

# Handling Poor Performers

## Summary

- Establish clear performance expectations and provide on-going formal and informal feedback (both positive and constructive).
- Set up one-on-one discussions to determine the root cause of the poor performance.
- Determine a solution to address and resolve the problem (including use of individual development plan).
- Document performance consistently.
- Contact the Employee Relations Specialist within the HR Office.
- Continue to monitor employee's performance and work closely with the Employee Relations Specialist.

## Information You Need to Know:

### Why Manage Poor Performers?

Research indicates that a poor performing employee can negatively affect an organization's ability to meet targets by reducing productivity and morale of an agency.

Source:

Mollie Ziegler, "Removing Poor Performers: Why It's So Hard and What You Can Do About It," *National Border Patrol Council*.

### How-To Manage Poor Performers?

Leaders have the primary responsibility for managing poor performance. It is important to establish clear performance expectations and continue to provide (formal and informal) feedback to all of your employees. Here are some typical signs of poor performance: missed deadlines, customer complaints and reduced quality of work output. Once you recognize that your employee's performance is diminishing it is necessary to intervene. The sooner you intervene the better the outcome will be. Throughout this process make sure that you document the employee's performance.

Setup a one-on-one meeting to discuss the employee's performance. The objective of this meeting should be to determine the root cause of why the employee's performance is poor and to establish a solution to resolve the performance problem. Take time to listen to the employee and allow them the opportunity to provide a solution(s) to address their performance. If they do not know how to do something, make sure that you provide them with the resource(s) necessary to improve their performance. Continue to monitor and provide the employee with feedback (positive and negative) and remember documentation is critical.

If the performance is not improving be sure to contact your employee relations specialist within the HR Office. This individual will be able to provide you with the necessary support you need.

Source: "Managing Poor Performance in the Public Sector," Corporate Leadership Council. July 2004.

### ***Peer Insight:***

*We want to hear from you. Do you have any suggestions on how to reward and/or recognize employees? Do you have any tips or best practice ideas? Please share your ideas with ITA at [ITABestPractices@mail.doc.gov](mailto:ITABestPractices@mail.doc.gov)*

At this time there are no best practices from ITA Leaders.

### ***For more information on this topic check out these resources:***

Web sites:

[Management The Perils of Poor Performance](#)

[Tips for Preventing Poor Performance](#)

[U.S. Office of Personnel Management Resource Center for Addressing and Resolving Poor Performance](#)

[OPM's Resource Center for Addressing and Resolving Poor Performance Job Aids](#)

[Dealing with Poor Performers](#)

Webcast:

[Handling Problem Employees: Avoiding Lawsuits and Investigation Disasters](#)

Books:

[Coaching, Mentoring and Managing: Breakthrough Strategies to Solve Performance Problems and Build Winning Teams](#) *by Micki Holliday*

This invaluable management resource will show managers how to tap into the hidden strengths and talents of employees, to inspire peak performers to even greater levels of productivity, to confront inappropriate behavior, turn problem employees into productive workers, to ask questions that get good answers, -to be a winner and to teach others how to be winners. Gives the skills to become a good coach to lead and inspire people to work as a team and produce winning results.

[Perfect Solutions for Difficult Employee Situations](#) *by Sid Kemp*

From underperformance to office romances to interpersonal conflicts, *Perfect Solutions for Difficult Employee Situations* gives you effective techniques for solving 401 sticky employee situations. Drawing on top psychological and management methods to help you avoid problems--and prepare for you when they do arise--this survival guide features "perfect phrases" for responding to difficult or uncomfortable situations and treating employees with sensitivity and concern.