

Running head: Performance Evaluation

Leading Community Risk Reduction

Performance Evaluation

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## Abstract

The problem was that the Verona (WI) Fire Department (VFD) has no method by which to evaluate its employees. The purpose of this applied research project was to determine the contents of an employee evaluation process then determine how an employee evaluation process would benefit the employee, department, and community. This applied research project utilized the evaluative and action research methodologies to answer the following questions:

1. What are necessary components of an effective employee evolution process?
2. How would an employee evaluation process benefit the employee?
3. How would an employee evaluation process benefit the employer?
4. How would an employee evaluation process benefit the community?

The procedure used to answer research question one was to identify elements of an employee evaluation process by literature review, surveys and locating examples to fit the VFD. The procedure used to answer research question two was to identify how an evaluation process would benefit the employee via literature review and surveys. The procedure used to answer research question three was to identify how an evaluation process would benefit the employer via literature review and surveys. The procedures used to answer research question four was to identify how an employee evaluation process would benefit the community via literature review and surveys.

As a result of this research it was recommended that an employee evaluation process be designed and implemented for the VFD. The research resulted in an employee evaluation process being adopted and implemented by the VFD.

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## Introduction

The problem is during a recent Verona District Commission meeting, the President raised concern regarding lack of employee records to assist in making a personnel related decision. This came after a number of personnel matters had come to the Fire Commission and the lack of some form of employee evaluation had made disciplinary actions difficult. Both full-time and paid-on-call employees had expressed a desire to have progressive disciplinary actions based on proper employee evaluations. There is also a requirement within the Fire District Agreement that the Fire Chief evaluate the Department officer staff and that this has never taken place. The purpose of this research project was to identify what could be done to assist in properly recording employee performance both positive and negative so as to benefit appropriate disciplinary procedures.

This applied research project utilized the evaluative and action research.

Methodologies to answer the following four questions: (a) What are the necessary components of an effective employee evolution process? (b) How would an employee evaluation process benefit the employee? (c) How would an employee evaluation process benefit the community? (d) How would an employee evaluation process benefit the community?

## Background and Significance

The VFD serves a population of approximately 14,500 people over about 36 square miles including a response territory crossed between urban and rural. The department is a combination agency with three full-time Inspector/Fire Fighters, a part-time Chief, and the remaining staff being paid-on-call. The VFD is considered an all hazards response agency that does not include EMS. Apparatus operated by the VFD are as follows; 1 - heavy rescue, 3 - engines, 1 - ladder (quint), 1 - brush unit, 2 - tankers, and 3 support vehicles.

The VFD serves the City of Verona, Town of Verona, and a portion of the Town of Springdale. The City of Verona has been one of the fastest growing communities in Dane County located next to the State Capitol, Madison. Verona has transcended from a bedroom community to a City that now experiences large population influxes during typical work hours with continued growth expected. The growth of the City of Verona and surrounding areas has caused an increase in calls for service. The challenges don't stop there. VFD hired its first full-time staff in 2003 followed by two more in 2005. The VFD is a department in transition in more ways than one.

Community growth comes at a time when it is more difficult to gain part-time staff to meet the new challenges. This has resulted in working with neighboring agencies to develop an auto-aid program to supplement incident staffing for a more efficient resource implementation process. A computer software company has decided to build its world headquarters in Verona. The company has just completed the first of a possible five campuses. Each campus includes a parking structure for over one thousand vehicles along with five buildings housing approximately 1,500 employees. This company has had a ripple effect in our community in that other businesses have been attracted to Verona. Along with the businesses comes those that work for EPIC or other businesses building homes in and around Verona. The City of Verona and surrounding Townships have had to enhance their infrastructures in order to meet the continuing demands of local growth.

This local growth has been experienced by all of Dane County which has had an impact on Verona, especially its thoroughfares. Traffic has also greatly increased through the Verona Fire District causing traffic crash response to be a large portion of the VFD call base.

The challenges are not just external. With full-time staff comes the need for a higher level of accountability by the employee, the employer, and the community. The VFD attempted to discharge an employee for an ethical work rule violation. The employee was not discharged and discipline resulted in time off from work without pay. The employee as well as other staff voiced concern over no record during the employee's work tenure to date to help justify the discharge that was requested by the Fire Chief. Another incident involving a paid-on-call employee resulted in the Fire Chief once again reducing discipline. Again, this was a result of a question of progressive discipline and the lack of documentation to justify the requested discipline.

These were just two examples of problems with discipline due to lack of documentation. Out of these incidents, post disciplinary discussions came the question of why documentation wasn't maintained regarding the employee's overall performance to include both positive and negative actions. Discipline was not being considered progressive or based on overall performance of the employee. The VFD does, and is in the process of actively designing and implementing policy regarding a variety of topics. The VFD does not have a disciplinary policy and has held off on this policy until an evaluation process has been studied and implemented. An additional concern was that the full-time staff were about to unionize. An employee evaluation was believed to be more important as an agency policy issue and not just a union matter.

This research and ultimate action relates to the United States Fire Administration's Operational Objectives for reducing the loss of life in all civilian age groups and firefighters. This research project is also conducted to meet the requirements of the Executive Development course and fulfill the course goal of developing and integrating change management and

leadership techniques necessary in complex organizations (Federal Emergency Management Administration [FEMA], 2006, 3-27 - 3-30.) A primary concern here is to identify ways to increase performance among fire department staff as to insure accountability in incident responses. Executive Development instructs students to be proactive in order to identify a potential problem before it becomes a problem. This can be performed by using A.P.I.E. (analyze, plan, initiate, and evaluation) (FEMA, 2006, p. 3-4) method of implementing change through the fire service. In this case it is believed that some form of performance evaluation is needed now, and in the future. If a performance plan is not implemented, it was believed that the disciplinary problems would simply get worse. As the VFD transmissions from a paid-on-call agency, to one with more career staff, an evaluation process will be necessary. An evaluation process would help the employee to know whether their performance falls within acceptable parameters prescribed by the agency. An evaluation process will assist the agency in meeting its mission by noting whether the employee base is conducting them according to agency policy. Overall, the community will be the winner in knowing that its fire service is proving accountability internally and externally.

The fire service is a major component of every community thus, needs to act as a leader within the community by identifying potential problems and affect appropriate change. The VFD can take this opportunity to be a leader among local emergency services by leading the way to justify an employee evaluation process.

### Literature Review

In order to determine what had already been written on this topic, a literature review was conducted. Resources were consulted to determine what other agencies under similar

circumstances have done to alleviate a similar problem and determine what options could be implemented. This literature review included government and private sector references.

My literature review began at the National Fire Academy's (NFA) Learning Resource Center (LRC) while attending Leading Community Risk Reduction, January 2007. I was able to prepare a problem statement and define a purpose. During this process, publications and periodicals, along with on-line sources were identified for potential resource use. Once I returned home from the NFA, I continued to identify sources and conduct research at the local level. Literature reviewed was significant and contributed to the applied research project.

I read materials (Buckman, III, 2006, 132) showing that fire fighter performance includes key factors such as level of productivity, timeliness of work, its quality, and whether the work is performed in a safe manner and according to agency policy. Additionally, the leader has a key role in the effectiveness of fire fighter performance through developing skills and monitoring attitude. In order to produce highly performing fire fighters, the leader must help the fire fighter to build necessary skills to perform their job and the required level. While building the fire fighter's skill, the leader must simultaneously monitor their attitude. Is the fire fighter willing to learn? Or are they apathetic and unwilling to participate in skill development?

When the leader notices that the fire fighter's performance is lower or not at the expected level, the leader should check two things. The first question is; why? Why is the performance below the expectation of a standard? The leader should next determine if the performance reduction is due to the leader in part or total.

As it relates to performance, there may be a number of areas to look at. Does the firefighter possess the skills and competency to perform? The second would be what is causing the poor performance? Further analysis should consider whether the firefighter was provided

appropriate training and education for the position. In addition, is the standard to be met unrealistic? This means that the leader must also insure that performance standards are consistent with department expectations. Department performance standards should be set high enough to be attainable, yet not beyond typical capabilities. They must be achievable.

In order for the firefighter to be successful in their performance, they also need to be supplied with proper resources. The firefighter may not know how to use resources supplied, or how to locate them. The firefighter may have the resources and know how to use them, but is held back somehow by the leader. Not being provided with the opportunity to perform without being directed by the leader at every turn. The firefighter is over managed and can become frustrated.

The firefighter is an employee that requires some periodic feedback in the form of positive and negative. The leader should provide feedback so that the employee knows when they are performing as expected, yet also to know where improvement is needed. Feedback may help the leader to assist firefighter in maintaining a proper attitude. Attitude may be the basis for poor performance and the negative attitude being displayed.

Performance can also be documented by providing the firefighter with some form of appraisal in order to make this process more formal. This provides the employer a more formal setting to provide feedback relative to positive and negative performance while maintaining a record for future use.

Appraisals can be objective or subjective. Objective is about the employee meeting measurable standards while the subjective relies more on the opinion of the appraiser. Objective appraisals tend to be more accurate and acceptable by employees.

An (Graner, 2006, p. 149) employee appraisal may focus on some primary performance standards. Some examples may be as follows; does the employee provide the amount of work expected by the employer? Does the employee's quality of work meet expectations of the employer and community? Does the employee cost the employer money due to carelessness and breaking or damaging equipment? Is the employee timely for work or accomplishing tasks? Does the employee work in a safe manner or are they involved in performance resulting in property damage or personnel injury.

Some methods of appraisal may include the employer supervisor administering an evaluation appraisal based on their monitoring the employee. Some agencies provide the employee a self-appraisal yet this is believed to not be objective as the employee may over-rate themselves or may be reluctant to include positive things they have done. Another method that isn't recommended is to have employees appraise each other. A recommended method of appraisal is the combination evaluation. The employee is provided with an appraisal tool to complete. The employer provides an appraisal. The employee and supervisor then discuss their appraisal. The intent of an appraisal system is to evaluate each firefighter against specific criteria.

An employee can be terminated for not meeting the acceptable standards, especially if the employee is on probation. The facts must be documented by a supervisor and presented to a department head for this process to be successful. Part of the documentation must include what the supervisor has done as a part of the process of trying to make corrections. This is referred to as progressive discipline. Any counseling of the firefighter must be documented. This documentation doesn't have to immediately be placed in the firefighter's personnel file but if it isn't placed there, it may be included later in disciplinary actions. If the supervisor maintains the

information in a firefighter log or notes, it may play a vital role in noting developing patterns that should be dealt with on a formal level. These notes should not contain repeated failures to perform without formal recording of activity and actions.

Rules of public service require that employees be treated with respect and that they will perform their duties as expected. This applies to subordinates as well as administrative staff. It is also the requirement of the government entity (fire department) to establish fair and equitable policy, and standards of performance for all employees. Additionally, it is the responsibility of the department administrative staff to ensure that all employees are performing as required.

An evaluation process begins with education (Sargent, 2006, p. 165) so that all employees understand how the system works and have a clear understanding of expectations of the organization and supervisors. If the employee doesn't understand what's expected, they won't know how to perform. Feedback from the supervisor is also critical so that the employee receives feedback regarding whether performance meets, or doesn't meet organization expectations. This is also a part of the learning process and the opportunity to make necessary adjustments.

The day-to-day contact of the supervisor and employee provide opportunities for the supervisor to coach and mentor the employee, often by using other employees or team members to mentor employees in need of assistance. This helps the employee and mentor grow within their occupation and enhance their performance and build on communications between employees and the supervisor.

It should be remembered that employees will try and fail at times. We should allow some innovation and questions to help identify new and improved methods to get the task done within standards. An evaluation shouldn't surprise the employee as it should contain that which has

already been communicated between the supervisor and employee. If the employee is surprised, the supervisor didn't perform their job of communicating expectations and feedback. This sets up a communication barrier between the supervisor and employee.

Most employees are committed and conduct themselves as expected. An evaluation of this employee is just as important and used to reinforce positive performance, set goals and help the employee work toward career goals and aspirations. Don't forget to thank them occasionally for their commitment to the agency and meting organizational needs.

An evaluation process is a means to open communications. A company or command officer may use communications to seek feedback on their performance. Subordinate officers can talk with their staff to see how they are performing. Additionally, the commander can talk with their subordinates, or have them complete a survey to get their input. This can help the commander to evaluate their progress, communications, and expectations. The supervisor must be prepared for honest feedback and take it seriously. It's important for all to be honest.

Discipline is meant to change behavior and should not be confused with punishment which is about consequences. Agency policy may or may not be flexible on how the supervisor disciplines. A supervisor needs to know agency policy so as to reprimand when required by policy. Spend time wisely with staff to help them progress as time well spent with staff that want to progress will benefit the organization and those employees. Time spent with an employee that doesn't want t excel may be time wasted if too much time is spent. A supervisor must spend time with all staff, yet spend it wisely to help promote the employee to meet organization expectations. A supervisor needs to spend some time with the employee who only wishes to meet the basic requirements yet recognize where the real benefit is to the organization that of those that wish to meet organizational expectations.

The most difficult employee is the one that is consistently below expectation and may be referred to as the fringe employee. It is vital that the supervisor maintain records of this employee's performance and make sure they are in the official employee personnel file for potential discipline and or punishment. Some things to keep in mind during this is to make sure to list what was done wrong, what rule or policy was violated, what should have been done, what will help if this takes place again, what is expected in the future, how will this be done by preparing a plan, and getting the employee to sign it.

The evaluation will include everything the supervisor has done to that point to include; positive notes, mentoring sessions, and coaching sessions to improve performance. If it's not contained in the final evaluation, it may cause the evaluation to not be acceptable, especially if the end result is some form of discipline or punishment. It is important that all levels of the chain of command are informed of employee evaluations, especially in the case where the evaluation may result in punishments or removal from the job. Employee evaluations are a part of the agency record system and the agency should have a records management policy.

An evaluation policy is good and should be used as a guide, but each employee should be evaluated based on their individual merits or weaknesses. A key word to consider in evaluations is negligence. Was the error somehow negligent? Did it contribute to a safety matter or is a consistently repeated violation? A time to not accept mistakes is during an emergency operation. Assessment tools may be used to evaluate training, hiring, probationary periods, etc...in order to assess whether what is expected is happening. If it isn't, changes can be made. This is true of the employee evaluation.

A goal of the employee performance appraisal (Edwards, 2005, p. 145) is to improve quality of work and the individual employee involved in that work. It is critical in the fire

service that safety and service delivery matters that performance is monitored and maintained at the upper levels and that it be attentive to individual and unit performance. The evaluating system must be comprehensive and fair. This system is used to make decisions about employees relative to promotion, salary, commendations, transfers, and termination. Therefore they must be fair and equitable. The manner in which employee performance is rated can impact moral as well as productivity. If administration helps educate the employee about the evaluation process and what it is intended to be used for, the higher the likelihood that the employee looks favorably on it and the more it's used for development opportunities.

Performance management is described as the process of observing an employee's performance in relation to job requirements over a predefined time frame, setting goals, documenting performance during this period and then proving feedback in the form of an appraisal or evaluation.

Some techniques that may help in performance evaluation will be the result of a job analysis to determine the knowledge, skills, and abilities that an employee needs to perform the job properly. Due to the complex nature of the fire service, it is necessary to have the supervisor conduct observations of the employee performance. Other ways to include performance evaluation is to look at the work of the employee, i.e. are there complaints about the? Have they changed behavior for the positive after providing feedback? Have there been compliments about the employees work? The employee's performance must be monitored on a regular basis in order to establish accurate data for the regular evaluation. If the performance isn't monitored and noted on a regular basis, the performance may be documented inaccurately.

Some attributes that can be evaluated are leadership, teamwork, judgment, and others specific to the position. The employee observation will also look for actual behavior an

employee must exhibit to be successful on the job. These behaviors must be job related, actual and observable job performance. Most are from an in depth job analysis so that behavior that is identified are measurable and valid. In the fire service many of the job related behaviors may be infrequently performed, therefore scenarios may be used to evaluate the employee rather than wait for an opportunity.

Some performance evaluation techniques are as follows: A graphic rating scale is simple as it has a series of boxes with varying levels of performance. The evaluator only needs to check the appropriate box. This method is easy but it often times includes various definitions under one row, therefore not being as specific as may be needed. It may exclude definitions that may be important to the fire service. Another method is the critical incident method that tends to capture highly favorable and highly unfavorable behavior. It tends to focus on critical incidents and only capture very good and very poor behavior, but miss relevant data that may be in between. Another evaluation tool is the ranking appraisal system where the supervisor puts all employees in a rank order as it relates to overall performance. This system tends to rank employees against each other based on a standard performance. The ranking differences between employees aren't well defined therefore resulting in a firefighter being ranked last in one group when he could have been first in another. This system doesn't promote good teamwork in the work place which is vital to the fire service. Ranking is often based on one criterion. A better system is the behaviorally anchored rating scale (BARS) with various performance levels along a scale and relies on employee's specific job behavior and a job analysis. It is based on measurable standards such as: the fire fighter can perform a specific fire service action in a prescribed period of time. The focus is on job behaviors rather than traits or characteristics and reducing subjectivity while depending upon observation of important job

functions. This system is easier to use as there are different supervisors within the organization and makes it easier for the employer to compare performance across the organization. This system provides an opportunity for the supervisor and employee to communicate regarding good performance or the need to enhance performance and possibly develop a plan for improvement.

Management by Objectives (MBO) is a system by which the employee and supervisor agree on a plan and then review the plan later to determine the success. This requires more communication between the two and more input by the employee regarding their performance and motivation to improve. Some keys to this process are that the employee who is involved in planning also tends to demonstrate high levels of commitment and performance. Clearly identified objectives encourage employees to strive toward desired results. Performance objectives are measurable. The down side of this system is that it may focus too much on the quantitative objectives and neglect other important areas. If not monitored, it can develop into a numbers driven evaluation. This system or portions of it may be beneficial, yet need to be implemented appropriate to the agency expectations.

Total Quality Management (TQM) includes subjective as well as objective methods of employee evaluation. Subjective may include other supervisors, peers, public, etc...dealing with attitude, initiative, and communications skills. The objective side deals with work related issues and processes dealing more with problems and potential solutions like cause and effect. This system focuses on teams and groups and how they meet organizational objectives rather than the individual.

The evaluation process the fire department chooses depends upon what is taking place within the department and the goals. An employee evaluation process that combines various points from the mentioned systems may be the best. A key to all of this is the management and

how they use the system. Success will depend largely on the level of commitment of the supervisor for the staff.

The following points can help provide a more valid and reliable evaluation system by rating employees on observable dimensions rather than traits. Evaluation criteria is clearly defined and understood by supervisors and employees. Criteria and scales are job related supported by job analysis and carefully developed. Those involved in the system are well trained on its application.

Some critical issues to avoid during employee evaluation are as follows. Failure to distinctively separate performance areas and allow one to influence others is the halo or horn effect. The central tendency method is when the rater tends to evaluate all staff as average rather than being specific. When a supervisor wants to avoid conflict they will evaluate employees higher than they deserve causing leniency. On the other hand, the supervisor may rate below due to unrealistic standards or selection perceptions. These are known as the leniency or severity error problem.

When a supervisor rates employees against each other rather than an established standard based on performance expectation of the job, they are using the contrast effect. This is often due to unclear criteria or performance standards. A sampling error may take place if the supervisor doesn't see much performance by an employee. The supervisor will rate based on what little they observed. Another error is referred to as the recency error. This is when the supervisor rates on recent events rather than activity throughout the evaluation period. The opposite of this is the primacy effect where the supervisor places most of the evaluation weight on events at the beginning of the evaluation period rather than from throughout. If the supervisor rates the

employee against his/her personal standards rather than that of the organization this is referred to as the frame of reference error.

A supervisor should also remove personal bias from the employee evaluation process as it relates to the employees race, religion, gender, disability, or age. This is considered discrimination and is illegal under federal law and should not be tolerated.

Overall, employee performance evaluation is important to the fire service as it allows supervisors to link employee activity and performance to the goals of the organization in a meaningful manner. Employee performance is based on a system in place by the department and the employee is rated at specific intervals. This allows the employee and agency to grow and improve. This helps link the employee performance to the organizational goals and helps administration make decisions and provide feedback to the employees.

An example of an employee evaluation may include seven steps. Step one is performance criteria. This is an analysis of the job to determine what the criteria should be for an effective performance to ensure legality, validity, and reliability. Validity relates to the job analysis while reliability relates to the consistency by which a supervisor rates an employee in successive evaluations or the consistency with which two or more supervisors rate the employee's performance. Step two is training for all staff so that they understand how to evaluate an employee, and that the employee understands when they are being evaluated on. This will help all to understand their responsibilities and avoid errors. Step three is an expectation-setting meeting where the supervisor meets with the employee and works with the employee on expectations for the next evaluation period. This is like a plan and it includes expectations. The fourth step is feedback which should be supplied to the employee on a regular basis. This helps the employee to know if they are meeting expectations and should be done

when performance related items take place. The fifth step is self-assessment where the employee uses the evaluation criteria to check their own performance. This should be done at the halfway point in the evaluation period and just before the end of the period in preparation for the evaluation meeting. Another element is the midway feedback session where the supervisor and employee meet to discuss progress since the beginning. This provides the employee an opportunity to make changes if needed and to further clarify if something has been forgotten or the employee misinterpreted. The supervisor should note the date and time of the meeting for the final review especially where performance isn't meeting expectations. The final element is the performance review at the end of the evaluation cycle. This is where the supervisory and employee meet to discuss the employees' evaluation and the supervisor comes to a final rating for the employee. If the supervisor has done his/her job, there will be no surprises on the part of the employee. If the employee doesn't agree with the final rating, they should be afforded an appeal process to take the issue to a higher authority within the agency. This meeting also includes starting the next evaluation cycle and laying out the expectations for that cycle.

Preparing for the evaluation review meeting will help the supervisor and employee. The supervisor should be very familiar with all the elements of the evaluation. The supervisor may wish to prepare a list to follow or agenda so as to not forget something. A way the supervisor can be better prepared is by maintaining good notes throughout the evaluation period. This can be done by maintaining a log that captures the date of the event, a brief description of the event, and the level of performance. Another method is to note positive events on one side of a sheet of paper and negative on the other side. The supervisor should try to keep the meeting from becoming confrontational. If the supervisor and employee have been communicating throughout the evaluation period, it is likely the meeting will not become negative.

The supervisor should have a draft of the evaluation for the employee to read. This provides an opportunity for feedback and to add something to the evaluation that may have been missed. It also provides the employee with the opportunity to be a part of the evaluation construction process which builds respect and trust along with communications between the two.

People vary in their ability (Brown, 1987, p. 33) to be successful. Brown relates that people who succeed at something to do so because they have been able to develop a successful habit about conducting a task where others have failed. Brown says that good work habits are only the tip of the iceberg and comes from good performance. That good performance is from good mental discipline which is described as a chain reaction. That we too often focused on the activity that people should engage and on the results we desire. That this would naturally come from activity, habits, and results. We need to pay attention to an accepted thought that creates a feeling in their mind that affects activity. The activity need to be rewarded as the rewarded activity leads to habits which in turn lead to results. In other words regular rewarding of positive activity results in the activity being done properly on a regular basis, i.e. habits. This promotes good physical performance which is in direct relation to mental discipline.

This chain reaction has a lot to do with the employee being able to see what the value of positive performance (Brown, 1987, p. 43) is in their eyes. If the employee sees the value in performing the task properly they will perform in this positive manner. They don't perform completely for money, but for self-esteem. An employee will perform highly for this which, over time, creates positive work habits. The employee will take much pride in this and take performance to ever higher levels. The employee is typically looking for success and this is the beginning of that.

Performance standards can come from (Coleman, 2003, p. 287) certification systems and standardization of education and training programs. That over time these standards have become a standard that we use to evaluate an individual based on their completion of training.

Student performance evaluations (Coleman, 2003, p. 299) are generally conducted through written and/or practical testing. That this testing must be fair, based on training objectives and real world actions, and must be valid and reliable. Evaluations should not discriminate and be based on an occupational analysis and real world activities. Additionally, the evaluation must be valid and reliable in that it can be measured. A pre-hire physical agility evaluation should be based on a person's ability to perform certain accepted firefighter functions. Certified training and physical agility tests are available that are based on national professional qualifications.

The quality of leadership in the department affects the (Coleman, 2003, p. 205) performance of the staff. The primary task of fire department leaders is to guide service delivery. That the fire department is tasked with preventing harm, building a safe environment, educating people to avoid dangerous behaviors or conditions, responding to emergencies, and to ensure the competence of the overall system's performance.

There must be organizational anchors (Coleman, 2003, p. 213) that define expectations, provide clarity, and keep the organization moving forward through its people. Four organizational anchors are; 1. Clearly defined mission and clear customer expectations. 2. Shared organization values and an understanding of the organization culture. 3. Well managed financial resources. 4. Appropriate levels of training on policies, standard operating procedures, and definitive strategic and operational plans. These anchors require regular attention and help the employees operate with proper focus and direction, and expectation. If the employee's first

line supervisor provides proper coaching and counseling, the employee will exhibit proper behavior performance.

Employees want to know about how well they are doing (International city/county management association [ICCM], 2005, p. 76) at work yet often dread the session between them and the supervisor. The employee looks at the meeting like their school days and the report card meeting with the teacher. At the same time the supervisor also has concerns about providing honest feedback as this doesn't come naturally. It's important to remember that the evaluation process should not be viewed as a once a year activity, but a continuous process that is on-going. The employee and supervisor should view themselves as on the same side and looking for ways to reach agreement upon goals.

The evaluation helps to establish benchmarks in order to determine if positive changes are, or will be made in the employee's performance. A regular meeting of once a year is established for consistency and that the assessment session will take place and not be forgotten about. This will only happen if the agency is committed, and establishes and follows through with policy criteria. The process can be co-designed with input from all staff at all levels. Using job standards will help the process to be objective and remove subjective analysis. This process may also be used for the supervisors to hear feedback on their performance from the employees.

Some other reasons for employee performance evaluation is; improve employee performance, define employee responsibility, eliminate misunderstandings about job duties, clarify expected results, provide an avenue for employee development, provide a written record to support personal decisions, provide a record of strengths and weaknesses in employee performance, improve communication with employees.

The formal process of performance evaluation also eliminates the casual or informal evaluation based on opinions. This can be the result of making assessments about people based on personal values, attitudes and behaviors which will most likely differ from the objective and agency criteria's. A careful and formal evaluation will help to insure that mistakes about the employee's performance are not the basis for evaluation as this could hurt the employee and be difficult to overcome.

An evaluation process starts the day the employee is hired. The supervisor must be very familiar with the agency evaluation process in order to insure that it's conducted fairly based on job description. The first three to six months are critical to the success of the employee as the supervisor must explain things to insure they understand as they may be reluctant to ask questions as they may feel they will look bad. Supervisors often don't include sufficient information to the new employee. The supervisor should maintain notes to capture good performance as well as deficient and use the notes to identify trends in the employee's performance. The supervisor should also provide immediate feedback to the employee so they don't think they performed correctly when they didn't.

The performance evaluation is a method to capture progress, goals, objectives, and observations, yet not over depend on this rather than providing regular feedback. These items should not be imposed, but established as a cooperative effort between the employee and supervisor.

The employee should be assisted by the supervisor in goal setting. The goals should match the job description, realities of the job, yet be attainable by the employee and time specific. Some things that can be included are as follows; timely for work, participate in training, good personal appearance, display proper demeanor and language, keep driver's license

valid and violations to a minimum, maintain assigned equipment in proper condition, inspect assigned equipment regularly, will complete written reports and other agency paperwork in a neat, accurate and timely fashion just to name a few.

Setting standards is important in order to monitor the employee and meet regularly so the supervisor can praise them, yet also make corrections on a regular basis. Many agencies meet annually which may be too late to make corrections. The evaluation process should not be viewed as punitive or disciplinary. This can be achieved by focusing on results and not on the personality for the employee and their shortcomings or failures. The supervisor should praise regularly yet note when to help the employee to improve something by looking for ways to do this. Reprimands should be handled as they take place and not help for the annual meeting. New goals should be noted and noted for the next evaluation period.

Supervisors should meet with the employee for formal evaluation interviews at least once during the performance evaluation period. These sessions can help the employee to measure progress and receive needed feedback, and discuss problems while current yet also discuss positive issues. This action will help the experience to be viewed as positive rather than negative. These sessions can provide praise yet also help coach the employee who needs attitude and work habits reinforces. These sessions require some planning and have best results if not held as a surprise. This will lead to no surprises in the formal evaluation process and annual meeting.

A performance evaluation interview should be planned to avoid distractions, in a neutral location, stick to work related topics and issues, and focus on the employee's development. The interview should be held where conversations are private yet eliminate barriers for open discussion. Topics for discussion should be employee duties, performance

standards or goals, completed appraisal report and overall job performance and goal attainment.

The employee should be provided with a copy of the performance report to follow along with.

Avoid discussing personal traits and focus on work achievements with the positive performance.

The supervisor should be constructive and provide negative feedback about any failures for the employee that was expected such as goals and what can be done to improve performance.

Improve future work by looking at what was learned in the past appraisal. The employee should be encouraged to be open and discuss any and all issues.

Any and all information about the employee's performance should be noted by the supervisor and maintained in the personnel file. Notes should be about goal achievement, work performance, supervisor intervention as well as recognitions and accomplishments. These notes should be accompanied by feedback with the employee.

Performance appraisal also must avoid legal challenges by meeting the following criteria. The evaluation process should be based on the systematic analysis of the individual job, accurate and current job description, focus on job specifics and related behaviors, performance standards or goals are communicated to the employee, supervisors are trained in the evaluation process, and documentation on the appraisal process is maintained.

The supervisor must be aware of pitfalls and avoid them. The tendency to rank the employee on all performance issues down the middle of the scoring method. This can be referred to as the "central tendency effect." Basing performance on the most recent activity rather than the whole time frame called the "recency factor" should also be avoided. Allowing one area of performance to affect rank of another area rather than treating it specific called the "halo effect". Avoiding supervisor personal biases or rating too harshly or to lenient across the whole evaluation.

After a firefighter has been hired (ICCMA, 2005, p. 272) they must be continually evaluated and provided feedback about their performance. A performance appraisal system can be the basis for promotion, discipline, transfers, training, and employee development. There are two basic types of appraisal systems. One is the narrative or essay style that includes written information from the supervisor and employee. These types of appraisal tools can capture weaknesses, strengths, and potential or development. These lack of quantified information required for personnel decisions and tend to be unstructured, often this is dependent upon the writer's capabilities. They do provide for the exchange of information between employee and supervisor and are used in occupations that require abstract knowledge and skills. They are most effective if related to performance standards.

A graphic rating scale is like a report card. This system will include particular titles or sections that can include a numerical rating system such as one through five scale, or a rating scale such as satisfactory, unsatisfactory, average, above average, below average, or superior. This type may include a written comments section for the rater. This system is easily applied to a variety of different occupations and tends to be quite consistent. Some negative of this system is that the grading terms don't allow for any variance by the rater who tends to judge the employee more lenient. These rating systems tend to be subjective and don't lend themselves to employee feedback and training. Supervisors tend to avoid the comments section and usually give a satisfactory rating.

Another system is called the forced choice where the rater completes a form that allows them to pick from statements that best describe an employee. The rating may represent a poor to outstanding performance yet due to the manner in which the statements are constructed, the rater will not know what the scoring weights are as there will not be a number of further description.

This scoring method is constructed by trained specialists. A third party interprets the results of scores and explains them to the rater who in turn explains the results to the employee. This system doesn't provide for an easy method of feedback, counseling, or advice on career development due to the third party interpretation. This system is more expensive and is typically used for middle or lower management positions.

Another method of rating is the behavioral anchored system of rating scales that are developed by job knowledge experts that describe typical successful job performance. These are formed by looking at job analysis and statistical analysis to identify behavior between effective and non effective performance. Employees are rated based on the frequency with which they engage in each kind of behavior. The scale will include a numerical and word descriptive range to score. An example of this would be; almost never 1 2 3 4 5 almost always. This system is expensive and time consuming to develop. It is also difficult to link the performance dimensions to the behavior especially when the employee must exercise judgment and discretion in their job.

Another type of appraisal is the critical incident based system. The rater and employee must identify incidents critical to successful job performance. The rater matches actual incidents against a predetermined critical incident scale to which numeric values can be assigned. This process is time consuming and may be costly if technicians are used to identify critical incidents. A job analysis is essential to the development of this type of system. The system may be used in a less formal manner where the rater keeps notes of actual incidents that are positive and negative behaviors. It is then used to discuss performance with the employee but is limited in application with respect to future performance.

A system that employs comparative ranking where employees perform similar work are compared to each other. Some negative to this is the number of times an employee may be

ranked above others which could be based on rater bias and the inability to determine the differences between employees.

Alternation ranking is another method where the rater must decide between the most valuable and least valuable employee and a final list is constructed. These systems are easy to use, yet are subject to easy manipulation and tend to score low in reliability and validity. This system doesn't explain why there may be intervals between individual's rankings yet the system is successful for making employee decisions where multiple judgments are used.

Each of the listed systems has positive points and negative points. They can provide input relative to career counseling, organization development and motivation. An effective performance appraisal system has many of the following criteria's; 1) System is based on a job analysis, 2) The purpose of the system is clearly defined, 3) The system is based on a job related behavior that is clearly defined performance standard, 4) Appraisals are conducted on an ongoing basis, 5) Appraisers receive extensive training in the use of appraisal techniques and in counseling employees, 6) Provision is made for appraisal discussion and positive feedback. Performance strengths and weaknesses are clearly spelled out along with clear plan of action of what is needed to correct faults and improve performance, 7) There is a clear link between good performance and reward system.

Whichever method of appraisal is selected, it must be fair to the employee while avoiding grievances. Management will want to make sure that the appraisal system doesn't yield disappointment due to poor research in its construction. Management needs to look at all systems to build what works for their agency while striving to avoid the negatives. The process needs to have a clear plan on what the system is to do and plan for ways to meet supervisory resistance. The system may rate what the employee is doing rather than results. Job

requirements must be defined as it relates to what the desired performance is. Supervisors must be trained to understand the process and how to communicate with their employees. Employee performance needs to be documented in clear behavior and job-relevant terms. The supervisor that provides regular feedback will improve the employee motivation and productivity. The supervisor should link past performance with what is expected in the future to include career development opportunities. The established performance standards should be a basis for measuring progress toward results and monitor the process to insure that it's working properly. This helps formalize the evaluation process as supervisors will rate employees even if there is no system which could result in poor judgment of their staff.

A personnel development program integrates recruitment, selection, training and education, career planning, career counseling, performance appraisal, and other human resource considerations into a single system. This means that management is also responsible for personnel development in order to help develop employees for future promotion and responsibilities. The performance appraisal is only a part of the overall personnel development. This helps to build a pool of staff that will be the futures specialists, supervisors, managers, etc... This is an integration of career development and management development.

Many agencies are quite progressive and will prepare documents that will help their employees to be successful within the organization as the employees have information to help them with promotion exams, interviews, prerequisites, and selection methods. This helps the employee to know what's expected while having a sense of perspective. This system provides career counseling and advancement to help the agency to be prepared for the future. The agency may also move staff around to different responsibilities and allow staff to serve on various committees that provide some insight for career development.

Performance appraisals (Gitlow & Gitlow, 1987, p. 120) accomplish a number of things: They help the supervisor to monitor the subordinate and to conduct coaching, to motivate the subordinate to provide feedback on how they're doing, provide back-up documentation for management decisions concerning transfers, dismissals, promotions, etc..., improve organizational development by identifying employees with promotional potential and by identifying development needs, to establish documentation as a basis for reference and personnel decisions.

Some literature and practices suggest that performance appraisals don't really help most people meet the above goals. It is viewed as a necessary evil and that there is no better alternative so most management and staff accept this process. If it is to be accepted, there must be a positive relationship between the supervisor and staff. The supervisor needs to receive ongoing feedback and assistance in reaching their goals. That objectivity and fairness are difficult to attain.

It is believed that performance appraisals can destroy teamwork because they are more concerned about themselves than the common good and tend to do what they can to impress the supervisor rating them. It may reduce initiative and risk taking because employees are more concerned about meeting their goals and lose creativeness. The supervisor may be holding people down and won't listen to new ideas. Employees often just try to fit into the mold that the supervisor has for all employees and don't want to rock the boat, look foolish, or feel like they are threatening the supervisor. The employee may also spread out their goal attainment over a couple of evaluation periods rather than surpass it as they could do. It may also create overly precise and useless measures of performance as the person who complains about their low evaluation tends to get higher appraisals as the supervisor doesn't want to deal with the

employee. It also may not distinguish between people and the system since the employee is only one element in the process, they are held responsible for the outcome. The employee may not have control over other influences such as processes, materials, machines, methods, people, etc...suggesting that the system has some randomness to it and the employee shouldn't be rewarded or punished based on this. Employees will increase variability of performance by adjusting for the next evaluation period based on what is expected and earn a better evaluation. The evaluation process causes focus on the short term rather than long term based on the evaluation period or employer based time frames rather than fairly assessing employee's abilities and guiding their careers.

I found that an evaluation (International Fire Service Training Association, [IFSTA], 2004, p. 113) determines how effective and efficient an item, program or process is compared to a benchmark or established set of criteria. The analysis is objective, evaluating is subjective, dependent on the knowledge and experience of the evaluator. That evaluation is defined as the appraisal of a person, project, or organization in relation to stated criteria or standards, the interpretation of the criteria or standards is subject to personal bias.

Evaluation methodologies use statistics or other methods to determine the efficiency, effectiveness, quality, and coverage of a program, policy or activity. That there are two types of evaluation processes; formative and summative. Formative evaluation processes include; an ongoing process, allows for alteration during operation, primarily forward looking, identifies strengths and weaknesses with intention to improve, develops habits, shapes direction of professional development, relies on feedback, and reflects on effectiveness or past similar events. While summative evaluations focus on overall effectiveness of the program, generates new programs or projects, documents achievements, documents habits that were relied upon by

participants, shows the results of variations on the traditional approach, relies on evidence, depends on any information developed through formative evaluations.

There are two basic types of evaluation methods. They are qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative relies on non numerical basis in that the evaluation is to deem whether the item, project, or program meets the intended value or outcome. Data is gathered via open ended questions, interviews of participants, content analysis, participant observations, and non-participant observations. This process is difficult to tabulate into neat, precise categories.

Quantitative evaluation is based on a numerical or statistical analysis. The item, program or project is judged against numerical criteria previously established. This works better when dealing with a large evaluation pool of respondents. Information may be gathered locally and judged against statistics gathered on a national level. Data is gathered from questionnaires that contain yes or no questions, checklists of information or preference scales. This may prevent fresh input or ideas and this process doesn't allow for it as it is based on prescribed scales. This process also tends to gather on a 50 percent return rate.

It's important (IFSTA, 2004, p. 195) that managers, supervisor and Chief Officers must periodically evaluate personnel under their charge. Evaluations may take place as a part of the hiring process, during probationary periods, annually as part of an ongoing performance review, for promotional purposes, or for disciplinary or termination purposes. An evaluation schedule shouldn't prevent the supervisor from providing regular and ongoing feedback to the employee.

Some advantages of a personnel evaluation program are; formal procedures for appraising employee abilities and accomplishments at all levels within the organization, note employee strength and weaknesses, becomes a part of the permanent record, can be used for awards, promotions, transfers, discipline, and termination, identify the need for additional

training, new programs could be developed to deal with common deficiencies, allows management to become more familiar with personnel, allows for effective use of personnel, develop a better succession system, help to motivate personnel toward improvement, upper management becomes more aware of lower-level managers and supervisors abilities, identify specific skills of an employee resulting in that employee being used in other areas of the organization, help improve efficiency of employees and organization.

Some characteristics of the evaluation process are as follows. Evaluations are timely relative to the event of unsatisfactory performance. Criteria should be clearly stated with goals and objectives with job-performance criteria written for review in successive evaluations. Avoid discrimination by applying job performance standards, not gender, sex, ethnicity, age, etc... The evaluation must be consistent and apply equally to job-performance standards through the organization based on the type of job or duty the employee is performing. Maintain thorough and complete records of each evaluation in the employee's personnel file. Provide the employee with a copy of the evaluation yet recognize that this record is not public so confidentiality must be maintained. Evaluators must be trained on proper evaluation procedures. The evaluation must be objective therefore personal bias must be put aside and based on established criteria as objectivity is essential.

The evaluation process begins with the employee meeting with a representative of management so that organizational expectations for job performance may be communicated and established. Performance standards are outlined and agreed upon by both the employee and the supervisor. This evaluation process is an opportunity to generate positive change in the organization. Change can be accomplished by focusing on the positive accomplishments of the

employee and involve that employee in setting goals and objectives, and creating an atmosphere where the employee can feel comfortable and accepted.

An evaluation schedule will be communicated to the employee as this is typically based on the probationary period. The information communicated at the initial meeting sets the stage for expectations during the probationary period. The supervisor must monitor the new employee regularly and provide regular feed back. Feedback can be in the form of praise, adding additional information about what is expected. If the supervisor doesn't provide feedback on a regular basis, the probationary period may be difficult for the new employee.

After the probationary period has concluded it is important for the supervisor to continue to provide job-performance evaluations. This is a time to establish an annual evaluation period and review quality of work and establish performance goals and objectives. If feedback is provided on a regular basis, the formal evaluation reinforces that feedback and ensures a successful evaluation. The supervisor can continue to insure that the employee is aware of roles, responsibilities, and authority of their position. Allow opportunities for the employee to establish or alter performance goals and objectives. The formal evaluation should be handled like a formal interview and time needs to be set aside for this private meeting and eliminate interruptions. The evaluation at this point should not have any surprises for the employee.

The supervisor should be using a 360-degree feedback evolution process where the supervisor gathers pertinent information on the employee throughout the evaluation period and use it as input for the formal evaluation. This could include input from other supervisors, peers, other employees, subordinates, citizens that may have regular contact with that employee. The observations should be based on observed performance. Responses must remain confidential to protect the people providing the information and confidentiality must ensure that they will speak

freely and not hesitate to provide constructive criticism. Feedback should back up a plan to improve any behavior that is perceived as below standard. Coaching, mentoring, continuing education, and specialized skills training are just a few ways to help an employee improve so as to meet performance expectations. The supervisor should be trained in order to provide a proper evaluation with proper interpretations.

An evaluation process should meet local, state and federal legal mandates by relating to the work behavior or skills that the employee is assigned to perform. The evaluation must include definite identifiable criteria based on the quality or quantity of work or on specific performances that are supported by a documented record. Evaluations must be objective and not based on subjective observations. Evaluations must be supported by documentation.

Job performance evaluations have benefits that are both tangible and intangible. The intangible benefits are those not related to the job performance criteria, i.e. why they joined the department. Tangible benefits are related to the terms of employment which may be mandated by the government, a part of labor and management agreements, or agreed to during the hiring process such as wages and benefits.

Evaluating personnel beings (Staley, 1998, p. 135) with a self-evaluation for perspective. This can take place by conducting an evaluation of you based on the agency standard. Take a look at yourself based on others, i.e. a supervisor, a subordinate, a person who favors you, and also an enemy. Be truthful about how you believe they perceive you. Compare yourself with other people by selecting a person you admire and compare their qualities to you. Evaluate the last time you felt proud of an accomplishment and couldn't wait to tell others. How did you feel? Also evaluate the last time you did poorly and either covered it up or denied involvement. You need to be brutally honest with yourself when doing this by picking something very good,

and something very poor and examining your feelings about it. Evaluate how other react to you. You may be doing the same things that you accuse others of doing.

We can evaluate people (Staley, 1998, p. 135) by starting with yourself. This can be done by using the following criteria. Evaluate yourself by filling out the performance evaluation form of yourself based on its criteria's. You can have some others tell you how they see you. Compare yourself with others. Evaluate what happened during your last accomplishment. Evaluate how others react when you're around them. This method may help you to identify areas that you need to improve upon. At the same time you should identify your strengths which should build your confidence.

Another method of evaluation is 360 degree feedback which entails evaluation by the supervisor as well as other supervisors that have contact with you. This can also include some form of feedback from fellow employees. This process provides an opportunity for consensus by the raters for the employee being evaluated. When using this method on yourself or others it's important to be looking at the common responses. This consensus is how others see this person's performance and the practice suggests that if all raters are seeing the same thing, then the issue must be present.

This can then be used to evaluate other people, namely employees. A rater must include praise yet provide the proper amount. Not enough praise and the employee will wonder whether they are doing right. Too much praise and the praise may become meaningless. Praise should be attached to specific performance and used with caution so as to not become a problem later. It can't be used to rate everything at once. Praise may cause the person to think they are good at all they do. The rater doesn't want to fill the personnel file with too much praise as there needs to be room for improvement and realistic performance recording. No one is perfect.

Constructive criticism should also be used carefully. Start with praise regarding certain performance, or of a recent positive issue before providing constructive criticism as the person will most likely become defensive. The praise helps to balance the constructive criticism so it isn't taken as a complete negative. The constructive criticism should also be focused on the issue and not used to broadly. After discussing the matter it is important now to discuss the resolution or method by which the employee can improve the issue. Allow them to provide a plan of improvement of their own before providing it to them.

Informal evaluations (Coleman, 1978, p. 499) may be used to evaluate employee performance in a casual manner at smaller incident responses. This is a time where the supervisor discusses a particular issue or incident with a small group of employees. This could be a response to an incident where the supervisor wishes to talk with his/her staff regarding elements of their response. This literature suggests that the supervisor gather the staff and use a white board or chalk board to illustrate pertinent information. The supervisor may wish to open the discussion with a brief introduction as to why they are meeting. The supervisor can ask some questions of the staff about what they knew about the call as they responded and then ask what they knew after arriving and discuss the differences. The supervisor can then discuss his/her knowledge and operations along with size-up and objectives. All get an opportunity to discuss their role and actions with the supervisor then asking how operations could have been improved.

This same type of incident evaluation could be done with a single employee and provides the supervisor an opportunity to help the employee to learn from the incident as well as the supervisor providing feedback to the employee so they understand how they performed with improvement intended for future such responses. Nothing written down or noted for future use, yet is a part of supervisory and employee evaluation. The supervisor must be honest and

objective when doing this to include admission of any mistakes that they may have made. The supervisor should be able to explain their decisions and actions. This process will help motivate the employee(s) to perform properly, or better, in the future and help to open lines of communications so that all are more informed as well as building confidence in the employee(s).

Formal evaluations are used to evaluate large incident operations. This should be help about a week after the incident so that official reporting is done and the leader of the incident evaluation has time to review all aspects for the incident in order to be better prepared. All participants in the incidents should be invited and asked to make notes of their involvement in order to assist them participate in the evaluation and provide necessary details regarding actions taken. The session should be recorded in order to document the sequence of events. The evaluation location should be large enough for all participates. Information about the incident prior to the incident should be collected for use at the session. This should include pre-plans, inspection records, building plans, response plans, etc... A panel of selected staff will help to keep the incident evaluation on track and draw out the necessary information. This should not be handled like a court room but to gather information to learn and not place blame. There will be documentation of when things took place, where, and how.

Each officer will provide details about their observations and actions when responding in to the incident. After all pertinent details are discussed and recorded, the results of the fire investigation will be presented in order to provide perspective. All participants should now ask and respond to questions and discuss the merits for the operation and also discuss other actions that could have been taken, or other hypothetical inputs. The overall plan is to evaluator the response, but at the same time evaluating the human factor based on the performance of staff. A

final report is completed and shall spell out whether actions were proper or not proper. It should have recommendations to improve specific performance which could be employees.

Organizational anchors (Compton, 1999, p. 3) can be implemented to enhance the change process. An anchor mentioned is performance and positive outcomes. That anchors can be used to improve the overall outcome of the agency by connecting with personnel. A key organizational element is whether employees know what it expected of them. Additionally, do employees have the latitude to perform and are they accountable? Is the philosophy and culture of the organization defined so that both can be more effectively communicated and evaluated?

Our employees (Compton, 2000, p. 15) are our internal customers and ethical issues are matters to be considered. That it isn't permissible to abuse agency equipment or benefits. That there are some basic unwritten behaviors expected along these lines and suggests some method to monitor this behavior and address shortcomings. One way is to mandate employee's involvement in their jobs and participate in improvement efforts, especially in the areas that impact their performance. That there shouldn't be an option and employees should be committed to performing and improving in the roles and job that they are assigned.

That the importance is stressed of change and keeping the agency moving forward. It is important for supervisors to be looking toward tomorrow and help their staff to move that direction. Work related decisions shouldn't be based on favoritism of a particular employee. This is part of the unwritten ethical contract we have with our staff or our internal customers. If not attended to properly issues can arise and get out of control and harm relationships, reduce effectiveness, compromise the mission, and make working with each other difficult.

The supervisor should set the example (Compton, 2002, p. 22) and make sure that expectations are passed on, and encourage the employee to get involved in agency activities.

Good behavior and performance needs to be regarded in some manner at every opportunity and shouldn't be taken for granted. At the same time, unsatisfactory behavior should not be rewarded. If it is, watch for it to be repeated. A supervisor should help employees to succeed and stay competent at all levels and help staff to be trained properly for professional growth. A supervisor should always promote safety, physical, and psychological and emotional wellness. A supervisor should support those employees that perform the mission each day. Staff also needs to know that there will be consequences (Compton, 2002, p. 27) for unsatisfactory behavior or performance and must be made clear. When necessary this needs to be documented based on agency requirements and consistent for possible disciplinary actions. The officers ability to balance discipline issues is important as it does affect the performance of the group and the quality of service.

I reviewed a standard that are used by the fire service (National Fire Protection Association [NFPA] 1201, 2004) the NFPA standard titled "Providing Emergency Services to the Public." This standard provides guidance relative to the fire department providing emergency services to the public and how it should be done. Chapter 4.5.3 - Policy Statement indicates that the fire department shall adopt policy regarding these services and to include delegation of authority to subordinates. Chapter 4.13.4 under the training section includes that the agency leader shall provide reports regarding organization activity and performance.

Annex A of this chapter includes section A.1.1 that describes the services the fire department supplies to the public, i.e. fire suppression, rescue, response to emergencies. etc... A.1.2 indicates that the standard shall provide effective and efficient protective services that operate in a sound manner to reduce risk to life and property as it relates to public fire protection.

Another standard (NFPA 1001, 2008) is the standard for Fire Fighter Qualifications.

Under Chapter 1 Administration, section 1.1 indicates that this standard helps to identify minimum job performances requirements. Section 1.3.2 indicates standards to develop instruction and training to prepare individuals to meet the job performance requirements. Section 1.3.8 indicates standards on how the fire fighter can maintain their levels for preparation via training.

Another standard Chapter 4 (NFPA 1001, 2008) is the standard for Fire Fighter Qualifications. Under Chapter 4 Entrance Requirements, section 4.2 Fitness Requirements indicates that the fire department should have a hiring fitness requirement to help insure the candidate is fit for duty.

A review of standard (NFPA 1001, 2008) is the standard for Fire Fighter Qualifications. Under Chapter 5 Fire Fighter I, section 5.3 Fireground Operations, lists the standards regarding performing activities necessary to insure life safety, fire control and property conservation relative to the skills, the fire fighter needs to use fire related equipment and take care of it according to the NFPA standards and adopted procedures of the agency.

A review (NFPA 1001, 2008) is the standard for Fire Fighter Qualifications. Under Chapter 6 Fire Fighter II, this section also lists the requisite knowledge and skills that a fire fighter needs to operate during an emergency relative to safety, protection, risk management, etc... I reviewed (NFPA 1001, 2008) the standard for Fire Fighter Qualifications. Under Annex B section B.1 Explanation of the Standard and Concepts of Job Performance Requirements, it identifies minimum job performance standards as being able to be used for training design and evaluation, certification, measuring and critiquing on-the-job performance, define hiring practices, and setting organizational policies, procedures, and goals. The evaluation process for

job performance may be used by the supervisor and employee to rate job performance on the job as well as after the task has been completed based on job performance requirements. These professional qualifications can be used for employee development by both the employee and the employer. This will help with the career path of all in the fire service. Agency policies may be based on these standards.

I reviewed (NFPA 1582, 2003) chapter 1 that shows that under section 1.2 Purpose, that the standard was developed to reduce the risk and burden of fire service occupational morbidity and mortality while improving the safety and effectiveness of fire fighters operation to protect civilian life and property. Chapter 4, section 4.1.1 indicates that the fire department shall establish a medical program that includes medical evaluations for candidates and members. Chapter 5, section 5.1.2 of this standard lists that the medical requirements shall correlate with the job tasks as determined by the fire department. Under section 5.1.3.1 the fire department must supply the physician with a list of tasks the fire fighter will be performing, i.e. using self contained breathing apparatus, exposure to toxic fumes, ventilating roofs and walls, conducting rescue operations, wearing protective clothing, climbing ladders, operating fire apparatus, ability to communicate, and other emergency operations. Chapter 7, section 7.3.1 indicates that all members shall receive a baseline medical evaluation after hiring and prior to performing fire fighting emergency functions and at least annually thereafter.

A review (NFPA 1500, 2007) Chapter 5 section 5.1.3 indicates that the fire department shall establish training and education programs that provide new members with initial training, proficiency opportunities, and a method of skill and knowledge evaluation or duties assigned to the member before engaging in emergency operations. Section 5.5.1 indicates that the department shall develop a recurring proficiency cycle with the goal of preventing skill

degradation and potential for injury and death of a member. Section 5.5.1 indicates that the fire department shall develop and maintain a system to monitor and measure training progress and activities of this member. Section 5.5.3 indicates the fire department shall provide an annual skills check to verify minimum professional qualifications of its members.

Another document (NFPA 1021, 2003) Chapter 3 section 3.3.8 Job Performance Requirements, lists that the department provide a statement describing a specific job task and items necessary to complete the task and define measurable or observable outcomes and evaluation areas for specific task. Chapter 4 Fire Officer I section 4.2 indicates that under human resources management the officer has the duty to evaluate member performance when supervising personnel during emergency and non-emergency work according to job performance requirements. Chapter 5 Fire Officer II section 5.2.1 indicates the officer shall initiate actions to maximize member performance and/or to correct unacceptable performance, given human resources policies and procedures, so that the member and/or unit performance improves or the issue is referred to the next level of supervision. The requisite skill for this comes under section 5.2.2 where the officer will evaluate the job performance of assigned members, given personnel records and evaluation forms, so each member's performance is evaluated accurately and reported according to human resource policies and procedures. Chapter 6 Fire Officer III section 6.1.2 General Prerequisite Skills, ability to research, to use evaluative methods to analyze data and to communicate orally and in writing, and to motivate members. Section 6.2 Human Resources Management lists the duty to establish procedures for hiring, assigning, promoting, and encouraging professional development of members, according to the job description. Annex A of this standard section B.2.3 Evaluation Parameters and/or Performance Outcomes lists that the job performance requirements guide performance toward successful completion by indenting

evaluation parameters and/or performance outcomes. That consistency in evaluation is established by reducing the variables used to gauge performance.

A review Graham's Rules for the Improvement of Performance Evaluations (GRIPE), retrieved 03/30/2008, from the World Wide Web:  
[http://www.gordongraham.com/pdfs/GRIPE\\_Fire.pdf](http://www.gordongraham.com/pdfs/GRIPE_Fire.pdf). Graham indicates that a fire department should have a policy regarding performance evaluations for staff. That it shouldn't matter whether the department has full-time, part-time, or volunteer employees. That performance evaluation is critical and that they will enhance moral when staff meet performance expectations, and that fair warning should be provided to staff whose performance is unsatisfactory and where improvement is needed for them to meet the standards. Graham also lists that supervisors need training on how to prepare the performance evaluation. That the evaluation should be agency specific as one process doesn't fit all agencies. The contents should be specific and include facts that can be articulated to support the rating. The rater needs to be cautious about overrating and underrating of employees. The evaluation should be accurate.

A review (McNamara, 2008) indicates that performance reviews are critical to the organization and should be prepared annually. Avoiding performance evaluations can decrease morale, decrease credibility of management, decrease the organization's overall effectiveness and wastes more of management's time to do what isn't being done properly. The performance appraisals should be job-related and valid; based on a thorough analysis of the job; standardized for all employees; not biased against any race, color, sex, religion, or nationality; and performed by people who have adequate knowledge of the person or job.

A form should be designed to facilitate this process and should include the following items; employee name, date the performance form was completed, time interval of the

evaluation, performance dimension, a rating system, space for commentary for each dimension, a final section for overall commentary, a final section for action plans to address improvements, and lines for signatures of the supervisor and employee. The evaluations should also include responsibilities from the job description, any assigned goals from the strategic plan, along with needed skills, such as communications, administration, etc... A rating system using poor, average, good, and excellent can be used.

I was able to locate an example of a firefighter performance evaluation form (Gresham F.D., 2008) as a sample. This is a 5 page document (Appendix A) that lists information specific to the person being evaluated on the first page, i.e. assignment, salary, anniversary date, date of last review, and evaluator. It also listed on the front page what evaluation this represented, i.e. initial probation, promotional, annual, change of reviewer, and other. There is also a spot for the job and class specification on the front page along with a spot for the person being rated to check acknowledgement of the evaluation. There is a page where goals are acknowledged and area for comments. This section lists an objective and responsibility after the goal along with a brief example for the rater. The next section of this evaluation lists topics along with a rating scale of one through five with one being not acceptable, three being acceptable, and five being superior. The number two is higher than not acceptable, yet lower than acceptable, with four falling being better than acceptable, yet not superior. There is also a box marked not observed. The employee is rated one through five on the following topics; appearance, behavioral skills, relationships, knowledge, performance, documentation, professional development, acting in capacity. Each of these sections includes additional sub sections to be rated on. The final portion of the evaluation contains an area listed as Strengths and Potential Areas of Improvement. In this area the rater lists the employees strong points, specific incidents that should be listed where strong

performance was observed, potential areas to be improved, and an area to list an incident to show the poor performance. This is followed by an area where the firefighter can list his/her comments in the evaluation, the final section provides for signatures of the employee, rater, and other department staff.

A recent study on retaining and recruiting volunteer firefighters (United States fire Administration [USFA], 2007, p. 66) lists an evaluation or performance appraisal as essential for improving volunteer performance which in turn improves the performance of the organization. Firefighters may look at the evaluation as a negative but if the evaluation is done properly, it should not be looked at in a negative light. Evaluation related meetings can be a coaching session to improve the firefighter and the organization as part of the focus can be about how that firefighter can help contribute to and improve the organization. The coaching meeting(s) can help to bridge communication issues and create a better working relationship, not to mention helping the firefighter to work on areas that they may be weak at.

A department officer can complete the evaluation form for the firefighter they supervise once or twice a year on such items as; task performance, communication skills, quality of effort, attitude, and knowledge of job requirements. Some departments also have those being supervised evaluate their supervisor with the objective of both to improve the organization.

With the return of a survey sent to targeted agencies around the state, I did receive three examples of current fire department evaluation forms. The first one [Plover Fire/EMS (PFED), 2008] provided content of an evaluation (Appendix B) used for probationary employees. This evaluation has a five step rating process on a two page form that scores the employee with points in nine categories. This included a section on terminology that helps the rater and employee to better understand the content and criteria's for the evaluation.

The second evaluation example I received [Sussex Fire Department (SFD), 2008] provides a one page employee evaluation (Appendix C), and a one page supervisor evaluation (Appendix D) with a five level grading scale. The employee evaluation form includes five major topic areas for rating; each area has additional information that further defines the rating area. The supervisor rating form is basically the same as the employee evaluation form except that the supervisor's evaluation form includes an additional section.

The third evaluation example I received [Monroe Fire Department (MFD), 2008] is a two page evaluation form (Appendix E) that uses a five level grading scale for nine categories. The tenth category is an overall performance based on the previous nine. This form includes an action plan for goal setting and accomplishment.

### Procedures

The procedures used in this applied research paper was determined based on the identification of a problem that if corrected would have great benefits for the Verona Fire Department. The problem was that the Verona Fire Department has no employee performance evaluation process even though the Verona Fire District Agreement required the Fire Chief to conduct performance evaluations on the Officer staff. This project was completed as an action research project with the intent of collecting pertinent data and then completing a finished product for use to evaluate employee performance at VFD.

With the problem identified this research paper focused on locating a solution and develop an employee performance evaluation process. In order to locate information regarding the content and benefits of an employee evaluation I began conducting research on what others have written on this subject as well as preparing two surveys. The surveys focused on what

components should be included in an evaluation as well as how an evaluation process would benefit the employee, the employer, and the community.

The first survey (Appendix F) constructed and distributed to twenty eight active status firefighters of the Verona Fire Department to solicit their input relative to what they believed the components should be in an employee evaluation process. I received five surveys in return, see survey results.

The second survey (Appendix G) was sent out to 43 fire department throughout the state of Wisconsin. I chose fire departments that served communities that were of a similar size as Verona. These 43 fire departments were selected based on data derived from (Wisconsin Department of Administration [WDOA], 2007) where I selected communities that were no less than 8,000 in population or more than 12,000 in population. I believed this was comparable in that Verona is considered to have a population of 10,125. These populations were based on a January 1, 2007 estimate from the (WDOA). This selection also provided a wider survey return and input to this research project. Eighteen surveys were returned. The intent of this survey was to solicit from these agencies the following; what they use as components for their employee evaluation process, how does the evaluation process benefit the employee, employer, and the community? The final question on this survey was whether the department would be willing to share their current employee performance evaluation with me. I did receive three current fire department evaluation process examples.

I performed research to locate information that has been written on the subject of what components make up an effective employee evaluation process. My research began while I was attending Leading Community Risk Reduction class at the NFA January 2007. I was able to identify publications and intent resources on this topic. This literature was reviewed for

significance and contribution to the applied research and then assessed for its contribution to this project.

## Results

The results of this applied research project were compiled from literature review and surveys. The questions posed in this applied research project are listed here with the results and findings in a logical and narrative format.

Research question 1: What are necessary components of an effective employee evaluation process? My research found information and a number of examples of employee evaluation forms suggested components for the evaluation. See Appendix A - I for components of example evaluation forms. I also conducted a survey (Appendix F) of VFD staff to solicit input from them relative to the components of an employee evaluation process. Also see survey results (Appendix G) of data collected from targeted Wisconsin fire departments relative to the components of an employee evaluation process.

The results of the surveys conducted help point to the necessary components for an evaluation. The survey of VFD staff (Appendix F) confirmed that staff believes an evaluation process would be beneficial and should include components such as; quantity/quality of work, job/assignment knowledge, initiative, communication skills, goal setting, etc...

The results of the survey of Wisconsin Fire Departments (Appendix G) also confirmed that an evaluation should include components such as; attitude, safety, appearance, development, performance, etc...

Literature review helped to point out components also. Performance includes key factors (Buckman, III, 2006, 321 such as level of productivity, timeliness of work, quality, and work performed in a safe manner and according to agency policy. An evaluation must also help the

employee to understand what is expected (Sargent, 2006, p. 165) of the organization and supervisors. It can help to assess training, hiring and probationary periods. Some other attributes that can be rated are performance, leadership teamwork, judgment, (Edwards, 2005, p. 145) and the behaviors that go along with this must be measurable and observable. The performance and activity of an employee may be linked to the goals for the organization in a meaningful manner.

The organization should establish anchors (Coleman, 2003, p. 213). that define expectations, provide clarity, and keep the organization moving forward through its people. This helps establish performance standards. The employee evaluation process ICCMA, (2005, p. 76) also improves employee performance, defines employee responsibility, eliminate misunderstandings about job duties, and clarify expected results while providing a written record that also includes employee strengths and weaknesses.

An evaluation process also provides (Gitlow & Gitlow, 1987, p. 120) ongoing feedback and assistance in helping the employee reach goals. An evaluation is also about benchmarks (IFSTA, 2004, p. 113) or established set of criteria. That analysis is objective while evaluating is subjective depending upon the knowledge of the evaluator. An evaluation methodology uses statistics or other methods to determine the efficiency, effectiveness, quality, and coverage of a program, policy or activity. That there are two types of evaluation processes; formative and summative with job performance having benefits that are both tangible and intangible.

An evaluation process can also begin with a self-evaluation process (Staley, 1998, p. 135) for perspective which can be done by evaluating yourself against an agency standard. This allows the employee to know up front what is expected and perform accordingly. The process is also a way for the supervisor to provide the employee with some constructive criticism. Another

way to evaluate the employee is to (Coleman, 1978, p. 499) meet regarding their performance at a particular incident or about an issue. This information could be included in the performance evaluation.

Anchors can be used (Compton, 1999, p. 3) to improve the organization through the employee by holding the employee accountable for their behavior(s) and reward positive behavior but not poor behavior. The performance evaluation can also include (NFPA 1201, 2004) how emergency service is provided. Minimum job performance standards (NFPA 1001, 2008) can also be included in the performance evaluation. How the employee performs on the fire ground (NFPA 1001, 2008) can also be included in a performance evaluation to include knowledge and skills that the employee displays. How the employee performs the job is also measurable and includes observable outcomes (NFPA 1201, 2003) may also be points of evaluation.

A performance evaluation should be covered by agency policy (GRIPE, 2008) for staff no matter if the agency has full-time, part-time or volunteer staff. The evaluation contents should be specific and facts that can be articulated to support the rating and be accurate. A form may include (McNamara, 2008) employee name, date of performance for completed, time interval of evaluation, performance dimensions, rating system, space for commentary, final section for overall commentary, action plan, and signatures. The performance system (IFSTA, 2004) should meet local, state and federal legal mandates relating to work behavior or skills that the employee is assigned to perform. It should be based on objective observations and documented.

An evaluation should also include some form of rating (Edwards, 2005, p. 145) such as a graph with boxes varying levels of performance. A box is checked to indicate the level of

performance. This system is easy yet the definitions may not be as specific as needed. The critical incident system captures the very good and the very bad and not capture important information in between. The ranking appraisal system is where the supervisor ranks employees against each other based on a standard performance. The ranking may not be well defined and not rank the employee as high or low as is really the case. It also doesn't promote teamwork. The behavioral anchored rating scale (BARS) includes various performance levels along a scale and specifies job behavior and job analysis. This is based on measurable standards during a prescribed period of time. This is more objective and easier to use by different supervisors and provides for communication between supervisor and employee.

The MBO is where the employee and supervisor (Edwards, 2005, p. 145) agree on a plan for improvement if needed and then review the plan later to determine the success. Clearly identified objectives encourage employees to strive toward desired results. Performance is objective and measurable.

The TQM includes subjective and objective (Edwards, 2005, p. 145) methods of evaluation. Subjective may include other supervisors, peers, public, etc...dealing with attitude, initiative, and communication skills. The objective side deals with work related issues and process dealing more with problems and potential solutions. This system focuses on team and groups and how they meet organizational objectives rather than individual. The evaluation the employer chooses depends upon what is taking place within the department and the goals. An evaluation process that includes various points from the mentioned systems may be the best. The key to this is the management and how they use the system.

A midway feedback session (Edwards, 2005, p. 145) is also important as it provides an opportunity for the supervisor and employee to check progress and maintain communications.

This is a time to make adjustments, clarify misunderstandings, and catch something that may have been forgotten. There will also be an evaluation meeting which will close out one evaluation by checking goal accomplishment and noting strengths and weaknesses. This will begin the next evaluation by setting expectations and goals for that time frame and what weaknesses need to be worked on.

Another rating system is the graphic rating scale (ICMA, 2008, p. 272) that include titles or sections that can include a numerical rating system such as a one through five. It could also include a scale such as satisfactory, unsatisfactory, average, above average, below average, or superior and may also include a written comments section for the rater. This system works well for many occupations and consistent. The grading system may not be as defined causing the rater to rate more lenient. This may be better than a system of preconceived descriptions of job performance that the rater must select from for the employee. This system includes a poor to outstanding performance. All of this is prepared by a specialist requiring a third party to interpret the results which doesn't lend itself to feedback, counseling or advice on career development, and is more expensive.

The behavioral anchored system (ICMA, 2008, p. 272) describes typical successful job performance based on looking at job analyses and statistical analysis to identify behavior between effective and no effective performance. This includes a numerical and word descriptive range to score such as one, meaning almost never, and five, meaning almost always. This may be more expensive and time consuming to develop and difficult to link performance dimensions to the behavior, especially when judgment and discretion is involved.

Research question 2: How would an employee evaluation process benefit the employee? My research found information about this question and supported my outcome. I also conducted

two surveys that contributed to answering this question. The first survey (Appendix F) solicited information from staff of the VFD. A few items that were collected from this survey were; consistent expectations and results, evaluation would benefit agency through the employee, and the survey indicated that employees would benefit. The second survey (Appendix G) solicited information from 43 Wisconsin fire departments listed; let employee know how they are doing, provide company officer ongoing officer development, help employee improve, just to name a few.

The employee can benefit by developing skills through help (Buckman, III, 2006, p. 132) from the supervisor. The employee's performance may be below expectation but now realize it and the process will help the employee to improve by providing the proper resources. The employee needs feedback in order to meet expectations and know when they are or they aren't. Is the employee providing the amount of work expected (Graner, 2006, p. 149) by the employer? Does the employee operate in a safe manner? If the employee is not performing as expected, the data is documented to include what has been done to try and make corrections resulting in progressive discipline. The employee should be treated respectfully through this process. Employees cannot perform without knowing (Sargent, 2006, p. 165) what is expected. The evaluation is a record of the employee's performance and their ability to meet expectations. Most employees are committed and will do well despite the evaluation, yet still need some positive reinforcement. Some employees will require ongoing attention and with that noted the evaluation won't be a surprise as the communications between the employee and supervisor will set the stage for evaluation. Appropriate discipline by the supervisor will help to modify the behavior of the employee to meet expectations. The evaluation process will have an affect on the (Edwards, 2005, p. 145) employee's future in the way of promotion, commendations,

transfers, and termination. The process must be fair, unbiased, and objective. The employee should not be judged based on the observations of others and comparisons. They should be rated on their own performance.

Good discipline can come from good (Brown, 1987, p. 33) work habits and that, when rewarded, continued good work habits will follow. That the employees pride and self-esteem will help them to continue to perform in a positive manner. If the employee is coached properly (Coleman, 2003, p. 205) the employee will avoid dangerous conditions and perform in such a manner that they and the staff with them are less likely to become injured or cause injury or property damage. The employees demeanor, language, appearance may be enhanced ICCMA 2005, p. 76) through the evaluation process. This can be accomplished via meetings and the supervisor pointing out good and poor performance issues. When employees know what's expected (Gitlow & Gitlow, 1987, p. 120) they will adjust their behavior for the next evaluation for a more positive result. By observing and noting employee skills IFSTA 2004, p. 195) that employee may be used in other areas of the agency to improve efficiency, possibly training, or public education. If there is a deficiency noted in an employee (Staley, 1998, p. 135) the supervisor should solicit input from that employee on making appropriate changes to get buy in on the process which should cause the employee to feel like a part of the process and maintain a good attitude.

Meeting with employees on issues or after an incident helps them to improve individually and as a group (Coleman, 1978, p. 499) and building employee teamwork. Employees shouldn't be dealt with in a favoritism manner or (Compton, 2000, p. 15) unethically.

Research question 3: How would an employee evaluation process benefit the employer? My research found information about this question and supported my outcome. I also conducted

two surveys that contributed to answering this question. The first survey (Appendix F) solicited information from staff of the VFD while the second survey (Appendix G) solicited information from 43 Wisconsin fire departments.

According to the survey (Appendix H) the employer would benefit for some of the following reasons; protection from litigation, greater respect for profession, better firefighting better organization, what staff can offer for ideas, know more about what staff is doing, who is and who is not performing, identify weaknesses in staff, possibly help in wage discussions, just to name a few.

According to the survey (Appendix G) the employer would benefit for some of the following reasons; improve operations, improve recruitment and retention, is agency mission being met, identify things that need improvement, better employer, better supervisor, adjust training, influence agency goal improve communications, better understanding between employee and employer, improve work ethic, sense of accomplishment, just to name a few.

If the employer is to get the work done that is required (Graner, 2006, p. 149) the employee must be monitored and appraised. This will also help the quality of work to be higher while minimizing carelessness and breaking or damaging equipment. Making sure the employee operates in a safe manner to avoid performance resulting in property damage and injury to staff due to this behavior. If an employee must be disciplined or terminated based on their behavior, there must be a record of that. The performance evaluation will facilitate that process.

The organization has expectation and if the employee (Sargent, 2006, p. 165) fails, it can be assumed that the agency will fail so the evaluation process is the vehicle that helps the employer to succeed through its employees. Time well spent with employees toward progress will benefit the employer. The evaluating system must be comprehensive and fair (Edwards,

2005, p. 145) as it will be used to promote staff which will be leading from within the employer in the future. The evaluation process helps the employer to be able to compare performance across the agency which in turn will help the employer to improve performance throughout the agency to meet expectations of the employer. This process assists the employer to link the performance of the employee with the goals of the organization to help reach organizational goals.

The primary task of the emergency service is to prevent harm (Coleman, 2003, p. 205), building a safe environment, educating people to avoid dangerous behavior or conditions, and responding to emergencies and ensuring the competence of the overall systems performance. That the organization will only move forward by establishing anchors that define expectations, provide clarity and do this through its people. The evaluation process is also based on (ICCMA, 2005, p. 76) the agency systematic analysis of individual job, accurate and current job description, focus on job specifics and related behaviors, performance standards or goals in order to avoid legal challenges. Supervisors need to be aware of these in order to prepare the evaluations to avoid this problem. Additionally, the employer will want to make sure that the evaluation system isn't a disappointment due to poor research into its construction. It is up to the employer to develop employees for future promotion and responsibilities. This is the future specialist, supervisors, managers, etc... a combination of employee career development and management development.

This evaluation process is a mechanism for identifying training needs, new programs, effective use of personnel, develop a better succession system, (IFSTA, 2004, p. 195) motivate employees to improvement, help improve efficiency of employees and organization.

This is also an opportunity for promotion positive change within the organization by creating an atmosphere where the employee can feel comfortable and accepted.

In order for the agency to get the employees to perform properly at the big incidents, the employer must (Coleman, 1978, p. 499) be able to talk with employee(s) about their performance at the smaller day-to-day incidents. This can be done in a group to promote teamwork amongst the staff. In order for the agency to move forward, it is up to the supervisors to make sure their staff is moving forward in order to meet the agency mission.

The agency provides services to the community (NFPA 1201, 2004) and this service can only be provided by proper training. Training then should be a part of the evaluation process so that the agency can insure proper service. Training is associated with minimum job performance (NFPA 1001, 2008) which helps the employee to meet the job description.

Training will help the employee to maintain a state of readiness. In order for the employee to meet these performance standards, they must be physically fit (NFPA 1001, 2008) to establish and maintain skill performance, insure life safety and property conservation. The employee will provide protection a life and property in the field (NFPA 1582, 2003). The agency shall also establish a medical evaluation that correlates with the job tasks. The employer will want to base its job task on a standard for evaluation (NFPA 1021, 2003) in order to define measurable or observable outcomes and evaluation areas for specific tasks.

An agency should have policy regarding performance evaluations (GRIPE, 2008) for staff no matter if the department has full-time, part-time or volunteer staff so that the moral of the staff is enhanced. The employer should prepare a form to facilitate (McNamara, 2008) performance evaluations to collect the data. Not conducting a performance evaluation may

reduce morale, decrease credibility of management, decrease organizations overall effectiveness and waste more of managements time to do what isn't being done properly.

Research question 4: How would an employee evaluation process benefit the community? My research found information about this question and supported mu outcome. I conducted two surveys that contributed to answering this question. The first survey (Appendix F) solicited information from staff of the VFD while the second survey (Appendix G) solicited information from 43 Wisconsin fire departments.

Based on the results of survey (Appendix F) the community would benefit from an evaluation process for the following reasons; better trained, more confident personnel bring more value to the community, better firefighter, better organization, Improve to perform on calls better, protection from litigation, greater respect for profession.

Based on the results of survey (Appendix G) the community would benefit from an evaluation process for the following reasons; more professional department, better employee attitude equates to better customer service, better community service, improve delivery services, less public disciplinary proceedings, less internal conflict, greater community pride, better community relations, just to name a few.

The community expects its fire department to operate by certain guidelines (Graner, 2006, p. 149) and the performance evaluation will reflect that. If an employee isn't performing based on those standards the community isn't benefiting. Employee's not operating safely or damaging equipment and property, costs the community money. The performance evaluation process will help employees to avoid this negative performance. If service delivery and safety are important, (Edwards, 2005, p. 145) performance should be monitored and maintained for the

individual and unit performance. An employee performance evaluation allows the employee and agency to grow and improve, improving service delivery and safety.

Service delivery is a primary task of fire department leaders, (Coleman, 2003, p. 205) how the personnel respond to emergencies and competence insurance will be the result of a performance evaluation.

The standard by which the fire service delivers emergency service to the public (NFPA 1201, 2004) is based on what the public expects and training will help the employee to provide that service. Training will help dictate this service therefore training and service delivery can be a part of the performance evaluation. The public expects effective and efficient service that reduces risk to life and property. Establishing hiring standards (NFPA 1001, 2008) helps the employer to make the best employee selection by having a fair standard that include fitness, requisite knowledge and skills, and establishing minimum job performance requirements. These standards help the community to establish legal and defendable standards and less likely that the community will have to pay out legal fees because of an unfair hiring process.

If the agency establishes a medical program that is based on job performance issues the employee is being evaluated by a medical doctor regularly and hopefully helping the employee to stay fit. The employer and community avoid payout of workers compensation and other medical and/or death claims. If the employee is going to be expected to perform, they must be trained (NFPA 1500, 2007) to a level of proficiency to develop skill knowledge regarding duties assigned with recurring training. If this was not done, the employee may be doing something other than is appropriate under the circumstances and not fulfilling the protection of life safety and property preservation. There wouldn't be an annual testing of skills meeting job

performance requirements based on task and defined measurable or observable outcomes and evaluation areas (NFPA 1021, 2003) and maximize performance deliver to the public.

The results of this research project are a policy and evaluation form (Appendix I) that I have developed for the VFD.

### Discussion

Through this research I found that evaluation components are critical for a fair evaluation (Buckman, III, 2006, 132) and that fire fighter performance includes key factors such as level of productivity, timeliness of work, its quality, whether the work is performed in a safe manner and according to agency policy. Much of this may come from agency policy or union contract.

Performance is based on the firefighter processing the skills and competency to perform the skills and a consideration must be given as to whether the firefighter was provided appropriate training and education (Buckman, III, 2006, 133) for the position with realistic standards and expectations set. Firefighter must be supplied with proper resources and educated on how to use and locate them and provided with the opportunity to perform without being over managed. I believe that under managed is critical and must be avoided.

All employees must receive education (Sargent, 2006, p. 165) in order to understand how the evaluations system works and acquire a clear understanding of expectations of the organization and supervisors. This education should begin with the hiring process and focused on during probation. VFD supervisors must help the firefighter to understand what's expected with feedback regarding whether performance meets, or doesn't meet organization expectations.

The firefighter should be provided regular feedback (Buckman, III, 2006, 133) so they know when they are performing as expected and where (Sargent, 2006, p. 166) improvement is needed and assist the firefighter in maintaining a proper attitude. Attitude may be the basis for

poor performance and the negative attitude being displayed. I believe that monitoring the attitude is vitally important and included this in the evaluation (Appendix H) as attitude may be affecting performance.

A firefighter evaluation (Graner, 2006, p. 149) may focus on some primary performance standards such as firefighter providing the work expected yet meeting quality expectations of the department and community. A supervisor should also note if the firefighter is careless and costs the department money due to breaking or damaging equipment rather than adhering to work place safety rules or proper use of the equipment.

An evaluation should include the supervisors evaluation based on their monitoring the employee and less on the employee's self-appraisal. I don't see the self-appraisal as objective as the firefighter may over-rate themselves or may be reluctant to include positive things they has done. This along with employees appraising each other were not included in the evaluation process I developed (Appendix H). I believe that encouraging the supervisor to regularly interact with the firefighter will create a more positive environment where the supervisor will note the true performance of that firefighter. The supervisor could ask the firefighter to rate themselves according to the evaluation standards during the evaluation meeting. This allows a two way feedback.

A firefighter can be terminated (Graner, 2006, p. 150) for not meeting acceptable standards especially if the employee is on probation then the facts must be documented by a supervisor and presented to a department head for this process to be successful. This documentation must include what the supervisor has done to make corrections, referred to as progressive discipline. The VFD will have to develop a consistent method by which the supervisor maintains documentation during the evaluation period and where the documentation

should be stored. VFD will also have to prepare a progressive discipline policy. Repeated failures to perform must be recorded and include what actions the supervisor took. All employees need to be treated with respect so they will perform their duties as expected. The department must establish (Graner, 2006, p. 151) fair and equitable policy and standards of performance for all employees and ensure that all employees are performing as required.

A primary goal of monitoring employee performance and evaluating it (Edwards, 2005, p. 145) is to improve quality of work and the individual employee involved in that work while insuring fire service safety and service delivery (Edwards, 2005, p. 146). The evaluating system must be comprehensive and fair as it will impact decisions about employees relative to promotion, commendations, and termination. An employee performance rating can impact moral as well as productivity so educating employees about the process and what it is intended to be used for promotes a higher likelihood that the employees look favorably on it and the more it's used for development opportunities. This education will need to be a priority for VFD.

After a firefighter has been hired [International city management association (ICMA, 1988) p. 272] they must be continually evaluated and provided feedback about their performance as this can be the basis for promotion, discipline, transfers, training, employee development. This can be performed via the narrative or essay style that includes written information from the supervisor that can help to capture weaknesses, strengths, and potential for development. These points have been included in the VFD evaluation I prepared (Appendix H).

An evaluation should be based on organizational anchors (Coleman, 2003, p. 213) that define expectations much of which the VFD has already established through training, policies, standard operating procedures, strategic planning. These anchors require regular attention by the supervisor to help the employees operate with proper focus, direction, and expectation.

It's well known that employees want to know how well they are doing (ICCMA, 2005, p. 76) at work and this policy for the VFD should help that employee to know what's expected. The evaluation process should be continuous and on-going as it helps to establish benchmarks (ICCMA, 2005, p. 77) in order to determine if the firefighter is making positive changes in their performance.

Organizational anchors are valuable components of the evaluation process (Compton, 1999, p. 3) that enhance the performance and positive outcomes that affect the overall outcome of the agency by keeping all personnel connected and have the latitude to perform yet be accountable. Our employees (Compton, 2000, p. 15) are our internal customers who need to be held to an ethical level in that it isn't permissible to abuse agency equipment or benefits. The employee should be committed to performing and improving (Compton, 2000, p. 16) in the roles and job that they are assigned.

Some advantage of personnel evaluation (IFSTA 2004, p. 195) program are; formal procedures for appraising employee abilities and accomplishments at all levels within the organization. VFD's new evaluation and policy will provide a method to note employee strength and weaknesses, become a part of the permanent record, used for awards, promotions, discipline, and termination, identify the need for additional training, allow management to become more familiar with personnel, allows for effective use of personnel, develop a better succession system, help to motivate personnel toward improvement, upper management becomes more aware of lower-level managers and supervisor abilities, identify specific skills of an employee resulting in that employee being used in other areas of the organization, help improve efficiency of employees and organization.

VFD supervisors need to rate timely and relative (IFSTA 2004, p. 195) to the event of satisfactory or unsatisfactory performance. The supervisor should be encouraged to provide the employee with a copy of the evaluation yet recognize that this record is not public so confidentiality must be maintained.

The evaluation process begins with the firefighter meeting (IFSTA 2004, p. 196) with a supervisor of the VFD so that organizational expectations for job performance may be communicated and established. Performance standards are outlines and agreed upon by both the employee and the supervisor. Change can be accomplished by focusing on the positive accomplishments of the employee and involve that employee in setting goals and objectives, and creating an atmosphere where the employee can feel comfortable and accepted.

The supervisor needs to inform the probationary firefighter (IFSTA 2004, p. 196) of the evaluation period and cover related policy. The supervisor must monitor the new employee regularly to provide feedback.

After the probationary period has concluded it is important for the VFD supervisor to continue to provide an annual job-performance (IFSTA 2004, p. 196) evaluation to review quality of work and establish performance goals and objectives.

The following standards should be considered as a part of the hiring process and/or employee evaluation process. The standard (NFPA 1001, 2008, p. 1001-6) for Fire Fighter Qualifications, (NFPA 1001, 2008 p. 1001-7) for Fire Fighter Qualifications including Fitness Requirements, standard (NFPA 1001, 2008 p. 1001-8) for Fire Fighter Qualifications Fire Ground Operations relative to activities necessary to insure life safety, fire control and property conservation relative to the skills the fire fighter need to use fire related equipment and take care of it, standard (NFPA 1001, 2008 p. 1001-11) for Fire Fighter Qualifications Fire Fighter II

requisite knowledge and skills, standard (NFPA 1001, 2008 p. 1001-15) for Fire Fighter Qualifications Concepts of Job Performance Requirements. The evaluation process for job performance may be used by the supervisor and firefighter to rate job performance on the job as well as after the task has been completed based on job performance requirements. These professional qualifications can be used for firefighter develop their career path. Agency policies may be based on these standards.

Standards (NFPA 1582, 2003 p. 1582-4) list the standard to reduce the risk of occupational morbidity and mortality and safety for the firefighter. Standards (NFPA 1582, 2003 p. 1582-6) list that fire department shall establish a medical program that includes medical evaluations. Standards (NFPA 1582, 2003 p. 1582-7) lists that the medical program shall correlate with the job tasks. (Standards (NFPA 1582, 2003 p. 1582-13) determine that the fire department employee is subject to a baseline medical evaluation after hiring and prior to performing fire fighting emergency functions and at least annually thereafter.

Standard (NFPA 1500, 2007 p. 1500-12) establishes training and education programs for new members (NFPA 1500, 2007 p. 1500-13) establishes recurring training proficiency cycle, and standard (NFPA 1500, 2007 p. 1500-13) requires a system to monitor and measure training progress with standard (NFPA 1500, 2007 p. 1500-13 requiring an annual skills check to verify minimum professional qualifications of its members.

Another example of evaluation content and procedure (Appendix A) included both a graph style scoring with a checklist and a number rating along with areas for narrative. It includes goals, an area for strengths and areas for improvement and firefighter comment/response area. The evaluation has some instructions and seems to be easy to use with some flexibility. This example influenced my evaluation process in that it included a five level

scoring method graph style to capture a lot of evaluation area. The narrative areas should be able to capture addition required data for the evaluation.

The examples from the Sussex Fire Department (Appendix C) and quite simple to use and broke out additional information for a supervisor (Appendix D) evaluation. This process only included the graph style in that there are boxes to check with a five level scoring method. There was no definitions to further explain the areas and requirements other than the scoring method was defined. The scoring uses terms such as top for the best and bottom for the evaluation that would be on the bottom end of the scoring. The terms could present problems in that the firefighter who earns a "top" score could take this out of context where a firefighter that ranked "lower" or "bottom" could take this a quite demeaning. I believed that this style is over simplified and may not be taken seriously by the firefighter or the supervisor. These examples influenced me to design something with more detail and substance.

VFD Supervisor will play a key role in the effectiveness of firefighter (Buckman, III, 2006, 133) performance through developing skills and monitoring attitude to help the firefighter to build necessary skills and perform their job at the required level. The supervisor must be attentive to the fire fighter's performance level and determine why the performance is below, at, or above expected standard. Performance should be documented to provide the department a more formal setting to provide feedback relative to positive and negative performance while maintaining a record for future use. Evaluations should be objective (Buckman, III, 2006, 133) with measurable standards as they tend to be more accurate and acceptable to all involved. A subjective evaluation relies more on the opinion of the rater which I believe should be avoided.

With VFD supervisors communicating and providing regular feedback, the firefighter shouldn't be surprised (Sargent, 2006, p. 167) by the content of their evaluation. Supervisors

must be patient and maintain open lines of communication with the firefighter. Most firefighters are committed and conduct themselves as expected so the evaluation should serve to reinforce positive performance, set goals (Sargent, 2006, p. 168) and help the employee work toward career goals and aspirations. VFD supervisors will be encouraged to say "thanks" occasionally to their staff for their commitment to the agency and meeting organizational needs. A simple thank you goes a long way to show appreciation and provide some basic motivation. Often time this is all that a person needs.

VFD supervisors needs to know agency policy (Sargent, 2006, p. 169) so as to know when to discipline or punish. The supervisor that spends time wisely with staff to help them progress will benefit the organization and all involved. A supervisor needs to spend some time with the employee who only wishes to meet the basic requirements, yet must also deal with the difficult employee who is consistently below expectation. The supervisor must maintain records of these employee's performance to include what rule or policy was violated, (Sargent, 2006, p. 170) what should have been done, what will help if this happens again, what is expected in the future, how will this be done by preparing a plan, and getting the employee to sign it.

An evaluation will include (Sargent, 2006, p. 175) all supervisor's notes that must be maintained for the final evaluation and/or discipline or punishment. All levels of the chain of command must be kept informed as they all must be able to monitor performance as it relates to future or past discipline or punishment.

An evaluation should be based on the individual strengths and weaknesses. If negligence is involved, these errors cannot be repeated and are not acceptable (Sargent, 2006, p. 178) even during an emergency operation and need to be dealt with by the supervisor swiftly. Additionally,

the evaluation process for the VFD will be used to evaluate probationary staff, paid-on-call, and full-time in order to assess whether what is expected is happening.

Performance management is the process of observing an employee's performance in relation to job requirements (Edwards, 2005, p. 148) over a predefined time frame, setting goals, documenting performance during this period and then providing feedback in the form of an evaluation. VFD evaluations will be annual except that probationary staff will be evaluated each six month until off probation. The supervisor's observations of the employee performance need to include work of the employee, compliments, have they changed behavior for the positive, have there been complaints? Performance must be monitored and noted on a regular basis for an accurate evaluation. This should include (Edwards, 2005, p. 149) all job related actual and observable job performance. Due to the infrequency of the tasks, scenarios may be used to evaluate the employee rather than wait for an opportunity.

There are a number of performance evaluation techniques. I selected the graphic rating scale as it's simple with some boxes (Edwards, 2005, p. 149) showing varying levels of performance. I submitted a numbering system for a word system (Appendix I) to rate with. I was also influenced by the policy I received from the Monroe Fire Department (Appendix F). The evaluator only needs to check the appropriate box. This method is easy and with our policy I believe I have defined these areas sufficiently to include agency and fire service related criteria. The critical incident method includes narrative that will allow VFD supervisor to capture more detail and not just the highly favorable and highly unfavorable behavior. I didn't choose the "ranking appraisal system" as I don't want the supervisor to put all employees (Edwards, 2005, p. 150) in a rank order as it relates to overall performance. I don't want employees ranked against each other as I see this as unfair due to different assignments, shifts, learning ability,

etc... The evaluation I developed could include the BARS if the VFD develops such a policy requirement. I believe an evaluation process should be open to this measurable standard if it's a job behavior, avoiding traits or characteristics and reducing subjectivity while depending upon observation of important job functions. This system allows for different supervisors within the organization to provide input to the evaluation process providing an opportunity for the supervisor and employee to communicate regarding good performance or the need to enhance performance and possibly develop a plan for improvement.

The evaluation I developed (Appendix H) includes MBO as this allows for the employee and supervisor to agree on a plan and then review the plan (Edwards, 2005, p. 151) later to determine the success. This will require more communication between the two and more input by the employee regarding their performance and motivation to improve. The employee who is involved in planning also tends to demonstrate high levels of commitment and performance as clearly identified objectives encourage employees to strive toward desired results. We need to train our staff to not focus too much on the quantitative objectives and neglect other important areas and keep it from becoming a numbers driven evaluation.

TQM includes subjective (Edwards, 2005, p. 151) as well as objective methods of employee evaluation. I believe that some level of subjectivity is necessary, i.e. have there been public compliments or complaints, does the firefighter possess a positive attitude, do they show initiative or do they need to be ordered to do things, and do they possess good communication skills and all play an important part in the performance evaluation process.

The evaluation process the fire department chooses depends upon what is taking place within the (Edwards, 2005, p. 152) department and the goals. An employee evaluation process that combines various points from the mentioned systems may be the best and that is why I

developed a policy and evaluation form that includes the graph scoring style while allowing the rater to also use narrative or simply pencil in notes in the selected area. Since this will be used for full-time, part-time and probationary staff, it needs to have some flexibility.

VFD supervisors will receive training to remove personal bias from the evaluation process as it relates to the firefighter's race, religion, gender, disability, or age. This is considered discrimination and is illegal under federal law and should not be tolerated.

Overall, employee performance evaluation is important to the fire service as it allows supervisors to link firefighter activity and performance to the goals of the organization in a meaningful manner. This allows the employee and agency to grow and improve while linking employee performance to the organizational goals, helping administration make decisions and provide feedback to the staff.

An evaluation process needs (Edwards, 2005, p. 155) to include an expectation-setting meeting where the supervisor meets with the firefighter to set expectations for the next evaluation period. If the supervisor has done his/her job, there will be no surprises on the part for the firefighter. If the firefighter doesn't agree with the final rating they should be afforded an appeal process to take the issue to a higher authority within the agency. The VFD will need to address this issue through a policy or contract.

People vary in their ability to be successful (Brown, 1987, p. 33) and people who succeed at something do so because they have been able to develop a successful habit about conducting a task where others have failed. Good work habits come from good performance which is from good mental discipline. VFD supervisors need to monitor their staff and provide regular rewarding of positive activity that results in the activity being done properly on a regular basis, i.e. habits. This promotes good physical performance which is in direct relation to mental

discipline. Employee's need to see the value of positive performance (Brown, 1987, p. 44) in their eyes. They don't perform completely for money, but for self-esteem.

An evaluation process (ICCMA, 2005, p. 78) starts the day the firefighter is hired with the first three to six months being critical to the success of the firefighter as the supervisor must explain things to insure they understand as they may be reluctant to ask questions as they may feel they will look bad. VFD supervisor need to recognize this critical period of time with active monitoring and regular feedback. The supervisor should also assist the firefighter in (ICCMA, 2005, p. 79) goal setting to help the firefighter succeed.

Supervisors should meet with the firefighter for formal evaluations interviews at least once during the performance (ICCMA, 2005, p. 80) evaluation period to measure progress and receive needed feedback, and discuss problems while current yet also discuss positive issues. VFD supervisor will be encouraged to meet with staff periodically.

A performance evaluation interview should be planned (ICCMA, 2005, p. 82) to avoid distractions, in a neutral location, stick to work related topics and issues, and focused on the employee's development.

Performance appraisal also must avoid legal (ICCMA, 2005, p. 83) challenges by; being a systematic analysis of the individual job, accurate, current job description, focus on job specifics and related behaviors, that performance standards or goals are communicated to the employee, supervisors are trained in the evaluation process, and documentation on the appraisal process is maintained. An evaluation process should meet (IFSTA 2004, p. 197) local, state and federal legal mandates by relating to the work behavior or skills that the firefighter is assigned to perform. The evaluation must include definite identifiable criteria based on the quality or

quantity of work or on specific performance that are supported by a documented record.

Evaluations must be objective and supported by documentation.

The supervisor must be aware of pitfalls (ICCMA, 2005, p. 83) related to ranking and avoid them. Avoid the tendency to rank the person on all issues down the middle of the score method or the "central tendency effect." Or, basing performance on the most recent activity rather called the "recency factor". Or, allowing one area of performance to affect rank of another area the "halo effect". Avoid supervisor personal biases, supervisor rating too harshly or, to lenient across the whole evaluation.

All systems have positive points and negative points however provide input relative to career counseling, organization development and motivation. An effective performance appraisal system (ICMA, 1988 p. 274) includes; 1) System is based on a job analysis, 2) The purpose of the system is clearly defined, 3) The system is based on a job related behavior that is clearly defined performance standard, 4) Appraisals are conducted on an ongoing basis, 5) Appraisers receive extensive training in the use of appraisals techniques and in counseling employees, 6) Provision is made for appraisal discussion and positive feedback. Performance strengths and weaknesses are clearly spelled out along with clear plan of action of what is needed to correct faults and improve performance, 7) there is a clear link between good performance and a reward system. Whichever method o appraisal is selected, it must (ICMA, 1988 p. 274) be fair to the firefighter while avoiding grievances. A personnel development program (ICMA, 1988 p. 275) integrates recruitment, selection, training and education, career planning, career counseling, performance appraisal, and other human recourse considerations into a single system. This means that management is also responsible for personnel development in order to help develop employees for future promotion and responsibilities

An evaluation (IFSTA, 2004, p. 113) determines how effective and efficient an item, program or process is compared to a benchmark or established set of criteria. An evaluation is defined as the appraisal of person, projects, or organization in relation to stated criteria or standards, the interpretation of the criteria or standards is subject to personal bias. In this case the performance will be of VFD personnel against the rating selected (Appendix H).

There are two types of evaluation (IFSTA, 2004, p. 114) processes; formative and summative. The VFD evaluation will include formative evaluation processes as it will be an ongoing process, allow for alteration during operation, primarily forward looking, will identify strengths and weaknesses with intention to improve, develop habits, shapes direction of professional development, rely on feedback, and reflect on effectiveness or past similar events. It will also include some summative evaluations as it will document achievements, rely on evidence, and reflect information developed through formative evaluations.

Managers, supervisor and Chief Officers must periodically evaluate (IFSTA 2004, p. 195) personnel under their charge. Evaluations may take place as a part of the hiring process, during probationary periods, annually as part of an ongoing performance review, for promotional purposes, or for disciplinary or termination purposes. An evaluation schedule shouldn't prevent the supervisor from providing regular and ongoing feedback to the employee.

The supervisor should be using a 360-degree feedback (IFSTA 2004, p. 196) evolution process where the supervisor gathers pertinent information on the firefighter throughout the evaluation period and use it as input for the formal evaluation. This could include input from other supervisors, citizen complaints and compliments. The observations should be based on observed performance yet remain confidential to protect the people providing the information and confidentiality must ensure that they will speak freely and not hesitate to provide

constructive criticism. Coaching, mentoring, continuing education, and specialized skills training are just a few ways to help the firefighter improve so as to meet performance expectations. The supervisor should be trained in order to provide a proper evaluation with proper interpretations.

Job performance evaluations have benefits (IFSTA 2004, p. 197) that are both tangible and intangible. The intangible benefits are those not related to the job performance criteria, i.e. why they joined the department. Tangible benefits are related to the terms of employment which may be mandated by the government, a part of labor and management agreements, or agreed to during the hiring process such as wages and benefits.

An evaluation process can begin (Staley, 1998, p. 135) by rating yourself by filling out the performance evaluation form of you based on its criteria's. I didn't add this to the policy I wrote as I don't recommend this be a part of the VFD policy and evaluation process. This doesn't mean that it couldn't be used in a particular case.

Constructive criticism should also be used carefully starting with praise regarding certain performance or of a recent positive issue before providing constructive (Staley, 1998, p. 145) criticism as the person will most likely become defensive. The praise helps to balance the constructive criticism so it isn't taken as a complete negative. The constructive criticism should also be focused on the issue and not used to broadly. A plan toward correction should then be discussed.

Informal evaluations (Coleman, 1978, p. 499) may be used to evaluate employee performance in a casual manner at smaller incident responses. This is a time where the supervisor discusses a particular issue or incident with a small group of firefighters. This could be a response to an incident where the supervisor wishes to talk with their staff regarding

elements of their response. This same type of incident evaluation could be done with a single firefighter and provides the supervisor an opportunity to help the firefighter to learn from the incident as well as the supervisor providing feedback to the firefighter so they understand how they performed with improvement intended for future such responses. This is an excellent method in dealing with firefighters on probation as the supervisor can meet with them as a group first a provide praise in public, yet meet individually after the meeting to address any specific deficiencies. This helps motivate the firefighter to perform properly, or better, in the future and help to open lines of communications so that all are more informed as well as building confidence in the firefighter.

Formal evaluations are used (Coleman, 1978, p. 502) to evaluate large incident operations and helpful about a week after the incident so that official reporting is done and the leader of the incident evaluation has time to review all aspects for the incident in order to be better prepared. This process could set the stage for an information evaluation process mentioned above.

It's important to keep the agency moving (Compton, 2000, p. 16) forward with the supervisor looking toward tomorrow and help their staff to move that direction. The supervisor shouldn't base decisions on favoritism (Compton, 2000, p. 17) of a particular employee reduces effectiveness, compromises the mission, and makes working with each other difficult.

The supervisor should set the example (Compton, 2002, p. 22) and make sure that expectations are passed on, and encourage the firefighter to get involved in agency activities. Good behavior and performance needs to be rewarded (Compton, 2002, p. 23) in some manner at every opportunity and shouldn't be taken for granted. At the same time, unsatisfactory behavior should not be rewarded. A supervisor should help firefighters to succeed and stay competent at

all levels and helps staff to be trained properly for professional growth. A supervisor should always promote safety, physical, and psychological and emotional wellness. A supervisor should support those firefighters that perform the mission each day. Staff also needs to know that there will be consequences (Compton, 2002, p. 27) for unsatisfactory behavior or performance and must be made clear. When necessary this needs to be documented based on agency requirements and consistent for possible disciplinary actions. The officers ability to balance (Compton, 2002, p. 28) discipline issues is important as it does affect the performance of the group and the quality of service.

According to Graham's Rules for the Improvement of Performance Evaluations (GRIPE), retrieved 03/30/2008, from the World Wide Web:

[http://www.gordongraham.com/pdfs/GRIPE\\_Fire.pdf](http://www.gordongraham.com/pdfs/GRIPE_Fire.pdf) a fire department should have policy regarding performance evaluations for all staff, i.e. full-time, part-time, or volunteer employees. That performance evaluations are critical and that they will enhance moral when staff meet performance expectations, and that a fair warning should be provided to staff whose performance is unsatisfactory and where improvement is needed for them to meet the standards. That the evaluation should be agency specific as one process doesn't fit all agencies. Learning that the evaluation process should be agency specific was important in developing the process (Appendix I) for the VFD.

The VFD policy (McNamara, 2008) retrieved March 30, 2008, from the world wide web:  
[http://www.managementhelp.org/emp\\_perf/perf\\_rvw/basics.htm](http://www.managementhelp.org/emp_perf/perf_rvw/basics.htm) will be annual as indicated in this reference. Avoiding performance evaluations can decrease morale, decrease credibility of management, decrease the organizations overall effectiveness and wastes more of management's time to do what isn't being done properly.

I also prepared an evaluation form that includes information this author recommends including the following items; employee name, date the performance form was completed, time interval of the evaluation, a rating system, space for commentary rating area, a final section for overall commentary, a final section for action plans to address improvements, and lines for signatures of the supervisor and employee. This evaluation also includes responsibilities from the job description, any assigned goals from the previous plan.

Another performance evaluation form (Gresham F.D., 2008) Retrieved from the world wide web March 1, 2008, <http://www.orcities.org/Portals/17/A-Z/GreshamFirefighterEval.pdf> for a firefighter (Appendix A) that lists information specific to the person being evaluated and was used as a reference in developing the evaluation process for the VFD based on its scoring method scale. In as much as I used this as an example I didn't include the box not observed as I believed that if it's not observed, it shouldn't be included.

I reviewed a recent study on retaining and recruiting volunteer firefighters (USFA, 2007 p. 66) that list an evaluation or performance appraisal as essential for improving volunteer performance which in turn improves the performance of the organization. Firefighters may look at the evaluation as a negative but if the evaluation is done properly, it should not be looked at in a negative light. Evaluation related meetings can be coaching session to improve the firefighter and the organization as part of the focus can be about how that firefighter can help contribute to and improve the organization. The coaching meetings can help to bridge communication issue and create a better working relationship, not to mention helping the firefighter to work on areas that they may be weak at.

A department officer can complete evaluation (USFA, 2007, p. 67) form for the firefighter they supervise once or twice a year on such items as; task performance,

communication skills, quality of effort, attitude, and knowledge of job requirements. Some departments also have those being supervised evaluate their supervisor with the objective of both to improve the organization.

An example provided indicated that a fire department Chief (USFA, 2007, p. 67) provides an annual evaluation to his/her staff where the goal is to discuss performance and share feedback rather than rate. They discuss and set personal and professional goals with evaluation on those items at the end of the year. This helps retention and helps staff to be satisfied and that motivation and goals are met. It allows staff to pass on complaint with the Chief and keeping the issues manageable rather than allowing to fester.

With the return of a survey sent to targeted agencies around the state, I did receive three examples of current fire department evaluation forms. The first one [Plover Fire/EMS (PFED), 2008] provided content of an evaluation (Appendix B) used for probationary employees. The second evaluation example I received [Sussex Fire Department (SFD), 2008] provides a one page employee evaluation (Appendix C), and a one page supervisor evaluation (Appendix D) with a five level grading scale. The third evaluation example I received [Monroe Fire Department (MFD), 2008] is a two page evaluation form (Appendix E) that uses a five level grading scale for nine categories. The MFD policy seemed to include the date that I was looking for yet provided some flexibility in use for full-time or part-time staff. Of the examples that I received this particular example influence my final product the most. This example can be designed to be used electronically and easily expanded, especially for the probationary firefighter where more details is necessary. The tenth category is an overall performance based on the previous nine. This form includes an action plan for goal setting and accomplishment. These

three examples assisted me greatly in developing my final product (Appendix H) of a policy and evaluation form for use with the Verona Fire Department.

### Recommendation

It is this researcher's recommendation that the Verona Fire Department adopt the policy and evaluation form that I have constructed (Appendix H) and administer the process as soon as possible. The Verona Fire District Commission has already undertaken a review of this material with the intent of approving it with subsequent adoption by the Fire Chief. The VFD doesn't have any method of providing performance evaluations to staff. With a growing agency it's important to establish perimeters now as there have already been problems due to the lack of an employee performance evaluation process.

The evaluation and policy I prepared will be used to rate all (GRIPE, 2008) firefighters and civilian staff beginning with probation (ICCMA, 2005, p. 78). The firefighter should be rated fairly (Buckman, III, 2006, p. 132) regarding work criteria, skills, competency, training (Buckman, III, 2006, p. 133) and supplied with proper resources toward this without being over managed. The firefighter should also receive regular feedback on their progress.

The VFD evaluation will include whether the firefighter is providing the quality of work (Graner, 2006 p. 149) that the agency and community expect and not abusing or breaking things and unnecessarily costing the agency or community money toward repairs. Unacceptable performance or behavior (Graner, 2006, p. 150) can cause the firefighter to be terminated. This evaluation process will also have an effect (Edwards, 2005, p. 146) on the firefighters future with VFD through a promotion, commendations, work assignments, just to name a few.

The VFD policy helps to provide organizational anchors (Coleman, 2003, p. 213) by defining expectations and providing clarity and this helps keep the agency moving forward, i.e. mission, organizational values, culture, training, policies, strategic planning.

This evaluation process provides the firefighter with information regarding (ICCMA, 2005, p. 76) how they are doing through benchmarks described in the policy (ICMA, 2005, p. 77) in order to determine if the firefighter is progressing or not. This also assists the agency in dealing with the firefighter with respect as an internal (Compton, 2000, p. 15) customer.

This evaluation process will also note firefighter strengths (IFSTA 2004, p. 195) and weaknesses and use the strengths to enhance the agency while noting weaknesses and providing input toward improvement by the firefighter. This rating must be timely regarding the noted performance. After the probationary period (IFSTA 2004, p. 196) the supervisor will continue to provide regular evaluations throughout their career.

The VFD evaluation process is designed to take into consideration applicable NFPA standards that the VFD has adopted.

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## Appendix - A



## **Firefighter Performance Evaluation**

**INTRODUCTION**

Complete the following administrative information regarding the Firefighter being evaluated and the performance evaluation. Note: If the Firefighter has worked for multiple supervisors, each should be listed and have input to the evaluation.

**Firefighter:****EMS Certification:** EMT-B**Company:** E 71**Shift:** A Initial Probationary Period**Salary Range/Step:** Promotional Probationary Period**Anniversary Date:** Annual Performance Evaluation**Date of Last Review:** Change of Reviewer**Period of Review:** through Other (Specify):**Evaluators:****EMS Certification:** EMT-B**EMS Certification:** EMT-B**JOB AND CLASS SPECIFICATION**

It is essential that the individual being evaluated be familiar with the City of Gresham Job and Classification Specification for Firefighter. Have the individual being rated indicate the following:

Yes      No

I have a copy of the Job and Class Specification for Firefighter  I feel that the Job and Class Specification is an accurate statement of my duties and responsibilities.  I feel that the Job and Class Specification for Firefighter has changed since my last evaluation.

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FIREFIGHTER PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

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**GOALS AND OBJECTIVES - CURRENT RATING PERIOD**

Indicate if the objectives for the current rating period were achieved. If they were not, please explain of why they were not (change in assignment, unavailability of resources, etc.).

**Goal:****Objective:**

Accomplished      Comments:

**Objective:**

Accomplished      Comments:

**Goal:****Objective:**

Accomplished      Comments:

**Objective:**

Accomplished      Comments:

**Goal:****Objective:**

Accomplished      Comments:

**Objective:**

Accomplished      Comments:

## FIREFIGHTER PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

**GOALS AND OBJECTIVES - NEXT RATING PERIOD**

Goals should state desired outcomes for the next rating period in broad terms. These goals must be clarified in specific, measurable, and achievable objectives. For each objective, identify both the Firefighter's responsibility and your responsibility as the Company Officer in the actions required to successfully meet the stated requirements. *The Firefighter's goals and objectives should support both organizational goals and individual professional development.*

**Example:**

**Goal:** Become a Lieutenant (Professional Development)

**Objective:** Successfully complete the Metro Fire Officer's Academy (to meet the technical training requirements for Fire Officer I) in the Fall of 2004.

**Responsibility:** Firefighter - Complete an application to attend the Academy and apply for leave or trade time to permit attendance on the required dates.

**Objective:** Successfully complete the following college course during the winter term, 2004: Math 95.

**Responsibility:** Firefighter - Apply to attend the course. Complete the requisite documentation for tuition reimbursement. Complete course assignments as required.

**Objective:** Completes GFES Company Officer Development I by December 31, 2004

**Responsibility:** Firefighter - Initiate participation in the Company Officer Development Program, work together with my Company Officer to establish a timeline for completion. Company Officer - Serve as a mentor and coach. Ensure adequate time is scheduled to support completion of the program.

**Goal:****Objective:****Responsibility:****Objective:****Responsibility:****Goal:****Objective:****Responsibility:****Objective:****Responsibility:****Goal:****Objective:****Responsibility:****Objective:****Responsibility:****Goal:****Objective:****Responsibility:****Objective:****Responsibility:**

## FIREFIGHTER PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Rating Instructions: Rate observed behavior with reference to the scale below. Comment on the most and least form and on continuation reports as required. Check Not Observed if the behavior is not observed during the rating period.

	Not Acceptable	1	2	3	4	5	Acceptable	Superior	Not Observed
<b>Appearance</b>									
1. Appearance	<input type="checkbox"/>								
<b>Behavioral Skills</b>									
2. Acceptance of Feedback	<input type="checkbox"/>								
3. Career Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>								
<b>Relationships</b>									
4. External Customers	<input type="checkbox"/>								
5. Internal Customers	<input type="checkbox"/>								
6. Ethnicity, Race, Gender	<input type="checkbox"/>								
<b>Knowledge</b>									
7. Department Policies and Procedures	<input type="checkbox"/>								
8. EMS Protocols	<input type="checkbox"/>								
9. Technical Knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/>								
<b>Performance</b>									
10. Station Duties and Equipment Readiness	<input type="checkbox"/>								
11. EMS Skills (Within Scope of Practice)	<input type="checkbox"/>								
12. Firefighting Skills	<input type="checkbox"/>								
13. Special Operations Skills (Hazmat, Rescue)	<input type="checkbox"/>								
14. Apparatus Operation	<input type="checkbox"/>								
15. Inspection and Pre-Incident Planning	<input type="checkbox"/>								
16. Field Performance: Non-Stress Conditions	<input type="checkbox"/>								
17. Field Performance: Stress Conditions	<input type="checkbox"/>								
18. Personal Safety/Situational Awareness	<input type="checkbox"/>								
19. Verbal Skills/Communication	<input type="checkbox"/>								
20. Problem Solving/Decision Making	<input type="checkbox"/>								
<b>Documentation</b>									
21. Routine Forms	<input type="checkbox"/>								
22. Writing: Organization/Details	<input type="checkbox"/>								
23. Writing: Grammar/Spelling/Neatness	<input type="checkbox"/>								
24. Appropriate Time Used	<input type="checkbox"/>								
<b>Professional Development</b>									
25. Internal Training	<input type="checkbox"/>								
26. Self-Study Activity	<input type="checkbox"/>								
27. Career Development	<input type="checkbox"/>								
<b>Acting in Capacity</b>									
28. Requisite Knowledge for NFPA Fire Officer I	<input type="checkbox"/>								
29. Command Skills	<input type="checkbox"/>								
30. Performance Management	<input type="checkbox"/>								
31. Project Management	<input type="checkbox"/>								

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FIREFIGHTER PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

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**Strengths and Potential Areas of Improvement**

The strongest areas of performance during this rating period were:

A specific incident (or incidents) which demonstrate performance in this area is/are:

Potential areas of performance improvement identified during this rating period are:

A specific incident (or incidents) which demonstrate performance in this area is/are:

**Documentation of Performance and Comments**

Category # and Comments

**Firefighters Comments****Reviewer's Response**

I acknowledge that my Company Officer has reviewed this performance evaluation with me and that I have had the opportunity to comment on it.

I agree with the content of this evaluation.

I disagree with the content of this evaluation and request to discuss the areas of disagreement with my Company Officer, Station Captain, and Battalion Chief.

Firefighter	Date
Company Officer	Date
Station Captain	Date
Battalion Chief	Date
Deputy Chief	Date
Human Resources	Date

## Appendix B

**VILLAGE OF PLOVER FIRE/EMS DEPARTMENT  
PROBATIONARY EVALUATION FORM**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

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**Name of Employee:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Position:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Supervisor:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Period Covered:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Scoring Criteria:** 1 – Failed to Meet Goal

2 – Partially Met Goal

3 – Met Goal

4 – Exceeded Goal

5 – Substantially Exceeded Goal

---

**Quality of Work – Emergency Management:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Points:** \_\_\_\_\_

Is the employee dependable, thorough, and does the employee exhibit good self-control and follow department standard operating guidelines?

**Quantity of Work – Station Management:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Points:** \_\_\_\_\_

Is the employee thorough at completing station duties and is the assigned work completed in an efficient/organized manner? Does the employee complete extra work?

**Meeting Requirements:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Points:** \_\_\_\_\_

Is the employee performing the required fire apparatus vehicle checks, equipment checks and does the employee follow appropriate protocols/procedures/guidelines as a firefighter, firefighter/EMT, EMT? Does the employee make effective decisions?

**Follows Instructions:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Points:** \_\_\_\_\_

Does the employee willingly follow direction from supervisors and/or department members, or is the employee someone who complains about assignments? Are the assignments completed in a prompt/timely manner?

**Initiative:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Points:** \_\_\_\_\_

Does the employee demonstrate a positive attitude? Is the employee a self-starter, taking on extra work on his/her own? Is the employee ambitious and does he/she display enthusiasm for the job? Does the employee volunteer for extra work without being told?

**Self-Improvement:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Points:** \_\_\_\_\_

Does the employee accept constructive criticism, or is there a negative response? Is the employee involved with outside education/training to improve and is the employee prepared and eager to learn at training sessions?

**Works Well With Others:****Points:**

Does the employee demonstrate effective working relations with the public and does he/she cooperate and work well with fellow employees? Does the employee work to prevent department conflict and does the employee function as a "team player"?

**Punctuality – Attendance:****Points:**

Does the employee respond to an adequate number of incidents? Does the employee report to all meetings, training sessions and other related meetings on time and prepared?

**Appearance:****Points:**

Does the employee report to work in the required uniform/turnout gear?

---

**EMPLOYEE POINT TOTAL:**

---

---

**POINTS:**

---

**Recommended Areas For Improvement:**

---

**Report Completed By:**

---

---

**Date**

---

I have read and discussed the above performance review with my Field Training Officer (FTO).

---

Employee Signature

---

Date

## Appendix - C

VILLAGE OF SUSSEX FIRE DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL EVALUATION Form: Employee (SF1)	EMPLOYEE EVALUATION				Bottom	Lower	Middle	Upper	Top
	TASK PERFORMANCE								
Name:	Applies safety standards and practices								
Rank: _____	Date: _____	Responds to orders and requests							
Applies standard techniques									
Maintains facilities and equipment									
Maintains physical conditioning									
COMMUNICATION SKILLS									
Communicates effectively in work groups									
Presents complaints/criticisms in a constructive manner									
Deals with the public in a professional manner									
Development Ladder									
Listens effectively									
QUALITY OF EFFORT									
Accepts responsibility for actions									
Observes deadlines, time constraints									
Aggressively pursues task assignments									
Performs job in a professional, dedicated manner									
Demonstrates initiative									
ATTITUDE									
Maintains interest in professional development									
Participates constructively in Personnel Development Procedures									
Maintains positive, cooperative attitude									
Maintains a professional appearance									
Participates constructively in Personnel Development Evaluation									
KNOWLEDGE OF JOB REQUIREMENTS									
Understands and applies department Policies and Procedures									
Understands and applies department Rules and Regulations									
Understands and executes the responsibilities of his/his rank									
Understands and executes the responsibilities of his/his assignment									
Rated Employee: _____									
Fire Chief: _____									
Human Resource Director: _____									
<b>YOUR SAFETY IS OUR BUSINESS!</b>									
TOP Outstanding performance deserving of commendation: Your supervisors appreciate your exceptional effort: well done									
UPPER Good performance in this evaluation measure: Thank you for the extra effort									
MIDDLE Your performance in this area is satisfactory; while acceptable, you are encouraged to work with your supervisor to improve your performance									
LOWER This is an area of performance while needs for improvement is indicated; your supervisor will assist you in developing improvement objectives.									
BOTTOM In this evaluation measure, your performance is not acceptable; improvement objectives should be designed for immediate action.									

## Appendix - D

VILLAGE OF SUSSEX FIRE DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL EVALUATION Form: SUPERVISOR (SFD)		EMPLOYEE EVALUATION				
		Bottom	Lower	Middle	Upper	Top
Name:						
Rank:	Date:					
<b>Development Ladder</b>						
<b>TOP</b>						
Outstanding performance deserving of commendation: Your supervisors appreciate your exceptional effort: well done!						
<b>UPPER</b>						
Good performance in this evaluation measure: Thank you for the extra effort						
<b>MIDDLE</b>						
Your performance in this area is satisfactory; while acceptable, you are encouraged to work with your supervisor to improve your performance.						
<b>LOWER</b>						
This is an area of performance while need for improvement is indicated; your supervisor will assist you in developing improvement objectives.						
<b>BOTTOM</b>						
In this evaluation measure, your performance is not acceptable; improvement objectives should be designed for immediate action.						
<b>EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE</b>						
Applies safety standards and practices						
Responds to orders and requests						
Applies standard techniques						
Maintains facilities and equipment						
Maintains Physical conditioning						
Participates effectively in Department training/education						
Provides quality training for subordinates						
<b>COMMUNICATION SKILLS</b>						
Communicates expectations to subordinates						
Presents complaints/criticisms in a constructive manner						
Deals with the public in a professional manner						
Listens effectively						
<b>QUALITY OF EFFORT</b>						
Accepts responsibility for actions						
Aggressively pursues task assignments						
Prepares accurate, timely reports						
Leads by example						
Accepts supervisory responsibility for subordinates						
Demonstrates initiative						
<b>ATTITUDE</b>						
Maintains interest in professional development						
Maintains positive personal and professional attitude						
Maintains professional appearance						
Participates constructively in Personnel Development Procedure						
<b>KNOWLEDGE OF JOB REQUIREMENTS</b>						
Understands and applies Department Policies and Procedures						
Understands and applies Department Rules and Regulations						
Understands and executes the responsibilities of his/his rank						
Understands and executes the responsibilities of his/his assignment						
<b>SUPERVISORY SKILLS</b>						
Plans and schedules time for increased effectiveness						
Seeks to remedy problems on his own level when possible						
Counsels and disciplines effectively						
Implements and enforces department programs in a positive manner						
Organizes personnel and activities for increased effectiveness						
Delegates effectively and appropriately						



**Appendix - E**  
**EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION**

Employee Name:			Employee No.	Date
Department			Job Title	
Date of Hire	Date of Last Review	Date Employee Began Present Position	Date of Next Review	
Check One: <input type="checkbox"/> 6 Month Review <input type="checkbox"/> Annual <input type="checkbox"/> Promotion <input type="checkbox"/> End of Introductory <input type="checkbox"/> Monetary <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Monetary <input type="checkbox"/> Other				

**KEY TO RATINGS**

E: EXCELLENT-Individual performs all tasks in an exceptional manner.	F: FAIR-Individual performs most tasks satisfactorily, but not all.
G: GOOD-Individual performs many tasks well and all other tasks adequately.	U: UNSATISFACTORY-Individual fails to perform many tasks well.
S: SATISFACTORY-Individual performs all tasks satisfactory.	

**1. RESPONSIBILITIES** *List the current job responsibilities*

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

**2. ACCOMPLISMENTS** *List major job related achievements since last evaluation*

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

**3. JOB KNOWLEDGE** *Employee possesses a clear understanding of the responsibilities and tasks he or she must perform.*

OVERALL RATING: (circle one)	E	G	S	F	U	(see key above)	

**4. JOB PERFORMANCE** *(QUALITATIVE) The neatness, thoroughness, accuracy and overall quality of the employee's work.*

OVERALL RATING: (Circle one)	E	G	S	F	U	(See key above)	

**5. JOB PRODUCTIVITY** *(QUANTITATIVE) Employee demonstrates commitment toward achieving results. Tasks are completed efficiently and effectively.*

OVERALL RATING: (circle one)	E	G	S	F	U	(see key above)	
Comments:							

**6. DEPENDABILITY** *Employee can be relied upon to complete assigned tasks, and is conscientious about his/her attendance and timeliness.*

OVERALL RATING: (circle one)	E	G	S	F	U	(see key above)	
Comments:							

**7. COOPERATION** *Employee demonstrates a willingness to work with associates, subordinates, supervisors and others. Responds willingly to changes in procedure, process, and assignments. Has a good work attitude. Is courteous and helpful to public.*

OVERALL RATING: (circle one)	E	G	S	F	U	(see key above)	
Comments:							



## EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

### 8. INITIATIVE

Employee demonstrates an ability to think and act independently. Originates innovative ideas and methods to improve job or complete tasks better...

OVERALL RATING: (circle one)	E	G	S	F	U	(see key on reverse side)
<b>Comments:</b>						

### 9. WORK ENVIRONMENT AND SAFETY

Maintains a safe and pleasant work environment, follows safety regulations, and actively contributes towards a safe workplace.

OVERALL RATING: (circle one)	E	G	S	F	U	(see key on reverse side)
<b>Comments:</b>						

### 10. OVERALL PERFORMANCE

Overall appraisal of the employee's job performance.

OVERALL RATING: (circle one)	E	G	S	F	U	(see key on reverse side)
<b>Comments:</b>						

### ACTION PLAN

The above criteria is important to properly evaluate your performance. The following Action Plan describes your specific strengths and weaknesses, and what can be done to improve your positions toward continued growth.

These weak points can be strengthened by:
Major strong points are:

Supervisor Signature

Date

Reviewing Officer

Date

Has this report been discussed with Employee?  YES  NO

If "No". Reason Why:

If "Yes". Employee's Comments:	
Employee Signature	Date
Supervisor Signature	Date

## Appendix - F

**Survey**

This survey is intended to help solicit information to assist in the development of an employee job performance evaluation process. This survey is part of a research project that I am conducting for the Executive Fire Officer Program at the National Fire Academy, Emmitsburg, MD. This survey is also intended to help develop a job performance evaluation process for the Verona Fire Department to assist the Fire Chief to comply with the Verona Fire District Agreement. The Fire District Agreement requires that the Fire Chief conduct job performance evaluations of his/her officer staff. Now that the Verona Fire Department has full-time staff I believe that the evaluation process should include all staff.

I would appreciate it if you would take a few minutes to complete this survey. I'm sending this electronically so that you may download this and add information if you wish. Please mark your answer or add additional information where requested and return this survey to 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Fire Chief J.F. Barger, OIC, Verona Fire Department by March 22, 2007. Please mark a yes or no by circling your answer. Place your survey in an envelope and write my name on the envelope and place the envelope on my desk or in the door bin to my office. Please do not indicate anywhere on this survey or the envelope your name or rank within the organization. This will help to insure fair and impartial survey results.

1) Do you believe that Verona Fire Department Personnel should be subject to a regular job performance evaluation?

Yes (4)                    No (1)

2) Would you be willing to provide your reasons for or against a job performance evaluation?

- Consistency of expectations & results.
- Yes.
- It would be too time consuming. You need to deal with individual problems.
- A good performance evaluation is a key element in the betterment of any organization because it provides standard and feedback for both employees and employers
- Periodic evaluations provide an opportunity to judge performance based on goal setting. Keeping in mind that the paid-on-call environment is different than career and the goals should be tailored with that in mind. It also takes the guesswork out of the employee's performance.

3) Should Verona Fire Department full-time personnel be evaluated on job performance differently than part-time or paid-on-call staff?

Yes (4)                    No (1)  
 • Will likely have different job expectations thought.

4) Should Verona Fire Department personnel on probation be subject to a job performance evaluation?

Yes (5)                    No (1)

- At the end of probation for sure & every six months leading up to.

5) Should probationary personnel be subject to a different job performance evaluation from other staff?

Yes (3) No (2)

6) Do you believe a job performance evaluation would benefit Verona Fire Department personnel?

Yes (5) No

7) Could you offer suggestions on how personnel would benefit?

- It would identify individual strengths and weakness and then address the course of action for the department to use the strengths and correct the weaknesses.
- Knowing what I need to know would help me set training goals
- Knowing areas where they have weakness and strengths.
- They would know what officers believe are their strengths and weaknesses and allow for dialog on opportunities for change.

8) Do you believe that you would benefit from a job performance evaluation?

Yes (5) No

9) Could you offer suggestions on how you would benefit from a job performance evaluation?

- They would know what officers believe are their strengths and weaknesses and allow for dialog on opportunities for change.
- I think everyone could befit from knowing how they are doing.
- Knowing what I need to know would help me set training goals.
- It would help me target goals, deficiencies in my performance and then establish a program to obtain the goals and correct deficiencies.
- It clearly would identify areas that need attention.

10) Do you believe that the community would benefit because Verona Fire Department personnel are subject to a job performance evaluation?

Yes (4) No (1)

11) Could you offer suggestions on how the community might benefit?

- Better trained, more confident personnel bring more value to the community.
- Better firefighting, better organization.
- If there are areas that we can improve in that will make us performance on calls much better.
- Protection from litigation on employment matters.
- Greater respects for our profession.

12) Do you believe that the employer (Verona Fire District) would benefit from an employee job performance evaluation?

Yes (5) No

13) Could you offer suggestions on how the employer might benefit?

- Protection from litigation on employment matters.
- Greater respect for our profession.
- Knowing more about what the staff is doing & what the staff can offer for ideas to make things run better & help improve.

- Better firefighting. Better organization.
- Takes the doubt out of the “who is and who is not performing” equation.
- Will help the district identify weakness in administrative, career and paid-on-call personnel. May make things easier during wage discussions.

14) Do you believe that a job performance evaluation would enhance personnel safety during incident responses, training, and other department activities?

Yes (5) No

15) Do you believe that a job performance evaluation would enhance safety at all levels within the Verona Fire Department?

Yes (5) No

16) Below are a number of potential job performance evaluation topics. Please indicate whether you believe the topic should or should not be included in the job performance evaluation for the Verona Fire Department.

a) Job/Assignment knowledge:	Yes (5)	No
b) Quantity of work:	Yes (3)	No (2)
c) Quality of work:	Yes (5)	No
d) Dependability:	Yes (5)	No
e) Cooperation:	Yes (5)	No
f) Initiative:	Yes (5)	No
g) Driver's license check:	Yes (4)	No (1)
h) Incident attendance: • Too subjective, already measured?	Yes (3)	No (2)
i) Teamwork:	Yes (4)	No
j) Training attendance:	Yes (5)	No
k) Report writing: • Administrative staff only • Too finite.	Yes (3)	No (2)
l) Leadership ability:	Yes (4)	No (1)
m) Communication skills:	Yes (4)	No (1)
n) Customer service skills:	Yes (3)	No (2)

o) Employee commendation/praise:	Yes (3)	No (1)
• Comments section perhaps.		
p) Goal setting:	Yes (4)	No (1)
q) Completion of goals:	Yes (4)	No (1)
r) Demeanor:	Yes (4)	No (1)
• Too subjective, hard to measure		
s) Attitude:	Yes (4)	No (1)
• Too subjective, hard to measure, address other ways.		
t) Use of agency equipment:	Yes (5)	No
• Define this one, ambiguous.		
u) Care for agency equipment:	Yes (5)	No
v) Appearance/cleanliness:	Yes (4)	No (1)
w) Completion of assignments:	Yes (5)	No

15) Could you suggest other areas that an employee would benefit from as part of a job performance evaluation?

- Maybe something added for extra curricular activities.
- Attendance at VFD open house, assistance with Hometown days activities, chili supper, etc... As they are, generally speaking, not a required activity they should not have a great amount of emphasis placed on them. But, it would be advantageous to both the department and employee to have activities on record to use in the overall process. It might also show some employee strengths that the department could use to its advantage that might not surface elsewhere.
- Peer reviews for officer staff.
- A way to solicit performance feedback from the troops to officer staff regarding effectiveness to lead.
- I've found having feedback on how I am doing at my job allows me to know the areas I am doing good and the areas I need to work better on. I also feel there should be one set of standards that is followed. If there is a rule put in place, then that rule should apply to everyone. If the rules aren't, then they should be removed. It's hard to hold someone to a level, if everyone isn't held to that same level.
- Physical fitness.

Thank you for completing this survey and providing your feedback.

## Appendix - G

**Survey**

My name is James F. "Harry" Barger, 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Fire Chief, OIC, Verona Fire Department. I am enrolled in the Executive Fire Officer Program at the National Fire Academy, Emmitsburg, MD. As a part of the class I am conducting research into Job Performance Evaluations for the fire service with an end result of developing a job performance evaluation process for my agency.

Below is a survey that I am conducting to help answer pertinent questions for my research. I would appreciate it if you could take a few minutes to answer the questions and return your response in the pre-addressed envelope.

1) Does your agency conduct job performance evaluations on your staff?

Yes (13)      No (4)

2) How often do you evaluate your staff?

6 Months 1    12 Months 10    18 Months 1    24 Months 1

3) Do you evaluate officer, full-time, paid-on-call staff differently?

Yes (10)      No (7)

4) Do you evaluate probationary staff?

Yes (16)      No (1)

5) Do you evaluate probationary staff differently than off-probationary staff?

Yes (11)      No (6)

6) Do you believe the employee benefits from a job performance evaluation?

Yes (16)      No (1)

7) Could you provide some reasons on how you believe the employee may benefit?

- Lets employee know how they are doing overall
- Lets employee assess and set new goals for achievement in next evaluation
- Give company officer ongoing officer development
- Helps employee to track and record good & bad performance
- Employee awareness to things they may not realize
- Opportunity for employee to improve in weak areas
- Opportunity for employee to receive praise for good work
- Employee can provide feedback which may benefit the department
- Employee can improve if allowed to discuss issues
- Allow employee to know if fulfilling all job requirements
- Employee won't improvement without discussion
- Employee receives feedback on performance

- Employee receives corrective actions to change performance
- Employee receives promotion due to evaluations
- Provides employee with correction to problems before disciplinary action is necessary
- An employee cannot improve if they do not perceive the problem
- Everyone wants to know how they are doing, good or bad
- Employee gains a better understanding of job expectation
- Employee is motivated
- Employee learns strengths and weaknesses
- Employee knows what our expectations are
- Provide better working relationship
- Allow employee to have a voice in the system
- Ability of employee to promote or defend self
- How does employee perceive self
- Provide positive reinforcement
- Career enhancement
- Sense of accomplishment
- Better employee

8) Do you believe that the agency benefits from a job performance evaluation?

Yes (16)                    No (1)

9) Could you provide some reasons on how you believe the employer may benefit?

- Employee has a clear understanding of what management thinks of performance
- Provide employee better understanding of what management wants
- Help establish goals for management and the agency
- Helps to evaluate management and agency goals
- Is management and the agency meeting anticipated goals
- Helps to develop company officers
- Proof of good worker
- Improve operations
- Improve communications
- Enhance employee ownership of agency & processes
- Provide officer with rewarding experience of helping an employee improve
- Better understanding between employee and employer
- Improved work ethic
- Sense of accomplishment
- Correct behavior or performance the frustrates other employees
- Improve recruitment/retention of employees
- Improve competency and performance
- Help agency to meet community needs
- Are agency goals being met
- Are agency objectives being met
- Is agency mission being met
- Employee usually have more positive approach to job
- Employee have better understanding of expectations
- Identify things that need improvement
- Better employer

- Better supervisors
- Paper trail important for possible dramatic needed actions
- Adjust training
- Provide educational opportunities
- Influence agency goals
- Adjust program improvements

10) Do you believe that the community benefits from job performance evaluation?

Yes (15)      No (1)

11) Could you provide some reasons on how you believe the community may benefit?

- Better employee does a better job
- Better firefighter through continues evaluation process
- Help firefighter to strive to do better
- Better service for the customer
- More efficient fire service
- Better community relations
- Greater community pride
- Community gets a better department
- Better work ethic reflects better attitude toward public (happy workers = happy citizens)
- Improve recruitment/retention of employees
- Improve commitment to community goals
- Improve competency/performance
- Less internal conflict
- Less public disciplinary proceedings
- Improved delivery of services
- Better community service
- Improved job performance
- Grow into a better service
- Evaluation helps agency to improve through employees
- Better employee attitude equates to better customer service
- More professional department

12) What components do you evaluate employees on? (please list them below)

- Approachability
- Coaching
- Development
- Specific Job Knowledge
- Decision Quality
- Teamwork
- Priority setting
- Team building
- Specific expectations
- Attitude
- Appearance
- Timeliness
- Behavior

- Intelligence
- Positive ness
- Knowledge
- Performance
- Creativity
- Safety
- Leadership
- Cooperation/Partnership
- Quality
- Work skills
- Appearance
- Attendance/Punctuality
- Work load
- Public interaction
- Quality of work
- Tasks done error free
- Work area
- Education
- Interaction
- Customer service
- Prevention
- Suppression
- Training
- All aspects of the job
- Training participation, contribution, willingness
- Incident driving
- District geographic knowledge
- Willingness and ability to perform tasks
- Professionalism
- Day to Day duties
- Positive attitude
- Duty accomplishment
- Positive attitude
- Involvement in outside activities
- Work habits
- Policy knowledge
- Their goals
- Interpersonal interaction
- Integrity
- Self-motivation
- Performance
- Agency needed goals
- Responsibilities
- Job productivity
- Dependability
- Cooperation
- Job knowledge
- Accomplishments

- Communication skills
- Quality of effort
- Following instructions
- Self-Improvement

13) I am also looking for fire service job performance evaluation examples and related policy. I would appreciate it if you could supply a copy with this survey or send a copy to me electronically at; [hdbarger@tds.net](mailto:hdbarger@tds.net). Thank you.

## Appendix - H

VERONA FIRE DEPARTMENT	
DIRECTIVE: 210	
Chapter 200: General Administration	Section 10: Employee Performance Evaluation
Effective Date:	Replaces:
Directive Author: Assistant Chief Barger	

**I      General Policy:** It is the intent and purpose of this directive to provide policy guidelines to it staff relative to employee performance evaluation.

**II     Scope:** This directive applies to all active firefighters who are full-time or paid-on-call.

**III    Evaluation period:** Full-time, paid-on-call, and part-time employees will be evaluated annually on their date of employment. Probationary employees will be evaluated on an each six months basis until they have completed probation. The employee's supervisor will use Verona Fire Department form VFD-025 (Appendix A) to record the evaluation. The supervisor will prepare the evaluation using the applicable sections of the evaluation to reflect the employee's performance based on their job description and employment status.

**IV    Evaluation rating definition:**  
 Rating Key: The rating key is included on page one (1) of the evaluation form for quick reference. A more detailed definition is listed below.
 

- Excellent – This rating is for the employee that performs all tasks in an exceptional manner and requires little if any supervision.
- Good – This rating is for the employee that performs many tasks well and all other task adequately and requires some supervision.
- Satisfactory – This rating is for the employee that performs all tasks in a satisfactory manner and requires an average amount of supervision.
- Fair – This rating is for the employee that performs some tasks at a satisfactory level yet, many not at a satisfactory level and requires regular supervision.
- Unsatisfactory – This rating is for the employee that fails to perform many tasks at a satisfactory level and requires regular, on-going, and additional supervision.

**V    Evaluation rating definitions:**

- A. Responsibilities:
  - This section should list the employee's current assignments and responsibilities.
  - If the employee switched responsibilities, this should be noted so that it's clear what responsibilities have been dropped and added and any applicable reasons why the switch was, or is being made. This could include promotion, re-assignment, etc...
- B. Accomplishments:
  - This section should be used to note and acknowledge achievements of the employee since the last evaluation.
  - This should include self-initiated activity that the employee has initiated on their own. It may also include accomplishments that were suggested by the supervisor or a specially assigned accomplishment.

- Also include the level of productivity the employee has accomplished.

C. Assignment Knowledge:

- This section should capture the employee's understanding and knowledge of their assignment and responsibilities as well as other tasks performed.
- This section should also include whether the employee demonstrates through performance a good working knowledge of their job description.

D. Assignment Performance:

- The employee should be rated on their work quality, i.e. are assignments completed correctly or does someone have to complete it or make corrections?
- Does the employee take responsibility for their actions, and are assignments handled without having to be reminded?
- Does the employee use good judgment in the course of their daily work and assignments?
- Does the employee observe good safety compliance?
- Does the employee participate without regular prompting or do they need to be requested on a regular basis?
- Does the employee possess good working knowledge of agency policy and applicable protocols as relates to job description, task performance, assignments, etc...
- Does the employee use equipment that is assigned to them or available for their use in a proper manner or are they unconcerned about this and abusive with equipment?
- Does the employee demonstrate performance consistent with job description?

E. Interpersonal Skills:

- Does the employee use appropriate and professional communication skills internally and externally?
- Is the employee dependable, i.e. prompt for work, assignments, follow-up, etc...
- Is the employee honest and ethical in their daily work and assignments?
- Does the employee take responsibility for themselves and their actions?
- Does the employee take responsibility for their assignments and daily work regimen?
- Does the employee display an appropriate and professional appearance internally and externally, i.e. neat, well groomed, clothing/uniform clean, neat, well pressed, foot wear polished, all attire/footwear well maintained, etc...
- Is the employee cooperative with supervisors, fellow employees, and the public?
- Does the employee possess a positive attitude or is it negative?
- Does the employee use good judgment in their daily activities and assignments?
- Is the employee a team worker in their daily participation and interactions with all staff?
- Does the employee possess creativity in that they are able to adapt to situations and think through issues and make a plan?
- Does the employee accept constructive criticism without becoming defensive or, do they attempt to defer the responsibility or issue to something/someone else?
- Does the employee take request, orders, etc... in a positive manner and carry out the appropriate follow-up or, do they attempt to avoid work and pass the request or order off as not necessary?

F. Training:

- Does the employee participate willingly in training?
- Does the employee possess a positive attitude toward training or is it negative?

- Does the employee participate in training as a team player and present a helpful interaction?
- Does the employee take a leadership role in training and willingly assist or take on a training role?
- Has the employee met department training requirements for job/task assignment?

G. Apparatus Driving/Operation:

- Does the employee possess and display skill as it relates to apparatus driving and operations?
- Does the employee observe safety in day-to-day driving and operations to include adherence to agency policy and applicable traffic statutes?

H. Leadership Skills:

- Does the employee possess a positive attitude and demeanor as it relates to being a leader/supervisor?
- Does the employee display proper team work skills when supervising or leading a group of personnel in an activity, training or an incident?
- Does the employee possess and display a good working knowledge of agency policy and protocols, and enforce those policies and protocols?
- Does the employee have the ability to delegate during daily activities or during an incident, or do they take on the task(s) themselves?
- Does the employee have good organizational skills or do they require supervision to oversee their organizational skills?
- Does the employee have good coaching and mentoring skills with other employees to help the employee correct behaviors and grow in their career?
- Does the employee possess self-initiating skills or do they require prompting to make corrections, handling job requirements, and daily tasks or take on an assignment?
- Does the employee display sound competence and problem identification and solving skills or do they require regular assistance in this area?
- Does the employee display that they can handle assignments and tasks in an efficient and effective manner including monetary issues, or do they require regular supervision?
- Does the employee possess and display sound competent emergency response or incident procedures and tactics?
- Does employee demonstrate good incident management skills?

I. Goal Accomplishment:

- This section will list the goals that were listed in the previous evaluation and whether the employee was able to accomplish them or not, and whether the employee did so on their own initiative or did they require regular supervision to complete this.
- Did they complete the goals in the time frame established?

J. Future Goals:

- This section will list the goals that the employee needs to attend to and/or complete during the next evaluation period.
- Time frames, if established should also be listed and any other criteria's that would help facilitate the goal accomplishment.

K. Goal setting:

- This section shall capture the strengths that the employee has displayed.

- This section should also capture goal setting points and the plan put in place to accomplish the goals.

L. Overall Performance:

- This section should capture the overall performance of the employee based on the previous sections for a final evaluation rating for the identified evaluation period.

M. Supervisor/Employee discussion:

- This section should note whether the employee and supervisor discussed the evaluation. Points discussed can be included in evaluation.
- If they didn't, then a reason should be noted.

N. Employee comments:

- If the employee wishes to add comments to the evaluation this is the area where they may be allowed to do so. The employee may write directly on the form, or prepare a document to be presented to the supervisor and included with the evaluation. If a the employee prepares a document, the supervisor should note on the evaluation that a document has been included.

O. Signatures:

- The final area is where the employee, supervisor, and agency head will sign the evaluation before placing it in the employee's personnel file.

P. Employee contesting performance evaluation:

- If the employee wishes to contest segment(s) of the evaluation, the employee should take the matter to their supervisor first.
- If the employee doesn't get the satisfaction they believe they should, they should take the matter to the next level of supervision.
- The final step would be a meeting with the Fire Chief.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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James F. Barger  
1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Fire Chief, OIC  
Verona Fire Department

**Verona Fire Department**  
**Employee Performance Evaluation**

Employee Name:	Employee No.:	Date:	
Rank:	Date of Hire:	Date of last Evaluation	Date of next Evaluation:

**Key to Ratings:**

E = Excellent – Employee performs all tasks in an exceptional manner.

G= Good – Employee performs many tasks well and all other tasks adequately.

S=Satisfactory – Employee performs all task satisfactorily.

F=Fair – Employee performs most tasks satisfactory, but not all.

U=Unsatisfactory – Employee fails to perform many tasks well.

**1. Responsibilities – List current job assignment and responsibilities.**

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**2. Accomplishments – List major job related achievements since last evaluation including self-initiated activity, special assignments, level of productivity.**

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**3. Assignment Knowledge – Understanding of responsibilities, tasks performed, job description.**

Rating	E	G	S	F	U

**4. Assignment performance – Work quality, responsibility, judgment, safety standards application, participation, knowledge of policy/protocol/ job description, care of equipment assigned or available for use.**

Rating	E	G	S	F	U

**5. Interpersonal Skills – Communications, dependability, honesty, responsibility, appearance, cooperation, attitude, judgment, teamwork, creativity, take orders.**

Rating	E	G	S	F	U

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**6. Training – Participation, attitude, teamwork, leadership, safety, meets department requirements.**

Rating	E	G	S	F	U

**7. Apparatus driving/operation skill, safety, policy adherence, follow applicable traffic laws.**

Rating	E	G	S	F	U

**8. Leadership Skills – Attitude, demeanor, teamwork, agency policy knowledge & enforcement, ability to delegate, organizational skills, coaching/mentoring skills, initiative, competence, problem identification and remedy, efficiency and effectiveness, incident competence, incident management skills, job description**

Rating	E	G	S	F	U

**9. Goal Accomplishment – From previous evaluation.**

Rating	E	G	S	F	U

**10. Future Goals – For next evaluation period.**

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**11. Goal Setting – The following action plan describes your specific strengths and weaknesses and is intended to be a plan toward your career growth.**

**Major strengths/weaknesses:**


**Goal setting points/plan:**


**12. Overall Performance**

<b>Overall Rating</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>U</b>
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**13. Has this evaluation been discussed with the employee?  Yes  No**  
**If "no", reason why:**

**14. Employee's comments**

**Employee Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Supervisor Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Fire Chief Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Did employee receive a copy of evaluation?  Yes  No**

**VFD-025**  
**00/00/2008**

