

Your New Performance Standards – Alert #9

EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE PROTECTION PLAN

With the new appraisal system, comes another task for SSA employees: protecting yourself against inaccurate assessment of your performance and/or an evaluation of your performance that your supervisor intends to use against you in a performance based action (such as suspension, demotion, or removal from your job). Your appraisal and your award may depend upon how well you perform this task. Omit it or perform this task poorly and you may not be able to dispute your supervisor's negative assessment of your work.



Follow these suggestions in order to protect yourself against adverse action in the new performance process:

1. Ask questions if you don't understand what your supervisor tells you or if the information is vague.
2. Put explanations from your supervisor into an email asking if your summary is accurate. Include a statement that says, "If you do not respond within five (5) days, I will assume that my interpretation is accurate." Send (cc:) the email to yourself.
3. Request a *Read Receipt* when you send the email so you will know when your supervisor reads your message. To request a *Read Receipt*:
 - Type your email.
 - Before sending, click on "Options" from the Menu Bar.
 - Click on "Request a Read Receipt for this message."
 - Click "Close" at the bottom.
 - Send your message.
4. Retain *all* correspondence from your supervisor regarding your performance. Put the emails you send, *Read Receipt* responses and all emails from your supervisor in both an *electronic file* in OUTLOOK and also in a *paper file*. **Do not remove information with names and SSNs from the office, and do not forward emails containing claimants' names and SSNs to your private email. Sanitize all claimant information from these records (use last name and last four digits of SSN only) if sharing these records with your union representative or others or if taking these records out of the office.** For additional guidance see "Procedures for Safeguarding Personally Identifiable Information (PII) on Employee Review Forms" or contact your Local AFGE Representative.
5. Take notes of any performance-based meetings/discussions with your supervisor or any member of management. If the discussion is verbal, send a message to the supervisor with a summary of the discussion per item 2 above. In every staff and unit meeting in which performance expectations are discussed, take good notes, ask questions and insist on clear

and explicit responses. Encourage your coworkers to do the same. Insist that supervisors clarify their expectations.

6. Immediately rebut *in writing*, any unwarranted criticism or any negative performance feedback, and insist that your rebuttal be placed in your SF-7B file. Ask for agency time to write the rebuttal. (*Attachment 1 can be used to help you document unwarranted negative feedback.*)
7. Inform your supervisor *in writing* when you are not being given enough time to complete your assignments. Inform your supervisor *in writing* when you are not being given the resources to complete the assignment.
8. Keep records *in writing*, for example, if...
 - Your work is held to a higher standard of performance than your peers
 - You are given extra assignments or extra interviews
 - You are asked to help clean up someone else's desk
 - You miss your desk/adjudication day
 - You are assigned training or mentoring duties
9. Document all additional duties as follows:
 - Short description of the extra work
 - Date you began and ended the work
 - Number of cases processed, if applicable
 - Length of time it took you to do the work
 - Whether work was assigned or if you did it voluntarily
 - Whether any other employees were involved in the extra work (*Attachment 2 can be used to help you document extra duties.*)
10. Under the new performance system, you may voluntarily submit a *self-assessment* statement to your supervisor to be considered as part of your appraisal. If you do so, provide only positive information since anything negative that you provide may quite possibly be used against you.

Just as it's going to be *your* responsibility to make management aware of your contributions that are performance-related, it will also be up to you to provide documentation to support your rebuttal of any negative or unwarranted feedback or criticism. The only way to make sure that you have the information you need is to document everything *in writing*.

For additional information, visit www.afgec220.org

CHECKLIST FOR REBUTTAL INFORMATION

(Use this form to help document factors that were beyond your control that contributed to negative and unwarranted feedback from your supervisor.)

CLAIMANT NAME/SSN: _____

- Case had case characteristics that were factors beyond my control:

- On vacation from _____ to _____

- Extra assignments:

- Due to coworkers' leave or for other reasons, I missed desk days.

- I inherited this case from a coworker and it was already _____ days old.

- Extra Interviews

- Training, Mentoring assignments:

- Other:

