

# ***Service Rating Manual***

**For all Employees in the Classified Service**



***City of St. Louis***

**Department of Personnel**

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## Introduction

Supervising a staff is a complex job. Successful supervisors understand and respect an organization's rules. Successful supervisors also apply the rules fairly and consistently to the people they supervise. It is a challenging task that requires technical knowledge, good interpersonal skills, and vision.

Managing performance through the Service Rating Process is a vital part of the job, and that is why the Personnel Department developed this guide. It will assist you - the supervisor - with this critical task in two ways:

- By explaining the City's performance management process
- By explaining the forms that are part of that process

The Service Rating Form functions as both a communication tool and a rating instrument.

You will learn more about the Service Rating Form later, but keep in mind that you should use it wisely during a new employee's probation. During the probationary period, make every effort to help new employees succeed. In addition, be sure to record those efforts on the rating form.

Take the time now to read this manual. Highlight sections that you may wish to refer to in the future. We hope that the manual – including the tips – will make your job easier and more rewarding.

This manual is intended to provide you with a better understanding of the rating process. In addition to the manual, the Personnel Department offers educational workshops in the Service Rating Process through the Training and Organizational Development Division. If you would like to obtain the schedule of these courses or arrange a session for the supervisors in your agency, please call 622-5763.

## Section 1: Overview

### Definitions

**Performance Management:** A process of setting standards of performance aligned with organizational goals that clearly define individual performance expectations, reviewing performance periodically, providing ongoing feedback and coaching, evaluating performance against established standards, and making employment decisions based on performance.

**Service Rating:** A periodic evaluation of an employee's performance of assigned duties and responsibilities, which is made by the immediate supervisor, the next higher supervisor, and reviewed and approved by the appointing authority. The rating becomes part of an employee's permanent record and is used to make various employment decisions.

**Service Rating Process:** A series of steps that help the supervisor gain a clearer picture of and effectively guide an employee's performance throughout the rating period. Each step is important to ensure fairness, accuracy, and positive improvements in employee performance. The steps in this process include: Clarification, Communication, Evaluation, Reward, and Development. You will learn more about these steps in Section 2 of this manual.

**Standards of Service:** The requirements of the position and not comparisons of individual employees constitute the basis on which supervisors should evaluate the performance of their employees. The standard of performance in each factor should be set at the level that is expected after a reasonable period of time of a qualified, competent and successful employee.

**Mandatory Improvement Plan:** Raters develop a Mandatory Improvement Plan (MIP) when their subordinate receives an Overall Rating of "Unsuccessful." The MIP outlines actions that the employee must take to correct unsuccessful job behaviors. Section 7, page 22 outlines proper procedures for creating a MIP.

**Interim Service Rating:** An Interim Rating is a rating requested by an appointing authority at a time other than the end of the working test period, the end of the annual rating period, or the end of a mandatory improvement plan. Find more information on interim ratings in Section 3, page 7.

### Authorization

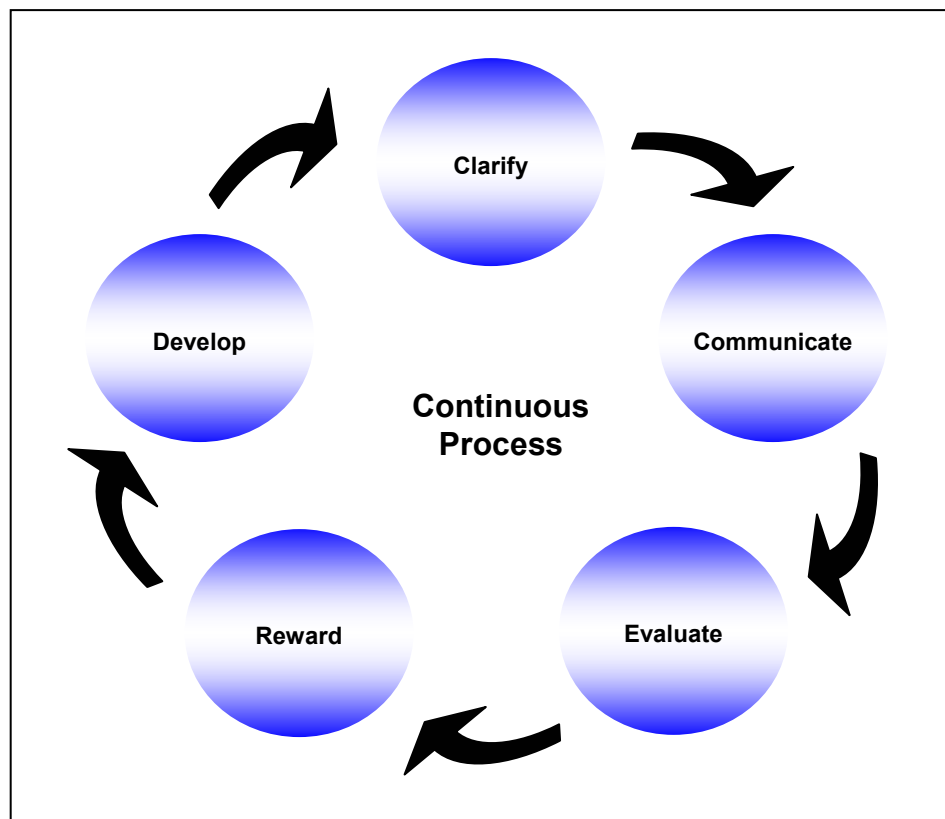
Section 3(h) of Amended Article XVIII of the Charter of the City of St. Louis requires the Civil Service Rules to establish standards of service and a system of service rating. The Charter Amendment further provides: "The service ratings provided shall be given consideration in examinations for promotions, and in connection with increases in pay, layoffs, reemployment, transfers, reinstatements, reductions in pay, demotions and removals hereunder. Standards of service shall be established which any employee must meet to qualify for an increase in pay, reemployment, or promotion, and other standards shall be established, failure to meet which shall result in action for decrease in pay, demotion, or removal."

## Section 2: Understanding the Process

We often think of Service Rating as an event that we perform once a year when the Service Rating Form is prepared. Usually, employees and supervisors view this event as awkward due to the discomfort of evaluating another's performance. The fact is that you as the supervisor can minimize this awkwardness if you use the Service Rating Form as a tool within the scope of the larger Service Rating Process. The Service Rating Process contains the following components:

- **Clarify** your expectations of the employee
- **Communicate** with the employee about his or her performance
- **Evaluate** the employee's performance fairly
- **Reward** the employee for successful performance
- **Develop** the employee toward improved performance capability

The diagram below illustrates the cyclical nature of the Service Rating Process. However, in addition to being cyclical, the components go on simultaneously and overlap considerably. For example, communication with subordinates should take place throughout the process.



**Clarify:** It is important to clarify your expectations for the employee by setting performance standards and goals. Employees will improve their performance if they know what you expect of them and how they can change their behavior to meet specified standards. This manual already sets out performance factors to measure each employee's performance (see rating terminology, page 10). All you need to do is determine the levels of performance required to achieve **Successful** or **Highly Successful** performance. You can clarify expectations by further discussing exactly how you will evaluate subordinates' performance against performance standards at the end of the rating period.

**Communicate:** The communication component of the process is the most prevalent and holds all other components together. This component involves meeting formally or informally to provide feedback and coach subordinates based on your observations of their performance. It is important to provide constructive feedback and offer suggestions for improving performance as problems arise. Communication should take place within each component of this process. Subordinates are much more understanding and willing to cooperate if you clearly communicate why you are taking certain actions.

**Evaluate:** Your evaluation of subordinates is a vital component of good supervision. With the Employee Service Rating Form, you can record the employee's performance and gauge the effectiveness of your performance management approach. Do not just provide a written copy of the form to the employee. Be sure to set up some quiet, uninterrupted time to discuss how you evaluated the employee's performance. This discussion should cover how performance measured up compared to established standards. There should be no surprises during the formal review. Your discussion with the employee should recap prior discussions during the rating period and focus on performance trends.

**Reward:** You should reward successful performance not only at the end of the rating period, but also throughout. Rewarding employees makes them aware that they are on the right track and motivates them to maintain their successful level of performance. It is important to keep in mind that money is not the only way to reward subordinates. Think of creative, informal ways to reward employees. There are several ways to reward a job well done. While many are motivated by verbal praise, others might value being placed on assignments of more importance and responsibility. Additionally, nominating employees for the Mayor's Service Awards Program is another great way to recognize exceptional performance.

**Develop:** You should create a development plan for your employees, regardless of whether they performed successfully. For those employees who fall short of successfully meeting standards, you should focus on how to bring them up to level. For those employees who were successful, your development plan should focus on how to prepare them for new responsibilities or promotion. Your development plan should outline both your responsibilities as the supervisor and the employee's responsibility toward improving performance. Discuss with the employee training and development needs and opportunities, as well as promotional opportunities within the organization.



### Important Note

Throughout the Service Rating Process, it is important to gather as much data on employees' performance as possible. Keep documentation of performance observation and performance discussions in a confidential performance file for your review at the end of the rating period. This documentation will make rating employees much easier and make explaining your rating to the employee easier as well.

## Section 3: Preparation of Ratings

### *When Ratings are Required*

Service ratings are generally prepared on an annual basis for all employees occupying permanent full-time and part-time positions, as well as those who are classified as Permanent Per-performance and Career Seasonal. Limited-term employees are not rated unless they become Career Seasonal. The *Service Rating Form* fulfills an important step in the Service Rating Process. This form serves as:

- *Final documentation of employee performance during the entire rating period*
- *Follow-up to mutual goals and performance standards set at beginning of rating period*
- *Formal conclusion to regular performance reviews conducted throughout rating period between the employee and supervisor*
- *A tool to facilitate discussion between the supervisor and employee over areas where the employee should develop skills and improve performance*

A separate *Working Test Period Rating Form* is used for probationary employees, which provides the appointing authority the following options to document:

- *The employee is being granted permanent status, or*
- *The employee is being terminated for failing the Working Test Period, or*
- *The employee's Working Test Period is being extended for any period up to a maximum of eleven (11) months (see Section 6, page 21 for more information on Working Test Period Ratings)*

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Ratings are required under four (4) general circumstances listed in more detail below: at the end of a working test period, after a standard fifty-two week rating period, at the conclusion of a Mandatory Improvement Plan, or at the request for an Interim Rating by an Appointing Authority. Prepare a *Service Rating Form (PD-204)* **or** *Working Test Period Service Rating Form (PD-204A)* for each employee as follows below.

**Working Test Period Rating:** At least one *Working Test Period Service Rating Form (PD-204A)* is required to evaluate an employee's performance:

1. ***At the conclusion of the employee's normal working test period.*** This will be at the end of six (6) months. However, employees may be rated at the end of ninety (90) days or extended for an additional five (5) months. An appointing authority may request in writing to the Director of Personnel approval to place classes of positions in an automatic eleven (11) month working test period. Before completing this rating, **see Section 6, page 21.**
2. ***At the conclusion of an extended working test period.*** Under certain circumstances, an employee's normal six (6) month Working Test Period may be extended up to five (5) additional months. At the conclusion of any extension of the Working Test Period, another Working Test Period rating form (PD-204A) must be completed.

**Standard Service Rating:** At least one standard *Service Rating Form (PD-204)* is required to evaluate an employee's performance:

1. ***At the conclusion of the first fifty-two weeks of employment.*** If the employee just completed an eleven-month Working Test Period, this fifty-two week rating must be turned in one month early along with the Working Test Period rating. The employee's next rating will occur thirteen (13) months later on the employee's second anniversary date.
2. ***Every fifty-two weeks, unless there is an event that changes the anniversary date (see number 3 below).***
3. ***Fifty-two weeks after a change in salary anniversary date as allowed by the Compensation Ordinance.***



#### **Important Note**

Approximately six (6) weeks before individual ratings are due, the Personnel Services Section of the Department of Personnel provides Appointing Authorities and Payroll personnel with a list of employees who will be due for Service Rating and the pay periods their ratings will be due. Payroll personnel should check these lists for accuracy.

**Mandatory Improvement Plan Service Rating:** A Service Rating (PD-204) must be completed at the conclusion of a Mandatory Improvement Plan, which has been developed for the employee because of an Overall Rating of "**Unsuccessful.**"

**Interim Service Rating:** An Interim Rating is a rating requested by an appointing authority at a time other than the end of the working test period, the end of the annual rating period, or the end of a Mandatory Improvement Plan due to either of the following two (2) situations:

1. ***The employee's performance has changed so much that it would result in a different overall rating than the previous rating.***
2. ***The appointing authority wants to adjust an employee's rating for reasons of exceptional or substandard performance of duties*** (as provided in Section 7 of the compensation ordinance). If a Section 7 salary action is requested at a time other than the time of a scheduled service rating, an Interim rating must be prepared to accompany the request.

The Department of Personnel considers an Interim Rating as an employee's official rating for all purposes for which Service Ratings are used, if all of the following conditions are met:

1. ***At least sixty (60) days have elapsed since the effective date of the last rating before an employee can be rated again.***
2. ***There has been a significant change in the employee's level of performance resulting in a change in the Overall Rating.***

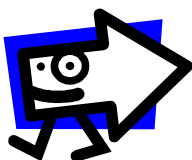
Salary may be adjusted based on an Interim Rating. The change must be in accordance with the standards established in **Section 5** of this manual and **Section 7** of the current compensation ordinance, which requires twenty-six (26) weeks of employment at the current pay rate.

**Unofficial Ratings:** Any appointing authority may establish a procedure requiring unofficial ratings. Unofficial ratings provide feedback to employees on performance expectations during the rating year and assist supervisors in preparation of the annual rating. Unofficial service ratings should be retained by the agency and cannot be appealed under this system of service ratings. In departments/divisions where internal transfers or working for several supervisors is common, the Director of Personnel may require unofficial ratings. Any unofficial rating must be discussed with the employee. It must also be signed and dated by the employee and a copy given to the employee.

**Change of First Rater:** An employee's first rater should complete an **unofficial** rating if an employee is reassigned to a different First Rater, unless the change is the result of the employee's promotion or demotion. This rating is appropriate for an internal or inter-agency transfer or a change in supervisor. This unofficial rating serves as record of the employee's performance during a portion of the annual rating period and should be retained by the agency. This rating will help the employee's newly assigned supervisor complete the next annual rating more accurately.

## ***Period of Time Rated***

When rating an employee, the supervisor(s) can only consider the employee's performance since the employee's last official Service Rating. Employees who have been rated during the year on an interim basis, at the conclusion of a Working Test Period, or at the end of a Mandatory Improvement Plan, will be rated for the period following the ending date of that previous rating period.



### **Example**

Say an employee was tardy 2 times during a 6-month working test period. After passing his working test period and before his annual rating, the employee is tardy an additional 3 times. When rating that employee for his first annual rating, you can only consider the 3 instances of tardiness that occurred after the working test period and not the 2 instances that occurred during the working test period.

Raters and appointing authorities should consider the employee's performance only for the period rated.

## ***Use of Service Ratings***

For a truly fair rating system, you as the supervisor must be impartial, objective, and sincere in rating your employees. The use of care and skill in evaluating employees is a measure of your ability to direct the work of others. Accurate service ratings are valuable to supervisors and employees alike.

**For Supervisors:** The periodic review of employee performance gives you a more realistic and comprehensive understanding of each individual's strengths and weaknesses. This understanding gives you the ability to more effectively coach and train employees toward maximizing their respective abilities. If your employees are better able to perform their jobs, your job becomes much easier, and you become better equipped to reach your goals.

**For Employees:** Service Ratings are of great importance to employees because they officially document how well their performance is progressing in assigned duties. A properly conducted service rating informs the employee of exactly what areas need improvement and relieves much of the guesswork. Additionally, the rating serves as a basis for various employment decisions and opportunities (e.g., order of layoff, examinations, etc.).

Service ratings also offer an opportunity for both you and the employee to discuss work assignments and performance expectations periodically.

**For Employment Decisions:** The Department of Personnel uses service ratings as a measure to determine eligibility for pay increases, layoffs, reemployment, reemployment from layoff, and promotions. Ratings help in determining the need for pay decreases, demotions, and removal from the service. See Section 5 page 19 for more information on the relationship of service rating to employment decisions.

The Department of Personnel maintains a personnel file for each employee that contains all of the employee's official service ratings. Ratings historically document job performance and establish an accurate summary of the employee's performance during his or her tenure as a City employee. Therefore, it is important that you objectively complete ratings to reflect the nature of the employee's performance.

## ***Who Will Complete the Service Ratings***

Four (4) people should participate in an employee's rating: the employee, the employee's immediate supervisor, the next higher level supervisor, and the appointing authority.

**First Rater:** The employee's immediate supervisor is the first individual who should rate the employee's performance. The immediate supervisor (designated as "First Rater" on the service rating form) plans and assigns the employee's work, establishes performance standards, checks or inspects work for proper method and results, and is immediately responsible for the work of the employee. The immediate supervisor is normally the one most familiar with the details of the employee's work methods and duties. **Employees in "Lead" job classes (e.g., Electrician (Lead), Utility Worker (Lead), etc.) are not supervisors and are not authorized to serve as First Raters.**

**Second Rater:** The service rating system also provides for evaluation by a "Second Rater." The second rater is the immediate supervisor of the First Rater, and should be familiar with the work of the employee being rated. The Second Rater's input adds an additional level of observation and objectivity to the rating process. If the First and Second Raters' assessments are unanimous, the Second Rater can indicate agreement by simply signing the rating. The Second Rater can also indicate agreement by checking the appropriate box for each performance factor and the Overall Rating on Page 3 of the rating form, prior to signing. There is not always a second rater.

**Rater Discrepancy:** When differences of opinion arise between the First and Second Rater, the two raters should discuss and try to resolve their differences. Should the raters fail to agree with one another on the employee's performance, they should each document their independent assessments in the boxes provided with each factor on the rating form. The ratings given by the First and Second Rater have equal ranking. It is the appointing authority's responsibility to make the final determination.

**Appointing Authority:** The appointing authority is responsible for reviewing the ratings given by the First and Second Rater. After that review, the appointing authority records his or her overall assessment of the employee's performance in the space provided on the rating form.

When the appointing authority disagrees with the judgments of both the First and Second Raters, he or she makes the final determination by checking the appropriate box on the rating form and provides an explanation in the space provided for "remarks."

## ***Interpretation of Rating Terminology***

It is important that all who participate in the rating process have a common understanding of the rating terminology. Please familiarize yourself with the nine (9) Performance Factors and the three (3) different levels of performance described in this section. Additionally, carefully review the information regarding key performance factors on Page 12 of this section.

**Performance Factors:** Evaluate non-supervisory employees in the General, Trades, Professional, Management, and Fire Pay Schedules on the first seven (7) specific performance factors. These factors cover observable areas of the employee's performance in an effort to reduce subjectivity in the evaluation process. In addition to the first seven (7) two (2) additional performance factors have been included for the evaluation of supervisory personnel. Complete these additional factors (Items 12 & 13) when evaluating employees who rate other employees.

Be sure to review each performance factor description prior to the evaluation of each employee. The performance factors (Items 5 through 13 on the Service Rating Form) are as follows:

***Customer Service:*** Displays friendly, courteous, respectful behavior toward both internal and external customers. Listens patiently and attentively to determine customer needs, sees actions through to completion or suggests reasonable alternative(s) if unable to do what customer wants. Committed to delivering products and services in a way that reflects positively on the department and the City.

***Interpersonal Skills:*** Willingly works with and assists others. Shares information and resources to maximize their benefits. Works to improve his/her department/work unit rather than just his/her area of individual responsibility. Approaches differences with others in a positive, problem-solving manner.

***Judgment:*** Exercises good problem solving skills. Determines which problems to handle independently and which to refer to supervisor or other personnel. Demonstrates sound decision-making process. Exercises discretion, observes confidentiality, and accepts responsibility for one's own actions.

***Productivity:*** Produces the amount of work expected of the position. Completes work in a timely fashion. Establishes appropriate priorities for fulfilling various job tasks. Meets established deadlines. Executes work in a productive and efficient manner.

***Quality:*** Performs work accurately and without excessive need for revision after review. Is attentive to important details. Identifies problems at an early stage and takes corrective action. Supports quality improvement efforts.

**Safety:** Has learned applicable safety rules and good work practices, and uses any necessary personal protective equipment to perform his/her job. Exercises safe job performance and implements the necessary ergonomic principles to reduce job hazards. Works with and encourages coworkers to perform their job safely.

**Work Habits:** Complies with established work rules, policies, and procedures. Uses care with City property. Complies with City's Code of Conduct as well as all other professional ethics. Takes initiative, utilizes time effectively, and avoids unscheduled absence.

**Performance Management:** Provides clear performance objectives and standards for subordinates. Gives subordinates frequent and timely performance feedback. Completes accurate Service Ratings for subordinates in a timely manner. Encourages the development of subordinates based on past performance. Communicates with employees in a professional manner. Creates a motivational environment for staff.

**Project Management:** Effectively plans and lays out work. Provides appropriate level of guidance, organization, and direction to subordinates. Supervises and follows up on assignments to ensure proper levels of performance from workgroup. Deals appropriately with customers regarding unsatisfactory work by subordinates. Accomplishes stated objectives within designated time frame.

**Levels of Performance:** In addition to the performance factors, it is also important to understand the meaning of the three (3) levels of performance. The three (3) levels of performance are:

**Highly Successful:** Achieves a superior level of performance by consistently exceeding all expectations related to the specific performance factor; consistently exceeds established performance standards; a truly top performer.

**Successful:** Consistently and reliably meets expectations related to the specific performance factor; performance standards are fully met with no significant performance deficiencies.

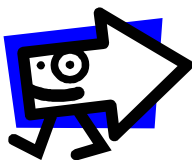
**Unsuccessful:** Fails to consistently meet expectations related to the specific performance factor; performance standards are not consistently met. Employees receiving an Overall Rating of Unsuccessful must complete a Mandatory Improvement Plan (see Section 7, Page 22).

**Overall Rating:** The Overall Rating describes the overall performance of the employee. It is the rater's general evaluation of the employee's work performance. It encompasses the evaluation of the above performance factors and any other related indication of an employee's work.

The Overall Rating is used to make important decisions that affect an employee's salary and other important employment matters. With that in mind, pay close attention to the following explanation of the conceptual basis for this rating. The Overall Rating is a supervisor's best summary of the employee's **total** performance. As such, it should be consistent with the employee's rating in the several basic performance factors, considering the impact of each of these factors as a contributor to an employee's overall performance.

**Overall Rating Consistency:** The Overall Rating made by the appointing authority will stand as the final Overall Rating. However, there should be consistency between the Overall Rating and the ratings in the individual performance factors. Inconsistent Overall Ratings can lead to Service Rating Appeals.

**Key Performance Factors:** Certain performance factors can be “key factors,” and therefore, have greater impact on the overall performance rating for particular jobs.



### Example

“Productivity” may be the key performance factor in an output-oriented job such as a Heavy Equipment Operator II who collects refuse, with secondary importance assigned to “Work Habits” and lesser importance to the other factors. However, for an Emergency Medical Technician, “Quality” and/or “Judgment” might be designated as key factors. In either example, “Unsuccessful” performance in the key factor(s) might lead to an Overall Rating of “Unsuccessful,” even if the supervisor rates the other factors “Successful.”

It is extremely important to specify Key Performance Factor(s) in the employee’s performance standards. Moreover, the supervisor should **communicate, at the beginning of the rating period, how the** “Key Factor(s)” will affect the employee’s rating.

The job classes discussed above are only examples. The appointing authority determines what weight to give to performance factors for each position under his or her supervision. He or she should weight factors in a manner **consistent with the job requirements**.

## ***Suggestions for a Successful Service Rating Process***

Before rating your employees, it is extremely important to familiarize yourself with the performance factors and the rating procedure. It is also important to review the Performance Standards that you discussed at the beginning of the rating period with the employee. Giving effective performance evaluations is vital to a supervisor’s success. Follow the suggestions below to give both you and your employees the best opportunity for success.

- 1. Allow a reasonable period of training and time for an employee to reach the standards before rating his or her performance.***
- 2. Reflect on the employee's performance over the entire rating period.*** Avoid only focusing on the most recent performance, or letting one performance action overshadow other notable employee performance.
- 3. Do not include performance that occurred prior to the current rating period.*** Each rating period is intended to give the employee an opportunity to improve his or her performance from the previous period.
- 4. Review existing documentation regarding employee performance*** (e.g., awards, accident reports, etc.). Appropriately weigh the positive and negative factual data related to performance based on documentation in the employee’s file.

5. **Consider each performance factor separately.** Consider only the particular factor that you are rating. Only reflect on overall performance when completing the Overall Rating for Item 14.
6. **Rate the employee's work performance, not the employee's potential.** Ratings should reflect how well an employee actually performs in his or her present position, not what you think that person is capable of doing.
7. **Do not be influenced by the employee's length of service.** It is not always the case that more experience in a position will reflect a greater degree of expertise. Ratings should measure **performance** and not length of service.
8. **It is likely that ratings will differ between performance factors.** An employee's performance in certain areas may be better than in others.
9. **Ratings should reflect your own judgment of an employee's work performance.** Do not be influenced in your rating by the opinion of others, unless the employee also served under another supervisor during the rating period.
10. **Fairly evaluate performance and give the appropriate rating.** Undeservedly high or low ratings do a disservice to the rater, the employee, and the department/agency. Highly successful supervisors can distinguish the various levels of performance. Ratings should be accurate and unbiased at each level of performance.
11. **Have a clear and objective understanding of "Successful" performance.** Be sure you understand the performance factors as they apply to the employee's classification **and** the day-to-day job performance that merits a "Successful" rating. Clarifying performance factors by establishing objective and job-related standards of performance is the most *important step in achieving a fair and accurate rating process*. Also, be sure to update performance standards as job duties change.
12. **Communicate with the employee and the other rater.** Routinely discuss with your employee your expectations for his or her performance, as well as the objective standards that will lead to a "Successful" rating. Several times throughout the rating period, and prior to completing the actual rating, discuss how well the employee is performing against stated standards. Identify and address areas of performance that need improvement as early as possible.

## ***Procedures for Successful Rating Form Completion***

After defining each performance factor in terms of the actual job duties and setting job-related performance standards for “Successful” performance, completing the rating process will be relatively simple!

*It is important that the First Rater and Second Rater reach a common understanding of the performance factors and performance levels prior to filling out the form.*

Each rater should review **all** of the following steps in successfully completing the Rating Form. **The Department of Personnel will not accept any forms with white-out on them.**

1. Payroll personnel must fill in the administrative information in Items 1 through 4. The form will then be forwarded to the First Rater.
2. **Rater Agreement:** The First Rater and Second Rater should discuss their judgments regarding appropriate ratings in various performance factors. This will lead to fairer and more uniform application of standards to all employees in a work unit. The raters should attempt to reach a rating agreement regarding each factor. If the two raters cannot agree:
  - Raters must give the rating that each believes to be appropriate
  - Raters will each prepare documentation addressing points of difference
  - The documentation will be filed in the operating department
  - The appointing authority will review the documentation to reconcile rating disagreements or inconsistencies and determine the employee’s Overall Rating
3. **First Rater:** As the First Rater, you should review any documented performance. Consider the documented data regarding performance **and** the performance factors on the rating form as they relate to the standards of performance. Next, enter an evaluation for each of the nine (9) performance factors in Items 5-13 (include Items 12 and 13 only for supervisory employees) and the Overall Rating in Item 14. Then sign the rating on Item 17. See number 7 below for additional First Rater responsibilities.
4. **Justification/Comments:** The Justification/Comments section with Items 5-14 provides space for the First and Second Raters to explain why they gave a certain rating. Justification is required when:
  - Providing a rating for an item that differs from the previous rating period (add additional sheets if necessary)
  - Giving either a “Highly Successful” or an “Unsuccessful” rating, regardless of the previous rating for that item

*\*\*Attach additional sheets for **Justification/Comments** if necessary\*\**
5. **Professional Development:** *Do not* use this section to explain or justify ratings. Completion of this section is required if an employee receives an **Unsuccessful** rating on any item(s) that *does not* result in an **Overall Rating** of **Unsuccessful**. In this section, include recommended actions that will assist the employee in improving his or her performance. Be sure to discuss these actions with the employee.

It is important for any employee to grow and develop professionally. We strongly recommend that you use this section as an opportunity to assist all of your employees with their development. Provide suggestions for development, even for employees who are "Successful" and "Highly Successful."

*\*\*Attach additional sheets for **Professional Development** if necessary\*\**

*When the First Rater has checked all of the ratings on the form, made appropriate entries wherever needed, and signed the rating, it should be given to the Second Rater.*

6. **Second Rater:** As the Second Rater, you review the First Rater's evaluation of the employee's performance. Next, enter your rating for Items 5-13 (include Items 12 and 13 only for supervisory employees) and the Overall Rating in Item 14. If you fail to check Items 5-14, Personnel will assume that your evaluation is the same as the First Rater's. Next, enter any additional comments to the Justification/Comments and Professional Development sections.

*\*\*Attach additional sheets for these sections if necessary\*\**

7. **Evaluation Conference:** As the First Rater, you should discuss the service rating with the employee. The Second Rater may participate in this discussion. Hold the conference in a private location and discuss the employee's individual ratings with him or her. Set a conversational tone and offer the employee opportunities to ask questions regarding the rating. Toward the end of the conference, the First Rater makes a copy of the employee's current license or registration and fills in the information required in Item 18 "License or Registration" (if a license, registration or certification, etc., is required for the job).
8. **Employee:** At the end of the conference, the employee enters any optional remarks/statements regarding the rating in item 19. After completing Item 19, the employee must complete Item 20 by verifying residence information and signing the rating.
9. **Signature Refusal:** If the employee refuses to sign the rating, the supervisor should point out that:
- a. *The signature is required and does not indicate agreement with the rating*
  - b. *It does not affect the employee's right of appeal*
  - c. *The signature item is included only to assure that each employee has an opportunity to review and discuss his or her rating*

An employee is subject to disciplinary action for refusal to sign the rating. If the employee persists in his or her refusal to sign, the rater should note, "Employee refused to sign rating," indicate the refusal date under Item 20, and forward the rating to the appointing authority. A witness should be present and sign the rating to verify the employee refused to sign the rating. The unsigned rating will be the employee's official rating. After the appointing authority reviews and signs the rating, provide the employee a copy.

10. **Appointing Authority:** After the employee has had an opportunity to review, discuss, and sign the rating, forward it to the appointing authority. The appointing authority then reviews the Performance Factor ratings and Overall Rating given to the employee. In Item 21, he or she should enter any remarks regarding the rating and enter the Overall Rating. The appointing authority's entry determines personnel actions affected by the Overall Rating.

**11. Mandatory Improvement Plan:** If the employee's Overall Rating is "Unsuccessful," a Mandatory Improvement Plan (MIP) must be prepared and submitted with the official rating. The MIP outlines a plan of specific actions to correct unsuccessful work behaviors within a specified period. Please refer to Section 7, Page 22 of this manual for guidelines and standards for the plan. Enter the date for completion of the plan under Item 16.

**12. Final Steps:** After the appointing authority signs the rating, agency personnel should:

- a. *Provide the employee with a copy of the rating, and note the date that you gave the employee the copy in Item 22. (Employees have 10 calendar days from this date to appeal their rating)*
- b. *Place an additional copy in the employee's personnel record maintained by the agency*
- c. *The original service rating shall be returned to the Department of Personnel by the date indicated in Item 2 of the Service Rating Form. Failure of the appointing authority to return the service rating by the date indicated will result in the employee's rating being administratively established as a "Successful" overall rating. If any service ratings are received by the Department of Personnel past this date and they are "Highly Successful" they will be placed in the employee's file and become the official ratings. If any ratings are received which are lower than "Successful" they will not be accepted by the Department of Personnel as the official ratings and will be void.*

#### **Important Note**

A list of individuals whose ratings were not received by the Department of Personnel will be compiled and sent to the departments' appointing authorities.

In the City system, employees are entitled to be rated on a regular basis. It is also a basic management responsibility to evaluate employee performance. Thus, supervisors who fail to rate their employees on a timely basis shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Ratings that are submitted to the Personnel Department with inadequate information will be subject to appeal by the employee.



## Section 4: *Service Rating Appeals*

Employees with permanent status in their current positions, who receive an Overall Rating of “Unsuccessful,” may appeal their Service Ratings. Please review the information below for details about the Service Rating Appeal process for all employees in the classified service.

### *What can be appealed?*

- **Only** an Annual or Interim Service Rating with an Overall Rating of “Unsuccessful” **may** be appealed.
- A Working Test Period rating **cannot** be appealed.
- An Overall Rating of “Successful” or “Highly Successful” cannot be appealed.

### *How long do I have to submit an appeal?*

- An employee has ten (10) calendar days from the date he or she received the signed official rating form (see item # 22 on Service Rating) to file a Service Rating Appeal with the Department of Personnel.
- If the tenth day falls on a weekend or holiday, the employee has until the end of the next business day to file the appeal.

### *How do I submit an appeal?*

- Obtain a *Service Rating Appeal Form* from one of the following:
  - Your department’s payroll personnel
  - The Department of Personnel (Carnahan Building, Room 700)
  - On the internet at: <http://stlouis.missouri.org/citygov/personnel/>
- Carefully read and follow the instructions provided on the Service Rating Appeal Form.
- Complete and return the Service Rating Appeal Form to the Department of Personnel, within the **ten (10) day time limit** mentioned above.

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**Ratings Resulting in Dismissal:** The Department of Personnel will not consider appeals of Overall Ratings of “Unsuccessful,” if the rating has been given at the culmination of a Mandatory Improvement Plan, and will therefore result in dismissal or demotion. The Civil Service Commission handles all appeals of dismissal or demotion.

**Appeal Decisions:** Rating changes that result from an appeal to the Director of Personnel will be official on the date on the letter signed by the Director of Personnel, as defined by this manual. An appeal to the Civil Service Commission can be filed by either party (employee or appointing authority) within ten (10) calendar days following the date of the Director of Personnel’s written decision.

The Director of Personnel considers the existence and validity of performance standards and any possible bias or prejudice in the application of the standards when determining an appeal decision. **Standards of performance must be established for each position under the appointing authorities. Raters must revisit and update performance standards as job duties of the rated position change.**

It is the appointing authority's responsibility to establish levels of performance to facilitate an objective rating of each performance factor under review. In the appeal process, the Department of Personnel is responsible for evaluating the fairness of the application of the standards.

**Decision Notification:** The Director of Personnel will normally notify the employee and the appointing authority of the hearing decision within two to three (2 to 3) weeks after the appeal hearing. For any questions regarding the Service Rating Appeal process, please contact the Department of Personnel, Employee Relations Section at (314) 622-3563.

## Section 5: Service Rating Relationship to Pay, Reemployment, and Promotion

The Civil Service Commission has adopted and approved the following standards of performance necessary to be eligible for an increase in pay, reemployment, reemployment from layoff, and promotion for all employees in the classified service. Consideration for a within range salary advancement requires that the employee meets the minimum eligibility standards listed below. Achievement of the minimum standards does not guarantee an employee an advance in the salary range. Appropriate ordinance, rule, or regulation may establish additional eligibility criteria.

The standards are:

- A. Salary Increase:** To be eligible for a within range salary increase based on an Annual Employee Service Rating, as set forth in the compensation plan, an employee must obtain an Overall Rating of **"Successful"** or higher, in addition to being otherwise eligible. An employee who receives a rating of **"Unsuccessful"** will not be eligible for a salary increase until fifty-two weeks and/or attainment of a "Successful" or higher rating, except as otherwise provided in this manual.
- B. Section 7(c) Adjustment:** An appointing authority may decide to evaluate an employee for the purpose of salary adjustment outside of the normal anniversary date, as stated in the Compensation Ordinance, Section 7(c). To obtain a salary increase for exceptional performance of duties, an employee must earn a **"Highly Successful"** Overall Rating. For an employee to have his or her salary decreased, he or she must receive an **"Unsuccessful"** Overall Rating.
- C. Exempt Employees:** Certain employees may not have their salary reduced as a result on Employee Service Rating. Employees who are allocated to Overtime Code 1 or Overtime Code 2 described in Section 15(a) of the Compensation Ordinance are not eligible for a salary decrease due to Federal overtime regulations.
- D. Salary Reduction:** An employee who receives an Overall Rating of **"Unsuccessful"** may have his or her salary reduced, provided the employee is above the minimum of the salary range, is not allocated to Overtime Code 1 or Overtime Code 2, and is not under the F pay schedule. For employees in the General, Trades, or Professional Pay Schedule, the reduction may be any whole dollar amount up to ten percent (10%) of the employee's bi-weekly base salary. No employee can be paid less than the minimum of the employee's pay range. If a Mandatory Improvement Plan is extended, the employee will continue to be paid at the reduced salary. If at the conclusion of the Mandatory Improvement Plan the employee receives an Overall Rating of **"Successful"** or higher, the employee's salary will be restored to the level held before the pay reduction took effect.
- E. Reemployment:** To be eligible for reemployment or reemployment from layoff, an employee must have attained an Overall Rating of **"Successful"** or higher on the most recent official Service Rating for a position in which the employee had permanent Civil Service status.
- F. Examination:** The Service Rating is a factor in all examinations. An Overall Rating of **"Successful"** or higher on the most recent official Service Rating for City employees is required for admission to an examination requiring permanent Civil Service status.

## Section 6: Working Test Period Service Rating

The City Charter requires that every person appointed to a permanent position in the classified service must serve a Working Test Period of probation before attaining permanent status in the position.

### ***Length of Working Test Period***

**Typical Period Length:** The normal working test period for employees in the General, Professional, Trades, and Management Pay Schedule is a six (6) month period. An employee may be removed for failure to pass the working test period at any time following completion of at least thirty (30) days of the probationary period. The appointing authority may grant status anytime after ninety (90) days, when additional time to determine competence is not required.

An appointing authority may request permission in writing from the Director of Personnel, that a classification be automatically required to serve an eleven-month working test period.

**Extensions:** An extension of the working test period for any period up to a maximum of five (5) months may be requested when valid reasons exist for needing additional time to observe the employee's performance. Working Test Periods cannot exceed eleven (11) months, even with an extension.

Complete Item 16 on the working test period rating form to request an extension. Prior to submitting a request for an extension, the reason for the request must be explained to the employee, and a copy of the rating form requesting the extension must be given to the employee prior to or concurrent with the submission.

**Fire Pay Schedule:** Probationary Fire Privates and Probationary Fire Equipment Dispatchers serve an eleven (11) month working test period. All other Fire Pay Schedule employees serve a six (6) month working test period. No extension of the working test period may be granted for employees who serve an eleven (11) month period of probation.

**Career Seasonal Positions:** Some positions are permanent in nature but are filled only on a seasonal or cyclical basis. When appointment is made to a career seasonal position, the employee will serve a working test period. Career seasonal employees will always be put on a leave at the end of their first season of work. When they return from their leave the following season, they will be placed in a working test period.

## **Completion of Service Rating Following Working Test Period**

The Department of Personnel provides each department with a list of probationary employees' names approximately six (6) weeks prior to the anticipated end of the Working Test Period. The procedures for completion of the *Working Test Period Service Rating Form (PD-204A)* are similar to those of the regular service rating. The key differences are in the items relating to granting of permanent Civil Service status. In making this decision, the appointing authority should **be sure** there is an affirmative answer to **each** of the following questions:

- 1. Has the employee demonstrated the willingness, ability, and skill necessary to perform the duties of the job in a competent and satisfactory manner considering the period of time on the job?**
- 2. Does the employee currently possess all licenses, registrations and/or certifications required for the job?**
- 3. Has the employee met all of the requirements for the job specified at the time of appointment?**
- 4. Does the employee reside in the City or have a valid Waiver of Residence granted by the Civil Service Commission? (This is a particularly important question, since many employees are hired on condition that they become residents of the City within 120 days of completion of the initial working test period.)**

The Working Test Period Rating does not provide for mandatory corrective activities since the need for such a formal plan would usually call for termination of a probationary employee.

**At the completion of the Working Test Period, an employee must receive a rating of "Successful," or "Highly Successful," in order to be granted permanent status.**

The Civil Service Rules provide that when a probationary employee's rating is not received by the Department of Personnel **within thirty (30) calendar days** after the end of the Working Test Period, the employee will **automatically** be granted permanent Civil Service status, and will be considered to have an Overall Rating of "Successful." Since the decision to grant or withhold permanent status is one of the key management functions and a pivotal point in each employee's career, it is **very important** for appointing authorities to be sure Working Test Period Service Ratings are completed and returned in a timely manner.

Working Test Period Service Ratings cannot be appealed, nor can the appointing authority's action regarding the granting of status. The employee should be given a copy of the rating as official notice of his or her status and the date should be entered in Item 22.

## Section 7: General Provisions

### ***Mandatory Improvement Plan***

A Mandatory Improvement Plan (MIP) must be developed for employees who receive an Overall Rating of **“Unsuccessful.”** The MIP should outline actions that the employee must take to correct unsuccessful job behaviors. A well-drafted MIP includes the following:

- 1. Write a statement including specific behavioral terms describing how the employee's performance is deficient.***

The rater(s) prepares the statement and has it approved by the appointing authority. If the appointing authority provided the Overall Rating of "Unsuccessful," he or she prepares the statement of deficiency; however, the raters still share responsibility for completing the improvement plan. In the statement, include the standards of performance that are required for satisfactory job performance, to explain the gap between present and expected performance.

- 2. Next, state specific actions the employee must take to correct the unsuccessful performance in measurable terms with stated time limits.***

MIPs must allow a minimum period of eight (8) weeks for the correction of specified deficiencies, and may extend to a maximum of thirty-six (36) weeks. Assign a shorter period for problem areas where employees know what to do *and* how to do it, but simply fail to comply. A longer period is appropriate where employees must obtain additional training or knowledge to achieve success.

- 3. List specific follow-up review time(s) to meet with the employee and assess his or her progress. Also, list any other special supervisory procedures that are part of the agreement.***

- 4. The rater(s), the appointing authority, and the employee need to sign and date the MIP before submitting it to Personnel.***

Upon submitting the rating and MIP to Personnel, the employee and the supervisor should each receive a copy of the current rating and MIP.

**Extension of MIP:** At the conclusion of the MIP period (listed in Item 16), the appointing authority may extend the MIP. Even with an extension, the entire MIP, from beginning to end, cannot exceed thirty-six (36) weeks. If the appointing authority extends the MIP, he or she must promptly notify the Director of Personnel of the extension in writing. The employee must receive a detailed explanation of the reason for the extension. The employee must also receive a copy of the letter that went to the Director of Personnel extending the MIP. Specify the following in the *extension notification letter*:

- *The performance deficiencies that remain*
- *The actions required by the employee to correct the unsuccessful performance*
- *The ending date of the extension*

**Conclusion of MIP:** At the conclusion of the MIP, the employee must be re-rated. If the employee receives an Overall Rating of **"Successful"** at the conclusion of the MIP, the employee's salary shall be restored. If the employee receives an Overall Rating of **"Unsuccessful"** at the conclusion of the MIP, the appointing authority must initiate a pre-termination review (see pre-termination procedures in Department of Personnel Administrative Regulation No. 117). Since the tentative decision to terminate the employee in his or her current position is the result of a job performance problem, the alternative outcomes are:

- *Dismissal; or*
- *Demotion to another position with duties that the employee can reasonably be expected to perform at an acceptable level.*

**Multiple MIPs:** Occasionally, an employee may successfully complete his or her MIP, perform at an acceptable level for a short period, and then resume the former pattern of poor performance that occasioned the MIP. If this performance decline occurs within one year of the first MIP, the employee must be scheduled for a pre-termination hearing. An employee cannot begin a new MIP within twelve (12) months of completion of the prior plan.

If an employee transfers to another appointing authority, demotes, or transfers to a different class of position in the same department while in a MIP, the Plan will be canceled and the **"Unsuccessful"** rating and the salary reduction will stand.

Raters must forward the rating to the Department of Personnel within 30 days of the MIP expiration. If the rating is not received within 30 days, the Department of Personnel will administratively change the rating to **"Successful"** and the salary will be restored. It is very important for appointing authorities to ensure that service ratings are completed and returned in a timely manner.

## ***Service Rating Exemption***

An appointing authority may request the exemption of specific employees from the Service Rating process for the current rating period. Employees compensated on "per-performance" or "hourly" basis (or in rare circumstances a regular full or part-time employee) may qualify for exemption.

The Director of Personnel will only exempt per performance employees if the work requirements are so intermittent or the job skills so unusual that a fair and objective service rating becomes impractical. To request an exemption for an individual or similarly situated group of per performance employees, an appointing authority should make a written request to the Director of Personnel providing the reason(s) for the exemption. This request must be submitted each rating period that the appointing authority wishes the individual or group to be exempt from rating. The Director of Personnel will inform the appointing authority of his or her decision.

***Service Rating Extension:*** Exemption of an employee from rating for the purpose of extending the rating period may be granted. This type of exemption will only be given if an employee has been absent from the workplace for a considerable amount of time during the rating period. The appointing authority must request this exemption in writing from the Director of Personnel. The Director of Personnel may grant exemption for several reasons. The following is a list of *example* circumstances that may constitute a basis upon which the Director of Personnel will grant an exemption:

1. ***Sick Leave***
2. ***Family and Medical Leave***
3. ***Workers' Compensation***
4. ***Military Leave***

After the employee has returned to the workplace for two (2) or more months, the appointing authority can request, in writing to the Director of Personnel, authorization to complete an Interim Rating. This Interim Rating will serve as the employee's official rating until the employee's next anniversary date.

The Department of Personnel considers employees who are exempt from the service rating process to be "**non-rated.**" Personnel will use a non-rated employee's most recent service rating in which the employee had permanent Civil Service status for personnel actions for which service ratings are a factor. Since work requirements occasionally change, such exemption requests are required on an annual basis.

The Director of Personnel will not consider exemption requests for ratings due at the end of a Mandatory Improvement Plan.

## ***Rating Forms***

Each agency is responsible for maintaining an adequate supply of blank Service Rating Forms. Both the *Employee Service Rating Form (PD-204)* and the *Working Test Period Service Rating Form (PD-204A)* can be ordered from the Multigraph Section of the Supply Division.