

What Should an Employee Expect From a Performance Evaluation?

It is well established that as a part of “management rights,” management has the right to evaluate its work force.

Most collective bargaining agreements and employer personnel rules contain provisions describing the process for evaluating employees. Union collective bargaining agreements universally contain requirements that all performance evaluation systems be based on “reasonable evaluation standards.”

Generally, the rules governing performance evaluation systems establish goals that should be attained as a result.

Those goals usually include:

- (1) creating an evaluation of the employee’s past performance, usually the prior year;
- (2) establishing future performance expectations;
- (3) determine training and development needs and
- (4) identifying other organizational support the employee may need.

Most employer evaluation processes also include the expectation that the evaluation will be based on standards included in the employees’ job classification, and that any comment contained in the evaluation, (positive or negative) will be based on specific examples of the work performance that supports the statements.

Almost all employer evaluation processes contain a multi-step process that leads to the final agreed to document. The initial step of the process should be a meeting with the employee and supervisor to review and, if necessary, update the employee’s job description. The supervisor and employee should identify performance elements that are relevant to the position, and review any previously established performance expectations.

The second step in the process is for the supervisor to provide the employee with a draft of the evaluation and discuss the content and the work performance examples that supported the comments on the evaluation.



The final steps are a review and response to the evaluation at a “feedback session,” and when agreement is reached, a signature by both the employee and the supervisor, finalizes the evaluation.

What happens if the employee and the supervisor cannot agree on the final evaluation?”

In the event the employee and the supervisor cannot agree, employees have a variety of avenues through their collective bargaining agreements.

Although collective bargaining agreements differ in what process an employee can use to disagree with their evaluation, all contracts provide the ability to grieve a performance evaluation that violated the process established by the employer and the union.

Collective bargaining agreements differ on whether the content of the evaluation is subject to the grievance procedure if the evaluation process was followed.

Some contracts allow employees to grieve the content of the evaluation, but only within the employer steps of the grievance procedure, excluding arbitration. Other contracts prohibit an employee from grieving the content of the evaluation, but allow for a rebuttal to be attached to the evaluation and placed in the employee personnel file.

Whether an employee uses the grievance procedure to attempt to modify an evaluation, or uses the rebuttal process to establish disagreement with the evaluation, there are established processes to finalize the evaluation process and ensure that the comments from both the employee and the supervisor are given equal weight, if subject by review by a third party.

The majority, and most successful performance evaluations are the one’s that have reached mutual agreement between the employee and the supervisor, and create a positive foundation for future evaluations.

— By Local 17 Union Representative Bill Kalibak