
COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR SUPERVISOR – A GUIDE FOR EMPLOYEES

Why Talk With Your Supervisor?

For you and your organization to successfully transition to the Performance Management and Appraisal Program, you must be able to communicate openly with your supervisor. This provides a powerful opportunity for you to actively engage in continuous communication with your supervisor about your accomplishments, current work, and future goals. As you prepare for the Performance Management and Appraisal Program, your supervisor will be a valuable source of information and guidance. It is imperative that you understand why DoD is moving to the Performance Management and Appraisal Program and what you need to do to succeed. It is important for you to discuss any questions or concerns you have with your supervisor.

What Topics to Discuss

Arrange a time to meet with your supervisor to discuss the following topics:

Focus on Performance Planning

The move to the Performance Management and Appraisal Program includes a shift in the way DoD evaluates performance. The focus is on performance and how you contribute to your organization. Success is linked to how well you perform and how that performance contributes to the success of the organization. Work with your supervisor to establish performance standards that show you how to meet the goals inherent in your work assignments. It is important that you:

- Understand the established performance elements and standards and continuously monitor and routinely track your progress in meeting your goals;
- Meet regularly with your supervisor to discuss your performance and ensure your goals and standards are up to date; and
- Document the results and outcomes of your work that support the organization's goals.

Work Assignment and Accountability

You work hard at your job every day. It is essential that you and your supervisor share a common understanding about your performance and results, and how your day-to-day activities contribute to mission accomplishment. Make sure that you know what you are accountable for, what the short- and long-term priorities are and how the work you do contributes to the success of your organization. If you have not already done so, make it a point to meet with your supervisor on a regular basis. Continuous and honest communication is essential to success.

Skill Development and Learning Opportunities

Adding new skills and expanding areas of knowledge increases your value to the organization and enables you to take advantage of new job opportunities. Meet with your supervisor to identify skill-building opportunities and work together to set up a development plan that enhances your value to the organization and maximizes your potential for career progression.

COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR SUPERVISOR – A GUIDE FOR EMPLOYEES

New Opportunities – Safeguarding Employee Rights and Protections

This transition offers managers and supervisors an improved Performance Management and Appraisal Program for acknowledging employees who achieve their performance goals through individual and team contributions. Discuss with your supervisor concerns you may have regarding safeguards in the Performance Management and Appraisal Program. The Performance Management and Appraisal Program provides you with new opportunities for rewards and career progression, while ensuring your rights, protections and current benefits.

Career Goals and Interests

Discussing and documenting your career path and progression enables your supervisor to take your goals into consideration when assigning future work. When you discuss your desired career path with your supervisor, he or she can help explain your organization's mission and the available opportunities it creates for your group and for you.

How to Communicate

Remember the following guidelines as you get ready for the Performance Management and Appraisal Program.

Offer Constructive Feedback

As organizations implement the Performance Management and Appraisal Program, your feedback can drive improvement. Feedback is a good thing. Communicating your viewpoint to your supervisor in a constructive way helps improve the continuous dialogue in the long run. Remember these tips for constructive feedback:

Be prepared. Formulate an effective comment or recommendation; make sure your issues and points are formed properly and well stated so your supervisor can understand your views. Be candid and state facts, not feelings.

Be a part of the solution. Your ideas matter! When you discuss performance with your supervisor, include ideas on how your organization can prepare for and improve.

Continue the dialogue. As you prepare for implementation, keep talking with your peers and supervisor about performance. This open communication is crucial to you and your organization's success.

Use appropriate feedback channels. There are several ways to provide feedback (e-mail, anonymous drop-boxes, websites, etc.). Ask your supervisor for the best way to convey your thoughts in order to maximize your impact.

COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR SUPERVISOR – A GUIDE FOR EMPLOYEES

Ask for Feedback

Do not be afraid to ask your supervisor how you are doing. You want to know what you are doing well and areas where you can improve. When you receive feedback about:

What you are doing well

Take time to consider how you can apply what is working to your other responsibilities.

Areas for improvement

Try not to be defensive. Instead, ask for specific examples of how you need to improve and clarify any questions and concerns you may have.

Take a moment to jot down the outcome of your feedback so you have a record of it, and you can use the information later when you are preparing for your formal appraisal.