



PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
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SEP 15 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP
COMMANDERS OF THE COMBATANT COMMANDS
DEFENSE AGENCY AND DOD FIELD ACTIVITY DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: Implementation of the Mandatory Supervisory Critical Element, "Holding Employees Accountable"

References: (a) Acting Director, U.S. Office of Personnel Management Memorandum, "Performance Management for Federal Employees," June 17, 2025
(b) Department of Defense Instruction 1400.25, Volume 431, "Department of Defense Civilian Personnel Management System: Performance Management and Appraisal Program," February 4, 2016, as amended

The Office of Personnel Management issued reference (a) implementing initiatives that are intended to drive a high-performance and high-accountability culture throughout the Federal workforce. Full implementation of reference (a) is expected by October 1, 2026. To make progress towards full implementation, the Department is implementing the requirement to insert the new mandatory supervisory critical element and performance standards, "Holding Employees Accountable," for all supervisors covered by reference (b). This guidance is only applicable for those employees evaluated under Defense Performance Management and Appraisal Program (DPMAP).

By Friday, September 26, 2025, all supervisors with performance plans in DPMAP must include the mandatory critical element, "Holding Employees Accountable," with associated "Fully Successful" and "Outstanding" performance standards in their performance plan. The attached language for both the performance element and standards is **mandatory in its entirety** and **cannot be amended**.

Implementing this mandatory performance element necessitates a system workaround to the MyPerformance Appraisal Tool (MyPerformance) due to its 1,500 character limit. Instructions on how to include the entire mandated performance element in the MyPerformance Appraisal Tool are attached.

If this system workaround results in supervisory performance plans with more than 10 performance elements, the performance plan must be adjusted to eliminate an already approved supervisory and/or technical performance element, thereby ensuring there are no more than 10 performance elements in the performance plan.

By September 19, 2025, DoD Components are required to confirm full implementation of the mandatory performance elements and standards. The Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service will send instructions regarding submission of this information.

To ensure we promote a sustained culture of accountability, our team will be developing guidance to support evaluation of supervisors during, and at the end of, the performance cycle. The Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Civilian Personnel Policy will reach out to your staff to discuss in the coming weeks.

My point of contact is Mr. Michael A. Cogar, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Civilian Personnel Policy, at (703) 571-9282 or michael.a.cogar3.civ@mail.mil.



Anthony J. Tata

Attachment:
As stated

New Mandatory Supervisory Element, “Holding Employees Accountable”

Instructions

On the supervisor’s current performance plan, two new critical elements must be created. Part 1 includes the text that will be entered verbatim as the first critical element, and Part 2 includes the text will be entered verbatim for the second critical element.

- The Critical Element and Standards for “Holding Employees Accountable (Continued),” as outlined in Part 2 below, does not count towards the mandatory number of Supervisory performance elements defined in Paragraph 3.3.b.(2) of Department of Defense Instruction 1400.25, Volume 431 (reference (b)).
- At the end of the 2026 appraisal cycle, “Holding Employees Accountable (Continued)” must be marked “Not Rated (NR)” in MyPerformance. An “NR” cannot be used as a factor in deriving a rating of record.

Part 1

Insert “Holding Employees Accountable” into the “Element Title” field and insert the performance element, “Fully Successful” portion of the performance standard, and the sentence with the asterisk (*) into the “Element and Standard(s)” field. This is the performance element that **will be rated** at the end of the appraisal cycle.

Critical Element Title: Holding Employees Accountable

Performance Element and Standards:

Ensures subordinate’s commitment to efficient work execution. Models self-accountability and holds subordinates accountable for high-quality results. Recognizes, supports, and rewards excellent work from employees supervised. Timely and efficiently addresses poor and mediocre performance of employees supervised - including seeking appropriate action up to removal from the Federal service. Takes appropriate action when employees report concerns of illegal conduct or waste, fraud, or abuse.

Fully Successful: The supervisor consistently demonstrates the following behaviors and results:

- Ensures that subordinates are committed to executing work efficiently and effectively, modeling self-accountability in all tasks.
- Holds subordinates accountable for delivering high-quality results, setting clear expectations and standards.
- Actively recognizes, supports, and rewards excellent work of employees, fostering a culture of achievement and motivation.

- Addresses poor and mediocre performance in a timely and efficient manner, implementing corrective actions as necessary, including considering removal from Federal service if appropriate.
- Consistently takes appropriate action when employees report concerns of illegal conduct or waste, fraud, or abuse.

** Please see continuation of this Critical Element in “Holding Employees Accountable (Continued)”*

Part 2

Insert “Holding Employees Accountable (Continued)” into the “Element Title” field and insert the text for the “Outstanding” portion of the performance standard along with the paragraph after the bulleted list into the “Element and Standard(s)” field.

Critical Element Title: Holding Employees Accountable (Continued)

Performance Element and Standards:

Outstanding: The supervisor consistently demonstrates the following behaviors and results:

- Consistently demonstrates and instills a strong commitment to efficient work execution among subordinates, leading by example and optimizing processes to enhance productivity.
- Achieves exceptional results through subordinates by setting clear, ambitious goals and providing the necessary resources and guidance to exceed expectations consistently.
- Proactively identifies and celebrates outstanding contributions from employees, implementing innovative recognition programs that significantly boost morale and motivation.
- Effectively manages performance issues with a strategic approach, resulting in noticeable improvements in employee performance and engagement. Demonstrates skillful handling of complex and sensitive employee situations, including successful resolution of performance-related challenges using the full range of administrative actions.
- Fosters a transparent and supportive environment where employees feel safe to report concerns of illegal conduct or waste, fraud, or abuse.

Outstanding performance in this element reflects a supervisor who not only meets the basic requirements but exceeds them by creating a high-performing team that consistently delivers exceptional results, while maintaining a positive and compliant workplace culture.