

**STATE OF COLORADO  
PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

**COLORADO DEPARTMENT  
OF TRANSPORTATION**



**PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT  
PROGRAM  
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

**NOVEMBER 2012**

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PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM  
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR  
COLORADO'S PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

**November 2012**

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## **I. Introduction**

This document is the implementation plan for the performance management program at the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT). Within the state's performance management system rules, CDOT's Executive Management Team (EMT) makes all policy decisions concerning the implementation of the performance management program at CDOT. This implementation plan has been approved by the Executive Director and the EMT.

CDOT's program adheres to the uniform and consistent performance management system guidelines established for all state agencies. CDOT's program is and shall be revised, as necessary by CDOT's Executive Director and EMT to remain consistent with all requirements of the state's performance management system and the Personnel Board Rules and State Personnel Director's Administrative Procedures. Revised implementation plans will be submitted to the State Personnel Director, as required, for approval prior to implementation.

The following individuals/entities are responsible for leading implementation and management of the performance management program at CDOT.

- CDOT's Executive Director provides executive oversight of CDOT's performance management program.
- CDOT's Executive Management Team (EMT) provides input into the policies and processes of CDOT's performance management program.
- CDOT's Human Resource Office manages the performance management program at CDOT under the direction of the Executive Director and the EMT.

CDOT's performance management program consists of three components: performance management, dispute resolution, and merit pay adjustments.

## **II. Performance Management**

Establish consistency throughout the department to result in transparency and accountability while aligning the employee performance management program to the department goals and strategies.

The performance management program provides tools and guidance for employees and supervisors to maintain bidirectional communication to encourage employees to perform their best work.

- Planning and aligning expectations between the supervisor and employee
- Identifying resource needs to implement program objectives
- Providing constructive feedback for both improving performance and recognition of good performance
- Documenting performance in clear, consistent, and meaningful manner

An employee performance evaluation form (Performance Management Form) has been created for CDOT's performance management program to document the performance management process for each CDOT employee. The form is available electronically from CDOT's intranet web site. The electronic version of the form is a template enabling supervisors to add additional expectations and comments and sign electronically. The annual performance management cycle starts on April 1<sup>st</sup> and ends on March 31<sup>st</sup> the following year. CDOT's detailed schedule of events for the annual performance management cycle is:

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Date</b>
Performance planning	February-March (work unit and employee plans due by April 1)
Appraisal Keepers enter performance plan into SAP	April 30
Dispute resolution for annual performance plan	Within five working days of disputed event
Performance progress review	September/October
Appraisal Keepers enter mid-year performance progress review into SAP	November 30
Final performance review (meeting between supervisor or lead worker and employee)	February/March
Performance rating (Supervisor, reviewer and optionally the appointing authority meet to determine employee's final performance rating)	February-March
Employee's notification of final performance rating	By March 31
Dispute resolution process for final rating	April
SAP Appraisal Keepers enter final performance rating information into SAP	By April 15
SAP Appraisal Keepers enter dispute information into SAP	April
SAP Appraisal Keepers forward original signed (not a copy) Performance Management Form 1257 to HR and files a copy in personnel file.	April

The four key components of CDOT's performance management program are:

- Performance planning
- Performance progress reviews
- Final performance review
- Performance rating (evaluation)

## **A. Performance Planning**

The performance planning process establishes the foundation for an effective performance management process. Every employee's annual performance plan should align with CDOT goals and objectives comprising CDOT's strategic plan. A well-crafted performance plan informs the employee of the criteria that will be used to evaluate his/her performance several months into the future. The performance plan provides important clarity to the employee on the priorities for his/her job. The plan also provides a basis upon which the supervisor can direct his/her coaching and development activities toward each employee throughout the evaluation period.

The planning process for an employee's plan also evolves from the performance rating from the prior evaluation period. Areas for improvement that are identified during the prior performance review and rating processes can become points of emphasis for the following year's performance plan.

Performance planning involves a mandatory meeting between every employee and his/her supervisor or a lead worker assigned by the supervisor at the beginning of the evaluation cycle. This planning meeting consists of:

1. A review of CDOT's mission and goals.
2. A review and discussion of the unit's work plan for the upcoming year. This unit work plan typically contains the unit's priorities for the year.
3. A review and discussion of the job duties listed on the employees PDQ.
4. A discussion of CDOT's competency areas and the importance of each competency area to successful job performance.

In addition to the statewide uniform core competencies (communication, interpersonal skills, customer service, accountability, job knowledge), defined by the State Personnel Director, CDOT has a safety competency that is included on every employee's performance plan. The supervisory competency contains the required measurement of a supervisor's responsibility in performing the performance management functions.

The manner in which each supervisor or lead worker conducts the performance planning meeting is left to the discretion of the supervisor or lead worker. However, the supervisor must have a copy of the employee's performance plan available for the supervisor, lead worker (if applicable), and employee to sign. Supervisors may elect to involve employees in developing the employee's performance plan.

If a supervisor fails to provide an employee with an annual performance plan, the reviewer is responsible for completing the plan. If the reviewer fails to complete the plan in a timely manner, the reviewer's supervisor is responsible for completing the plan and

on up the employee's line of supervision until the employee's annual performance plan is completed.

Sanctions for failure to provide an employee with an annual performance plan will be imposed. Absent extraordinary circumstances, failure by a supervisor to provide a timely plan results in a corrective action and/or ineligibility for a merit pay adjustment pursuant to Personnel Board Rules and Personnel Director's Administrative Procedures Chapter 6.

### **B. Performance Progress Review**

Performance progress review(s) involves at least one mandatory and documented meeting during the year between every employee and his/her supervisor or assigned lead worker. CDOT's preference is that reviews occur quarterly. Coaching and feedback are important objectives of this meeting. This meeting consists of:

1. A review and discussion of the unit's work plan and any modifications resulting from changed business conditions since the plan was initially developed.
2. A review and discussion of the employee's performance on the competency areas selected during the performance planning phase.
3. Agreement on modifications to the employee's performance plan resulting from changed business conditions since the plan was initially developed.
4. Written documentation of progress and possible areas for improvement.

### **C. Interim Performance Review**

If an employee transfers, promotes, or demotes into a different job or the employee's supervisor changes during a performance cycle, an interim overall evaluation shall be completed and delivered to the new supervisor or State Agency within 30 days.

### **D. Final Performance Review**

The final performance review involves a mandatory meeting between every employee and his/her supervisor or assigned lead worker. This meeting consists of:

1. A review and discussion of all relevant performance data accumulated throughout the evaluation period.
2. A review and discussion of the employee's performance on competency areas throughout the evaluation period.

*The supervisor does not provide the employee with a final performance rating at the final performance review meeting since the final rating is subject to further review.*

Following the final performance review meeting, the supervisor recommends to the reviewer a final performance rating for the employee based on the supervisor's observations and input from the employee. At the discretion of the Appointing Authority, the supervisor's reviewer may be any position in the supervisory chain. The supervisor's recommended performance rating represents a fact-supported judgmental rating by the supervisor based on job-relevant performance information obtained from a variety of sources. The performance rating is determined through the principle of "preponderance of data."

### Developing a Recommended Rating

The first step a supervisor takes in deriving a final performance rating recommendation is to rate the employee's performance on each competency area. To arrive at a competency area rating recommendation, the supervisor considers the employee's performance on the behaviors listed within the competency.

Once the supervisor provides a rating recommendation for each of the required competency areas, the supervisor develops a final (composite) performance rating recommendation based on (1) the ratings for each competency area and the relative importance of each competency area to the employee's job and (2) all other relative performance data.

CDOT's method of determining performance ratings is based upon the experience, ability and responsibility of supervisors to distinguish levels of performance among employees. Supervisors are expected to examine each employee's performance from the perspective of performance on the selected competency areas, examine other job-relevant information, compare performance to job requirements, compare each employee's performance with other employees in the unit and make a fact-supported recommendation of each employee's performance rating to the reviewer.

### Performance Rating

All employees shall be evaluated, in writing, at least annually based on their job performance during the previous evaluation period. Performance ratings will be based on three levels, with the first level indicating unsatisfactory performance. Performance ratings are based on a qualitative system that is uniform throughout the department. All final overall ratings conform to the three-level rating scale.

The three rating levels for the overall rating are defined as follows:

#### **Level 3 – Exceptional – Consistently exceptional performance/achievements or consistently superior achievements**

This rating represents a consistently exceptional employee with documented performance achievements or an employee who shows consistently superior achievement(s) beyond the regular assignment. Employees at this level make exceptional contribution and have

a significant and positive impact on the performance of the unit or the organization and may materially advance the mission of the organization. The employee provides a model for excellence and helps others to do their jobs better. Peers, immediate supervision, higher-level management and others can readily recognize such a level of performance.

General guidelines for distinguishing *Exceptional* performance are based on unusual levels of performance during the year. Justification of an *Exceptional* rating might include one or more of the following elements:

- Exceptionally high production levels within a measurable activity.
- Consistently exceptional documented performance achievements or consistently superior achievement(s) beyond the regular assignment. Peers, immediate supervision, higher-level management and others can readily recognize such a level of performance.
- Exceptional contribution and a significant and positive impact on the performance of the unit or the organization.
- Exceptional response to an unforeseen event, such as a workplace emergency.
- Exceptionally high reliability in work performance, as measured by attendance, willingness to take on new tasks, etc.
- A model for excellence, helping others to do their jobs better.
- Unusual expertise that might have been gained by special training.

#### **Level 2 – Successful – Expected performance**

This rating level encompasses a range of expected performance. It includes those employees who exhibit competent work behaviors, skills, and assignments for the job as well as those employees who are successfully developing in the job. These employees are meeting all the expectations, standards, requirements, and objectives on their performance plan and, on occasion, may exceed them. This is the employee who reliably performs the job assigned.

#### **Level 1 - Needs Improvement - Failure to meet expectations**

This rating level encompasses those employees whose performance does not consistently and independently meet expectations set forth in the performance plan as well as those employees whose performance is clearly unsatisfactory and consistently fails to meet requirements and expectations.

A *Needs Improvement* rating, denoting unsatisfactory performance, results in a performance improvement plan or a corrective action. Supervisors ensure that sufficient documentation exists to support the rating and follow-up action. The performance improvement plan or corrective action shall specify the reason for the action, the desired behavior or outcomes expected from the employee to remedy the situation, and the period of time the employee has to comply with the desired behavioral changes or performance outcomes.

### **Additional Competency Rating Levels**

In addition to the above rating definitions, you can choose to further define the Level 2 – Successful Expected Performance into a 2<sup>-</sup> and a 2<sup>+</sup> for the rating of the individual competencies. The +/- allow the supervisor to further distinguish employee's performance within the successful range. The use of these two additional rating levels translates to a Level 2 – Successful Expected Performance on the overall performance rating.

#### **Level 2<sup>-</sup> - Occasionally meets expectations**

This rating level encompasses those employees whose performance on a competency is in between needs improvement and successful. At times performance slides below meeting all the expectations, standards, requirements, and objectives on their performance plan, However, not enough to warrant a Level 1.

#### **Level 2<sup>+</sup> - Occasionally exceeds expectations**

This rating level encompasses those employees whose performance on a competency is in between successful and exceptional. At times performance highlights exceptional work by demonstrating superior achievement, however, not consistently enough to warrant a Level 3.

The supervisor shall meet with the employee by the last day specified in the plan or action to review the employee's performance. The supervisor might decide to:

- Extend the period of time the employee has to comply with the desired behavioral changes or performance outcomes and continue the performance improvement plan or corrective action;
- Pursue more severe action against the employee (e.g., disciplinary action); or
- Take other appropriate action based on the merits of the situation.

The supervisor shall document the action and retain the documentation for future use.

CDOT's handling of performance matters complies with all procedures contained in the Personnel Board Rules and Personnel Director's Administrative Procedures, including Chapter 6 on Performance.

**Final Rating.** Final performance ratings must be communicated to each employee by the supervisor or assigned lead worker by March 31 of each year.

Each performance rating represents an agreement between the employee's supervisor, supervisor's reviewer, and possibly a higher-level manager (e.g., appointing authority in the employee's line of authority). At the Appointing Authority's discretion, the reviewer may be any position in the supervisory chain. The reviewer consults with the supervisor,

views the performance of all employees within the reviewer's larger area of responsibility, and determines the final performance rating for each employee. An employee's final performance rating therefore reflects the relative performance of the employee as judged by the supervisor and the reviewer. This process takes advantage of the reviewer's broader organizational perspective of performance derived from overseeing multiple organizational units. This review process may, at the discretion of the appointing authority, be repeated at a level above the employee's reviewer.

The reviewer functions in a quality control role ensuring that performance ratings reflect valid differences in performance levels among employees, not differences resulting from rating scale differences used by different supervisors (e.g., easy versus hard raters). Ultimately, each appointing authority is responsible for maintaining quality control over the performance management process in his/her organization. Part of this quality control is to ensure the equity and fairness of employee ratings across all units reporting to the appointing authority. In the event of a disagreement among supervisor, manager and appointing authority regarding an employee's final performance rating, the appointing authority determines the rating.

Quotas or forced distribution processes for determining the number of ratings in any of the three performance levels will not be established or used.

Once an employee's final performance rating is determined by the supervisor, reviewer and appointing authority, the supervisor informs the employee of the final performance rating. The supervisor should make a serious effort to keep to a minimum the time between the final performance review meeting and communicating the final performance rating to the employee.

If a supervisor fails to provide an employee with a final performance rating, the reviewer is responsible for completing the rating. If the reviewer fails to complete the performance rating in a timely manner, the reviewer's supervisor is responsible for completing the rating and on up the employee's line of supervision.

In the event an employee does not receive a final performance rating in a timely manner, a default final performance rating of Level 2 (i.e., successful rating) is awarded. This default rating is used in the process of determining the employee's merit pay eligibility.

Sanctions for failure to provide an employee with a final performance rating will be imposed. Absent extraordinary circumstances, failure by a supervisor to provide a timely rating results in a corrective action and/or ineligibility for a merit pay adjustment pursuant to Personnel Board Rules and Personnel Director's Administrative Procedures Chapter 6.

### **III. Dispute Resolution**

CDOT's dispute resolution process for the performance management program is a separate process from grievances or appeals, reflecting its emphasis on a more flexible,

informal approach to resolving disputes related to the performance management program. This process shall be open and impartial and will allow the parties an opportunity to have issues heard. Effort will be made to resolve disputes informally at the lowest level possible.

CDOT's process adheres to all requirements established by the State Personnel Director, including all applicable timelines for filing and completion of the process.

The formal dispute resolution system for the performance management program has two stages—CDOT's internal stage and a stage external to CDOT that is defined and administered by the State Personnel Director. Appointing Authorities are the decision-makers in the internal dispute resolution process. Appointing Authorities may delegate this authority, but the delegation must be in writing and publicized in advance. All employees must be notified annually of the authorized decision-maker for their disputes (i.e., the Appointing Authority or the named designee).

CDOT will communicate the internal dispute resolution process to all employees. This communication includes time limits for filing written requests, who will review and decide issues, time limits for issuing written decisions, and other requirements established by the State Personnel Director.

No party has an absolute right to legal representation during the dispute resolution process, but both parties may have an advisor of the respective party's choice present. The parties are expected to represent and speak for themselves.

Retaliation against any person involved in the dispute resolution process is prohibited.

#### **A. Basis for Disputes**

An employee may dispute the following issues:

- Employee's own final performance rating (or lack of a final performance rating);
- The application of CDOT's performance management program, policies, or processes to the employee's own performance plan and/or evaluation.

Decisions reached through the dispute resolution process for CDOT's performance management program on the first two items are final and binding. Employees may escalate the review process to the State Personnel Director for an external review based on the last criteria after CDOT's internal review process has been completed.

Employees who receive a corrective action as the result of a final performance rating may initiate a grievance in accordance with CDOT's grievance procedure. Other non-disputable issues (progress review, improvement plan, or awards) under the performance management program may fall within the CDOT grievance procedures. Allegations of discrimination in the performance planning or rating processes based on race, ethnicity,

national origin, age, gender or religion may be referred to a CDOT civil rights manager for additional remedies or appealed to the State Personnel Board.

**Not** subject to dispute resolution involving CDOT's performance management program are:

- The content of CDOT's performance management program;
- Employee's own interim performance rating (if applicable);
- Matters related to the funds appropriated;
- The amount of a performance award, including whether it is base building, non-base building, any combination, or none unless the issue involves the application of CDOT's performance management program.

Only issues originally presented in writing at step 1 of the CDOT's internal stage of the dispute shall be considered throughout the dispute resolution process.

## **B. Internal Stage**

### Step 1: Informal process

1. The employee initiates a performance management program dispute by notifying his/her supervisor (or second-level supervisor) that he/she is challenging a disputable performance management program action (e.g., notification of the performance rating) taken by the supervisor (or second-level supervisor). This notification must occur within five (5) working days of the action being disputed.
2. The employee and supervisor (or second-level supervisor) attempt to resolve the dispute informally.
3. The supervisor (or second-level supervisor) has five (5) working days from when the dispute is initiated to provide the employee with a written decision. Sample letters are available on the CDOT Intranet, under "Performance Management."
4. An employee dissatisfied with the result of the informal dispute resolution process or who fails to receive a written decision within the five (5) working days may advance the dispute to Step 2.

If the supervisor is also the Appointing Authority, the employee begins the process at Step 2. Only issues originally presented in Step 1 shall be considered throughout the dispute resolution process.

### Step 2: Formal written process

1. If the employee is dissatisfied with the result of the informal resolution process and wishes to advance the dispute to Step 2, the employee submits a completed CDOT Form 1293 (Performance Management Program Dispute Resolution Form) to the reviewer), or, if the reviewer was the supervisor at Step 1, to the reviewer's supervisor. CDOT Form 1293 must be submitted by the employee within five (5)

working days after receiving the written decision from the informal process or if a written decision is not received by the employee within five (5) working days after the date a written decision was due at Step 1.

2. The reviewer has five (5) working days from when the written dispute is received to render a written decision to the employee.
3. The reviewer may not substitute his/her judgment for that of the supervisor. The reviewer may instruct the supervisor to:
  - Follow CDOT's performance management program;
  - Correct errors;
  - Reconsider a performance plan or final performance rating, or

The reviewer may also suggest other appropriate processes to resolve the dispute, such as mediation.

Neither the disputing employee nor the CDOT decision-maker has absolute right to legal representation during the dispute resolution process; however, both parties may have a person of their respective choice at the dispute meetings. The disputing employee and CDOT decision-maker are expected to represent and speak for themselves.

CDOT's decision regarding an employee's performance plan (or lack of plan) and a final performance rating (including assignment of a default Level 2 final performance rating) concludes at the internal stage and no further recourse is available from the Department. For issues disputable at the external stage, the reviewer shall give the employee written notice of the process to advance the dispute to the external stage administered by the State Personnel Director.

### **C. External Stage**

Employees dissatisfied with the decision resulting from CDOT's internal dispute resolution process may proceed to the external stage of the dispute resolution process administered by the State Personnel Board if the dispute involves the application of CDOT's performance management program, policies, or processes to the individual employee's final overall evaluation.

The employee must initiate the external process by submitting the dispute in writing to the State Personnel Board within five (5) working days following the conclusion of CDOT's internal dispute resolution process. Written disputes must include:

- The Consolidated Appeal/Dispute Form  
<http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite?blobcol=urldata&blobheader=application%2Fpdf&blobkey=id&blobtable=MungoBlobs&blobwhere=1239163458144&ssbinary=true>
- Name, address, and telephone number of the employee submitting the dispute.
- The specific performance management program action being disputed (based on the list of disputable actions that can be escalated to the external

process). Include a copy of the section of CDOT's implementation plan that has not been followed. CDOT's performance management program implementation plan is available on CDOT's intranet, under "Performance Management."

- A short, specific statement giving the reason for the dispute.
- Documentation supporting the dispute.
- Copy of CDOT's final written decision (or notice that CDOT failed to provide a written decision).
- The specific remedy sought.

Written disputes must be received at the following address within the five (5) working days following the conclusion of CDOT's internal dispute resolution process:

State Personnel Board  
Attn: Appeals Processing  
633 17<sup>th</sup> St. Suite 1370  
Denver, CO 80202-3604  
Fax 303 866-5038

#### **IV. Training and Communications**

##### **A. Performance Management Program Orientation, Training, and Support**

All new employees are required to attend an orientation regarding CDOT's Performance Management Program. All supervisors are required to attend training regarding CDOT's Performance Management Program.

All employees and supervisors are required to attend an orientation to and/or training in CDOT's performance management program. CDOT appointing authorities choose from incorporating performance management program information into their organization's employee orientation programs or sending employees and supervisors to performance management program training sessions offered periodically throughout the year by the Office of Organizational Learning and Development. Topics covered in performance management program training have included:

- Overview of CDOT's performance management program;
- Defining performance levels;
- Performance management cycle;
- CDOT competency areas;
- Employee performance plans;
- Individual performance objectives and performance measures;
- Unit work plans;
- CDOT's strategic plan;
- CDOT's performance management system;
- Completing CDOT's performance evaluation form (Performance Management Form);
- Defining levels of job performance; and
- Achievement Pay

CDOT's performance management program training will be supplemented as enhancements to the state's performance management system or CDOT's performance management program are made.

CDOT's Human Resource Office conducts customized workshops for organizational units interested in developing annual work plans and relevant performance measures.

##### **B. Communications**

Performance management program information is disseminated to employees through various communication methods. These methods include:

- Postings on the CDOT's intranet;
- Electronic mail to CDOT supervisors;

- Periodic updates posted on CDOT's weekly public announcements dispersed through department-wide e-mail;
- Periodic updates at Executive Management Team meetings whose members then communicate updated information throughout their respective organizations;
- Periodic information meetings conducted throughout the department; and
- Answers from HR personnel to employee questions.

## **V. Performance Salary Adjustments**

### **A. Performance Salary Adjustment Distribution**

All performance salary adjustment distributions adhere to the performance management system rules outlined in Chapters 3 and 6 on performance awards and summarized below.

1. *Needs Improvement* performers (employees receiving the lowest rating) are not eligible for merit pay.
2. All performance salary adjustments are effective on July 1 and payable in the July paycheck. The salary adjustment is based on the final overall evaluation and the performance management program for the employee's current department as of July 1
3. An employee entitled to a performance salary adjustment will not be denied the award because of a corrective or disciplinary action issued for an incident after the close of the previous performance cycle.
4. Prior to payment of merit pay, the State Personnel Director shall specify and publish the percentage for any merit pay increase for priority groups.
5. CDOT employees must be employed on July 1 to be eligible for non-base building salary adjustments resulting from the prior evaluation period.
6. CDOT employees hired during the performance cycle will receive a pro-rated merit pay adjustment based on the number of months worked during the performance cycle. Employees who transfer to CDOT during the performance cycle will receive the appropriate full merit pay adjustment.
7. Employees transferring to CDOT from another department between April 1 and July 1, receive a salary adjustment based on the final overall evaluation from the other department's performance management program, including an employee who moves to another department after receiving a final overall evaluation, but prior to payment of the award.

## **Non-Salary and Monetary Incentive Rewards**

As provided by the state personnel system, employees are eligible to receive CDOT non-salary and monetary incentive rewards, regardless of position in the pay range, to supplement salary-based achievement pay. Non-salary and monetary incentive rewards are awarded according to CDOT's Non-Salary Incentive Awards Program established by the EMT. Each EMT member submits to the Executive Director an implementation plan specifying how the rewards program is managed within his/her organization.

### **VI. Performance Management Program Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting**

CDOT will provide timely information to the State Personnel Director, as requested. To accomplish this, CDOT collects, analyzes, and reports on data applicable for evaluating the effectiveness of CDOT's performance management program.

#### **A. Performance Measures**

Measures to evaluate the quality of CDOT's performance management program include:

1. Proportion of CDOT employees participating in a performance planning meeting with their respective supervisor or assigned lead worker by the established due date.
2. Proportion of CDOT employees receiving a final performance rating by the established due date.
3. Proportion of final performance ratings for each rating level.
4. Number of CDOT employees submitting a step 2 formal written dispute seeking resolution.
5. Successful uploading of performance ratings into CPPS by the established date.
6. Total amount of appropriated dollars awarded to employees for performance salary adjustments.
7. Total amount of dollars awarded for each performance level.