

STATE OF LOUISIANA  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE CIVIL SERVICE  
BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA

May 5, 2005

This public document was published at a total cost of \$10.27. 33 copies of this public document were published in this 1<sup>st</sup> printing at a cost of \$.31 each. The total cost of all printings of this document including reprints is \$10.27. This document was published by the Department of State Civil Service to keep agencies, employees, and other persons informed about the personnel program under authority of Article X of the Louisiana Constitution. This material was printed in accordance with standards for printing by State Agencies pursuant to R.S. 43:31.

General Circular No. 001606

To: Heads of State Agencies and Human Resource Directors

Subject: Performance Planning and Review (PPR) Evaluations

Issue Date: May 5, 2005

**NOTE: Agencies are asked to make the contents of this General Circular known to all rating supervisors and managers.**

On March 17, 2005, Civil Service updated the HR Handbook to include the following information:

Agencies are required to use Chapter 10 of the Civil Service Rules for planning and evaluating employee performance. The Chapter 10 rules on PPR clearly provide for a 5-level rating system. An agency may request approval to use an alternate system; however, any alternative must be approved by this Department prior to use.

We very often hear from supervisors that their agency management prohibits the use of any rating above a "Meets Requirements." This type of internal policy has the effect of changing the 5-level PPR system to a 3-level system. We believe that any agency that has changed the PPR system in this way is in violation of the rules because, in effect, the agency is using an alternate system without proper approval.

Agencies must use the full range of ratings described in Chapter 10 of the rules. Our standard recommendation is that supervisors provide written comments to support any factor rating given, and the rules require documentation for any rating below “Meets Requirements.” Generally speaking, the higher or lower the rating, the stronger the documentation should be in support of the rating. An agency, if it wishes, may legitimately require some sort of review process for factors rated above or below “Meets Requirements” to ensure that consistent standards of documentation are met within the agency for ratings above or below the “Meets Requirements” level.

Supervisors in our classes continue to maintain that their agency prohibits giving any rating above a “3” on any factor. In addition, Civil Service staff receives calls from employees who are upset at having received a “3” on one or more factors in their PPR, and who have been told by their supervisor that it is the agency’s policy that no rating above a “3” will be used.

While we clearly do not recommend that a supervisor rate an employee higher than what is deserved, we also wish to make it clear that it is a rule violation to prevent supervisors from using ratings higher than “3” when an employee’s performance warrants the higher rating. This practice is unfair to employees and leads employees to view the entire process as unfair and suspect.

A supervisor may legitimately and accurately rate an employee with ratings at the “3” level for any or all factors. However, if the employee has legitimately earned a rating of “3” for any or all factors, the supervisor should not state that the rationale for the “3” is that the agency has a “policy” of not using any of the ratings above the “3” level. This explanation deprives the employee of feedback necessary to improve performance, and also leads the employee to believe that a higher rating was earned but not allowed.

Honest performance evaluation, feedback and communication between supervisors and their employees provide the foundation of the PPR system. To achieve this, we ask that you stress the following:

1. Agency supervisors and managers must allow the use of the full range of ratings allowed in the rules when higher ratings are accurate and appropriate, and
2. Supervisors and managers should give employees an honest explanation of any rating (at any level).

We ask that each Human Resources Office make this document available to all levels of management at your agency. Civil Service will be distributing a copy of this General Circular in all of our PPR training classes; we ask that all agency trainers who deliver the PPR training include this General Circular in their handout material as well.

If you have any questions regarding this general circular, please contact your Program Assistance Consultant at (225) 342-8274.

Sincerely,

s/Anne S. Soileau  
Acting Director