORMANCE PLAN.**

- a. Four official rating levels are established for all elements in the CSB's program: Outstanding, Fully Successful, Minimally Successful, and Unacceptable.
- b. Before the beginning of the performance appraisal period, the supervisor will establish the employee's written performance plan. The plan will be based on translating into work assignments and responsibilities the goals which are part of or which are derived from the CSB's Strategic Plan and Annual Performance Plan or other guidance provided by the Chairperson for the forthcoming fiscal year. Performance plans will include critical and, if appropriate, non-critical and additional, performance elements for the appraisal period, and will describe the performance standard for the following three levels: Outstanding, Fully

Successful, and Minimally Successful. The form located at Appendix A of this order will be used to document the plan.

- c. Plans will be developed using the following kinds of elements:
 - (1) **Critical elements.** All plans will have at least three critical elements.
 - (2) **Non-critical elements.** Plans may include non-critical elements.
 - (3) **Additional elements.** Plans may include additional elements beyond the critical and non-critical ones. Additional elements cannot be used in calculating a Summary Rating.
- d. The Chairperson may require standard elements for certain employees or groups of employees for the rating period. A standard element may be critical, non-critical, or additional, depending on the requirement.
- e. Standards will be developed for each element and will be objective, explicit, measurable, attainable, and fair, and will specify what kinds of factors (such as quality, quantity, cost-effectiveness, timeliness, or accuracy) will be used to evaluate how well the employee has performed on that element.
- f. The supervisor (rating official) will confer with the reviewing official and the Human Resources Director on performance plans to assure a consistent approach within the organization.
- g. Supervisors (rating officials) will discuss the elements and standards with the employee and assist the employee in understanding the performance expectations. Agreement on the standards is desirable; however, the final determination of elements and standards will be made by supervisors, in consultation, as appropriate, with the HRD and the General Counsel.
- h. Supervisors (rating officials) will sign and date the elements and standards, and then obtain the signature of the reviewing official. The supervisor will obtain the employee's signature certifying that he/she has received a copy of the elements and standards and that they have been discussed with him/her. The employee's signature serves only to acknowledge receipt of his/her elements and standards. It does not indicate agreement or disagreement with the performance plan. The supervisor will indicate, at the place provided on the form, the date the standards were discussed with the employee and the date he/she was given a copy. The rating official files the original form in the employee's performance file for use during progress reviews and to prepare the appraisal at the end of the rating period. A copy of the signed performance plan cover sheet is to be sent to the HRD no later than October 1st of each fiscal year. If the employee declines to sign the elements and standards, he/she will be issued the memorandum at Appendix B, with a copy of the elements and standards attached.

- i. Elements and standards may be modified during the rating period if necessary. The standards **may not**, however, be changed within less than 60 days before the employee is rated. The employee must have at least 60 days under the same elements and standards to receive a rating on those elements and standards.

10. **PROGRESS REVIEWS.**

- a. The appraisal process is ongoing and supervisors are to provide feedback, formally and informally, to employees on a continuing basis, and to have regular performance progress reviews. At a minimum, employees receive at least one progress review at the midpoint of the appraisal period. For most employees, the progress review will be due by March 31. The formal progress review(s) is documented on the appraisal form (Appendix A) where the employee and supervisor (rating official) sign and indicate the date(s) the review(s) was held. A copy of this form showing these signatures should be sent to the HRD no later than April 5.
- b. Supervisors (rating officials) are to provide assistance to employees at any time that performance falls below the Fully Successful level. Section 16, below, contains instructions for situations in which performance falls below the Minimally Successful level.

11. **TIME LIMITS AND POSITION MOVEMENT.**

- a. **Annual appraisal period.** The appraisal period for the CSB extends from September 1 through August 31. Performance elements and standards should be prepared within 30 days of the beginning of the appraisal period.
- b. **Minimum appraisal period.** Employees who complete at least 60 days under the same performance plan during the rating period will be given a summary rating for that period.
- c. **Employee change in positions.** When an employee moves out of his/her position, he/she will receive a summary rating, if he/she has served in a position under a signed performance plan for at least 60 days.
- d. **Supervisor change in positions.** Supervisors moving out of their position must complete appraisals for employees under their supervision, before leaving their position.
- e. **Plans for the new position.** When employees change position during the appraisal period or are reassigned or promoted to a new position, elements and standards will be established within 30 days of the position change or placement in the new position.
- f. **Details.** Employees on details or temporarily promoted for 60 days or more during the appraisal period will also be rated on their performance while on detail.

When details or promotions are expected to last 60 days or more, a performance plan covering the detail or temporary position should be established in accordance with the procedures of this order, before beginning the detail or promotion. Appraisals of employees on details or temporarily promoted will be prepared within 30 days after the detail or promotion ends.

- g. **Transfers.** When a CSB employee transfers to another Federal government agency, the CSB will transfer the employee's most recent rating of record and any subsequent performance ratings to the gaining agency in accordance with 5 C.F.R. Part 293 and applicable Office of Personnel Management instructions.

12. **UNRATABLE EMPLOYEES.**

- a. If an employee has been in a position for more than 30 days, but less than 60 days, the rating period will be extended to provide a minimum period of 60 days. The rating period may also be extended for other compelling reasons, with the approval of the Chairperson. A rating of record will be completed within 30 days after completion of the required period of time.
- b. The performance rating of a disabled veteran may not be lowered as a result of the veteran's absence from work to seek medical treatment.

13. **EVALUATING EMPLOYEES.**

- a. At the end of the rating period, the rating official will review the elements and standards, any available documentation or records relevant to the employee's performance, and information from the progress review(s). Supervisors (rating officials) should seek input from the employee being rated before finalizing his/her evaluation.
- b. When preparing ratings, the supervisor (rating official) may give appropriate consideration to any appraisals received by the employee during the rating period, such as those from a detail or a previous position. Appraisals from other positions held during the same rating period can only be considered in preparing a summary rating for that period. A rating of record can only be based on the evaluation of actual job performance during the period covered by the rating. A rating of record from a previous appraisal period cannot be carried over to a subsequent appraisal period without an actual evaluation of the employee's performance during the subsequent appraisal period.
- c. The rating official will evaluate the employee's performance on each element, assigning one of the levels below:
 - Outstanding
 - Fully Successful

- Minimally Successful
- Unacceptable

If the performance is Outstanding or Unacceptable on any element, a full description of the performance will be provided.

- d. The rating official will assign a Summary Rating, which will be computed as follows:
 - (1) **Outstanding:** majority of critical elements rated as Outstanding; no critical or non-critical element rated less than Fully Successful.
 - (2) **Fully Successful:** majority of critical elements rated as Fully Successful; no more than one critical element rated as Minimally Successful; no critical or non-critical element rated as Unacceptable.
 - (3) **Minimally Successful:** more than one critical element rated as Minimally Successful; no critical element rated as Unacceptable.
 - (4) **Unacceptable:** one or more critical elements rated as Unacceptable.
- e. An Unacceptable summary rating will be assigned only if one or more critical elements are rated “Unacceptable.” Consideration of non-critical elements shall not result in assigning a summary rating of “Unacceptable.”
- f. There will be no forced distribution of ratings.
- g. After completing the appraisal, the supervisor (rating official) will forward it to the reviewing official who will either concur with and sign the appraisal or revise and sign it.
- h. The supervisor (rating official) will meet and discuss the appraisal with the employee and provide him/her a copy. The reviewed and signed appraisal becomes final upon issuance to the employee. See 5 C.F.R. § 430.208(a)(3). The employee will sign the form, indicating receipt of the appraisal. The employee’s signature does not indicate agreement with the appraisal and does not impact his/her right to request reconsideration of the appraisal in accordance with Section 14, below. If the employee declines to sign the appraisal, he/she will be issued the memorandum at Appendix C, with a copy of the completed appraisal attached.

The supervisor (rating official) will retain the completed appraisal with all required signatures and dates in the employee’s performance folder and will forward a copy of the summary appraisal to the HRD no later than September 17 of each fiscal year.

14. **RECONSIDERATION.**

- a. If an employee is dissatisfied with the rating, he/she may request reconsideration. This request must be directed to the reviewing official within 10 calendar days of the employee's receipt of the appraisal. The request must be accompanied by a written narrative, no longer than one page, explaining why the employee feels that the rating is incorrect. The narrative should be written in terms of specific elements.
- b. The reviewing official will issue a written decision to the employee within 10 calendar days of receipt of the request. This decision should address any issue raised by the employee relevant to the appraisal, and any other information the official feels is necessary to explain the decision.
- c. The reviewing official's decision is final. Performance ratings are not subject to further review.
- d. Changes to a rating of record in response to an employee's request for reconsideration must be made within 60 days of the date the original rating was issued.

15. **USE OF APPRAISAL AS BASIS FOR OTHER ACTIONS.**

- a. **Awards.** The appraisal may be used as a basis for an award.
 - (1) **Performance Award.** This award is a one-time cash payment to recognize performance of regularly assigned duties and is awarded in cases where the employee's performance warrants recognition. It is based on the employee's current rating of record which must be Fully Successful or higher.
 - (2) **Special Act or Service Award.** This is a one-time cash payment, time off award, or non-monetary honorary recognition of an employee for a special act or service, suggestion, invention, or exceptional performance in a specific aspect or element of the job.
 - (3) **Quality Step Increase (QSI).** The QSI is an additional pay increase, which raises the employee's rate of basic pay and provides continuing benefits, which are based on the employee's pay rate. It is given for consistently higher quality performance of regularly assigned duties that exceeds normal expectations for the type of position concerned. It may be granted only if the employee has a current rating of record at the Outstanding level and if the supervisor certifies that the high level of performance is expected to continue. However, a QSI is not automatically granted upon receipt of an Outstanding rating. QSI's may not be awarded to employees who:
 - (a) are in the maximum step of any grade (5 U.S.C.A. 5335(a)); or
 - (b) have received a QSI in the prior 52 week period (5 U.S.C.A. § 5336(a); 5 C.F.R. § 531.505).

- b. **Within-Grade Increases.** Eligible employees receive within-grade increases only if their current performance rating is Fully Successful or higher. This rating must be dated within the last year preceding the effective date of the increase, even if the employee is in a waiting period of more than one year for the within-grade increase.
- c. **Career Ladder Promotions.** The appraisal is used to determine if employees in a career ladder should be promoted to the next higher grade. To be promoted, the employee's rating of record in the current position must be at least Fully Successful on all critical elements; however, this rating **does not** guarantee a promotion.
- d. **Merit Promotions.** Employees applying for merit promotions must provide a performance appraisal in accordance with instructions in the position vacancy announcement. The appraisal is used as one tool in evaluating employees in the review process.
- e. **Reduction-in-Force (RIF).** Employees may receive additional service credit during a RIF for performance. No rating of record or summary rating will be assigned for the sole purpose of affecting an employee's RIF retention standing. No new ratings of record will be prepared for employees who have received a specific RIF notice until after the effective date of the RIF.
- f. **Training.** Appraisals may be used to determine if training is necessary to improve employee performance.

16. **PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN.**

- a. If at any time during the appraisal cycle an employee's performance in one or more critical elements is determined to be unacceptable, the supervisor shall provide the employee an opportunity to improve by the issuance of a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP). Unacceptable performance means that the performance is below the level described as Minimally Successful in the employee's established elements and standards.
- b. Supervisors identifying employees in need of a PIP should immediately consult the HRD.
- c. A PIP must be in writing and will include the following:
 - (1) Identification of the critical element(s) in which the employee's performance is Unacceptable. This identification should refer to the element specifically as written at the beginning of the rating period and should provide specific examples of deficiencies. It should also include dates and summaries of any progress reviews or discussions regarding the employee's performance. A copy of the element(s) and standard(s) should be attached to the PIP. If

possible, any written examples or documentation of the deficiencies should also be attached.

- (2) A description of the standard which must be demonstrated for acceptable performance. The standard described at Minimally Successful should be referenced in this description, with additional explanation if necessary.
 - (3) An offer of assistance to the employee in improving his/her performance.
 - (4) A schedule of formal meetings which the supervisor will hold with the employee during the improvement period. These will be more often than normal progress reviews and should be sufficient to establish clearly in the record that the employee has received assistance.
 - (5) The time in which the employee will be expected to improve to the Minimally Successful level. This is to be a reasonable amount of time, which is not less than 30 days, and usually does not exceed 60 days.
 - (6) Notice that failure to improve to the level of Minimally Successful could result in the employee's being reduced in grade or removed, and that failure to achieve Fully Successful will result in denial of a Within-Grade Increase.
- d. The purpose of the PIP and improvement period is to provide the employee with an opportunity to raise their performance to the previously established Minimally Successful level. The standards for attaining the Minimally Successful level cannot be changed during the improvement period.

17. ACTION FOLLOWING THE OPPORTUNITY TO IMPROVE.

- a. If, at the end of the opportunity period, the employee's performance continues to be unacceptable in the same critical elements found in the PIP, the supervisor may begin action to remove the employee or reduce him/her in grade, in accordance with 5 U.S.C. § 4303 and 5 C.F.R., Chapter 432.
- b. If the employee's performance improves to the level of Minimally Successful, he/she should be so notified in writing, with advice that failure to attain Fully Successful will result in denial of a Within-Grade Increase.
- c. If the employee's performance again falls below the Minimally Successful level at any time within one year from the beginning of the PIP and opportunity period, he/she can be subject to adverse action, up to and including removal, without having another PIP or opportunity period. If the employee's performance does not again fall below the Minimally Successful level until more than one year has passed since the beginning of the previous PIP and opportunity period, he/she must be given a new PIP and opportunity improvement period before adverse action can be taken.

d. Supervisors (rating officials) must consult with the HRD and the General Counsel during the process of issuing and monitoring employees on PIPs. The HRD and General Counsel must concur in all correspondence and other documents issued to the employee in connection with the PIP and resulting actions.

18. **RECORDS**. A copy of the signed performance plan cover sheet is to be sent to the HRD no later than October 1st of each fiscal year. After completion of the appraisal at the end of the rating period, the rating official shall file the rating and any other required documentation in the employee's performance file, with a copy given to the employee. Rating officials shall maintain ratings of record and any related documents in compliance with 5 C.F.R. Part 293, Subpart D. The rating official will provide a copy of the summary rating to the HRD no later than September 17 of each fiscal year. The HRD will report ratings of record data to the Central Personnel Data File in compliance with applicable Office of Personnel Management instructions.

U.S. CHEMICAL SAFETY AND HAZARD INVESTIGATION BOARD

July 17, 2000

Amended, August 17, 2007

U. S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board Performance Management Record

Name	Organization

Title, Series, Grade, and Step	Rating Period

Establishment of Performance Plan

The attached elements and standards are complete and accurate descriptions of the work expected of the employee during the designated rating period. They will form the basis for the performance appraisal at the end of the rating period.

Name and Title of First Line Supervisor/Rating Official

Signature

Date

Name and Title of Second Level Supervisor/Reviewing Official

Signature

Date

Employee Acknowledgment of Discussion and Receipt of Elements and Standards

Employee Signature

Date

Progress Review. At least one progress review during the rating period is required. The review must cover each element. Documentation may be attached if desired.

First Review (Mandatory)

Employee's Signature/Date

Supervisor's Signature/Date

Second Review

Employee's Signature/Date

Supervisor's Signature/Date

Third Review

Employee's Signature/Date

Supervisor's Signature/Date

Elements and Performance Standards

Use one sheet for each element with continuation sheets if necessary. Mark element number on each continuation sheet and note section(s) being continued.

Name

Organization

Element No. _____ **of** _____

Element:

Critical

Noncritical

Standards

Outstanding:

Fully Successful:

Minimally Successful:

Performance Appraisal

Complete one appraisal sheet for each element; use additional pages if necessary. If Fully Successful or Minimally Successful is assigned, the discussion can be fairly brief, but should be sufficient to demonstrate that the performance met the assigned level. If the level of Outstanding or Unacceptable is assigned, the performance should be discussed in more detail.

Name	Organization
Element No. _____ of _____	Rating _____

Narrative of Accomplishments

Name	Performance Summary
	Organization

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Element List by Number	Critical/Noncritical	Rating

Summary Rating	Refer to CSB Order 010 for Instructions on Deriving Summary Rating
_____ Outstanding	_____ Minimally Successful
_____ Fully Successful	_____ Unacceptable
Award Recommended: Yes _____ Attach recommendation No _____	

Rating Official, Signature, and Title	Date
Reviewing Official, Signature, and Title	Date

Employee Acknowledgment of Discussion of Appraisal and Rating and Receipt of Copy	
Employee Signature	Date

MEMORANDUM FOR: *name of employee*

FROM: *supervisor*

SUBJECT: Notice of Declination to Sign Performance Plan

The U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB) Performance Appraisal Program requires that each employee acknowledge discussion and receipt of his/her performance plan by signing the Performance Management Plan in the appropriate place.

On *provide date*, you were given a copy of your performance plan with the elements and standards, appropriately signed by your supervisor, *insert name*, and your second level supervisor, *insert name*. You declined to sign the forms.

Accordingly, as required by CSB Order 010, Section 9(h), this notice is issued to document your declination to sign. A copy of the notice will be placed with the plan in your employee performance file and will be maintained in accordance with applicable records maintenance procedures.

A copy of the plan, which you declined to sign, is attached.

Attachment

name of supervisor

cc: Human Resources Director

MEMORANDUM FOR: *name of employee*

FROM: *supervisor*

SUBJECT: Notice of Declination to Sign Performance Appraisal

The U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB) Performance Appraisal Program requires that each employee acknowledge discussion and receipt of his/her performance appraisal by signing the Performance Management Plan in the appropriate place.

On *provide date*, you were given a copy of your appraisal for the period *fill in dates of appraisal period* appropriately signed by your supervisor, *insert name*, and your second level supervisor, *insert name*. You declined to sign the forms.

Accordingly, as required by CSB Order 010, Section 13(h), this notice is issued to document your declination to sign. A copy of the notice will be placed with the completed appraisal in your employee performance file and will be maintained in accordance with applicable records maintenance procedures.

A copy of the appraisal, which you declined to sign, is attached.

Attachment

name of supervisor

cc: Human Resources Director