



# United States Department of the Interior



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In Reply Refer To:  
1680 (9100) P

October 4, 2011

Instruction Memorandum No. AK- 2012-001  
Expires: 09/30/2013

To: All Supervisors/Managers

From: State Director

Subject: FY11 Employee Performance Appraisal Plans (EPAPs) and Associated Awards

**Program Area:** Performance Award and Recognition Program

**Purpose:** The purpose of this Instruction Memorandum (IM) is to establish guidance on the FY 11 EPAP and performance award process.

**Policy/Action:** Departmental and Bureau policy requires all past FY performance ratings and associated awards be completed and submitted by October 31 of each year. All current FY EPAPs must be initiated by November 30 of each year. Regulation requires all performance awards be processed by December 31 of each year.

The following requirements are established in order to improve performance management.

EPAP Guidelines and Deadline:

**For the FY 11 rating cycle, the deadline for submission of EPAPs and associated awards to HR will be extended to November 30.** An additional month beyond the established timeline should be sufficient to deliver significant improvement in our performance management. In the FY 12 rating cycle, the completion deadline will be October 31.

HR will not accept any EPAPs and/or associated awards after the November 30, 2011 deadline. Managers not meeting that deadline must submit late EPAPs to the ASD with written justification for late completion. **HR must process all EPAPs and related awards by December 31.**

HR will monitor EPAP submissions and provide managers with weekly reports. The report will list all permanent and temporary employees on the rolls as of October 1, 2011.

EPAP reviews for managers will take place after the November 30 deadline so performance management can be factored into their summary rating.

Listed below are reminders of the requirements for completing EPAPs:

- **EPAP forms dated September 2009 for non-supervisors and September 2010 for supervisors are the only forms that will be accepted.** These forms are located at [http://web.ak.blm.gov/blm\\_fws/forms/di.htm](http://web.ak.blm.gov/blm_fws/forms/di.htm).
- **To receive a rating of record, a permanent employee must be performing in a position supervised by the rating official and under a signed EPAP for the last 90 days.** The performance period may be extended for up to a maximum of 90 days past the end of the appraisal period to allow for the rating of employees who have not been in the same position, under the same supervisor, or under written performance standards for the full 90 days at the end of the appraisal year. Temporary employees must have worked more than 120 days during the annual appraisal period and have been under assigned EPAP for the last 90 days in order to receive a rating.
- **A narrative summary must be written for each critical element assigned a rating of “Exceptional”, “Minimally Successful”, or “Unsatisfactory.”** This narrative should contain examples of the employee’s performance that substantiate the rating. The narrative summaries may be recorded on the EPAP or attached separately.
- **All ratings of record of “Exceptional”, “Minimally Successful”, and “Unsatisfactory” must be reviewed and approved (signed) by the reviewing official PRIOR to discussion with the employee.** The reviewing official is defined as the next level of supervisory authority above the rating official.
- **Employees who receive a “Minimally Successful” or “Unsatisfactory” rating on any one element must receive an overall rating of either “Minimally Successful” or “Unsatisfactory” regardless of the overall points assigned.** Ratings of “Minimally Successful” or “Unsatisfactory” should be coordinated with Employee Relations (Mildred Riley at 907-786-3647 or Helen Stewart at 907-786-3307) prior to an employee receiving such a rating. An employee whose performance fails to meet the standards of a critical element or whose overall performance is less than Fully Successful is not eligible for a within-grade increase.
- The final rating for each element must be noted on the EPAP form, Part C, and the final rating calculated in Part D. **Ratings must be in whole numbers only.**
- After obtaining any necessary approvals, the supervisor will meet with their employee, discuss the summary ratings, and obtain the employee’s signature to indicate receipt of the EPAP. If an employee refuses to sign the EPAP, annotate the original copy the EPAP

- **Reconsideration Process:** When an employee has a concern about the rating given on a particular element, which, if changed, will affect the outcome of the rating of record, he/she may request reconsideration of this rating through the HR Office.

Performance Award Guidance:

Through a July 29, 2011 memo the Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management, and Budget established limitations on performance and individual contribution (STAR) awards for FY 11 and 12. Awards must be limited to no more than 1% of BLM's total aggregate salary costs. In addition, for FY 11 and 12, managers must not exceed their FY 10 spending levels for time-off awards and Quality Step Increases (QSIs). To comply with this guidance, each organizational unit must limit their award spending to 1% of their unit's aggregate salary costs and not exceed the FY 10 level for time-off and QSIs. Each manager will be provided with a FY 10 award baseline.

Please note that this limit does not change the guidance for individual employee awards. Employees who receive an overall rating of record of "Superior" or "Exceptional" are eligible and may be considered for a performance award. The following applies:

- "Exceptional" (Level 5) – Eligible for one or more of the following: a monetary award of up to 5 percent of base pay (COLA is not included in the calculation), a Quality Step Increase (QSI), Time-Off award, and/or other appropriate equivalent recognition.
- "Superior" (Level 4) – Eligible for a monetary award of up to 3 percent of base pay (COLA is not included in the calculation), Time-Off award, and/or other appropriate equivalent recognition. Employees with "Superior" ratings are not eligible for a QSI.
- Employees who receive a "Fully Successful" rating are not eligible for any type of performance-based award. However, all employees are eligible to receive an award for reasons other than sustained performance tied to the rating of record. For example, the employee is eligible to be recognized for a noteworthy contribution or special act that occurred within the rating period with a STAR award.

The delegated authority for award approval is as follows:

- Immediate supervisors may award up to \$500 (gross).
- Deputy State Directors, District Managers, Field Managers, OPM Authorized Officer, and AFS Manager may award up to \$3,000 (gross).
- State Director may award up to \$5,000 (gross).
- Awards over \$5,000 (gross) must be forwarded to the Director in Washington for approval.
- Time-Off awards given as a performance based award cannot exceed 40 hours.

All award amounts should be documented as GROSS amounts (NET amounts are no longer used) on the Recommendation and Approval Form, DI-451. The Financial Action Record on

page 2/3 of the DI-451 should **NOT** be completed for performance based or STAR awards. This section is to be completed for **non-monetary** awards only.

The original completed EPAP and DI-451 should be submitted to Human Resources Office, USFWS, Mail Stop-111, upon completion. Incomplete EPAP form and awards forms will be returned unprocessed and counted as missing until properly completed and returned.

**Timeframe:** Effective immediately.

**Budget Impact:** To comply with this guidance, each organizational unit must limit their award spending to 1% of their unit's aggregate salary costs and not exceed the FY 10 level for time-off and QSIs.

**Background:** Performance management is a critical element of supervisory responsibilities. An audit of the BLM-Alaska Human Resources (HR) program highlighted performance management as an area needing considerable improvement. The audit identified deficiencies including use of obsolete forms, lack of mid-year progress reviews, late submittals or non-receipt of EPAPs, missing award justifications, and missing signatures

**Manual/Handbook Sections Affected:** 370 DM 451, Awards and Recognition Program; 370 DM 430, Performance Appraisal System.

**Coordination:** This IM was coordinated with the Associate State Director, the State Budget Officer, and the Human Resources Management Officer.

**Contact:** Questions regarding these instructions should be directed to Helen Stewart at 907-786-3307 or Mildred Riley at 907-786-3647.

Signed by:  
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