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|  | <b>STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE</b><br>State Form 39870 (R/S-06)    | Reference Number<br><b>HMR-032</b>        |
|   | Subject<br><b>Letters of Commendation, Counseling and Reprimand</b> |   |
|   | Special Instructions<br>Replaces PST-008 dated January 15, 2015     | Effective Date<br><b>February 3, 2026</b> |

## **I. PURPOSE**

Establish guidelines for writing and maintaining letters of commendation, counseling and reprimand.

## **II. POLICY**

Department supervisory personnel shall initiate and use letters of commendation, counseling and reprimand as appropriate supervisory tools to encourage and direct their subordinate's actions. Copies shall be forwarded to the Human Resources Division for inclusion into the employee's permanent personnel file.

The Internal Investigation Section (IIS), for research purposes, shall maintain a database on all counseling forms and letters of reprimand issued to Department employees.

## **III. PROCEDURE**

### A. Common characteristics of letters of commendation, counseling or reprimand.

1. Each letter should contain facts relevant to the specific act or event;
2. The letter shall be given in a timely manner to the act or event bringing praise or requiring redirection. These letters shall not be saved up or held until a later date.
3. If applicable, the letter should stress the proper/correct action taken by the employee and encourage similar like actions in the future; or if applicable, identify any undesirable or improper behavior by the employee and redirect that behavior by stating what behavior is desired or proper.

### B. Retention and documentation of letters.

#### **1. Letters of commendation:**

- a. Shall be incorporated by reference into the employee's next Performance Appraisal Report;
- b. Shall be maintained in the appropriate Division, Area, Section or District general administrative file, that is confidential pursuant to IC 5-14-3, except to the employer and affected employee; and
- c. Shall be forwarded to the Human Resources Division for inclusion into the employee's permanent personnel file.

## 2. Counseling Forms (state form #45032)

a. Shall be incorporated by reference into the employee's next Performance Appraisal Report (PAR). Counseling to redirect an employee's behavior may cause a deduction on the employee's PAR depending on:

- (1) The nature of the event;
- (2) The employee's response to counseling; and
- (3) Any repeat occurrences of the undesirable behavior.

b. When used to document a breach of Department policy, not the result of a preliminary inquiry or an internal investigation, the employee's Commander shall:

- (1) Attach any supporting documentation to the counseling form and then forward the documents electronically to the Internal Investigations Section (IIS)(this information shall only be used for inter- office use and shall not be copied to the employee); and
- (2) Forward a copy of the counseling form to the Human Resources Division for inclusion into the employee's permanent personnel file.

c. When used to document a breach of Department policy that is the result of a preliminary inquiry or an internal investigation, refer to [IIS-001](#) section VIII. A copy of the counseling form shall be sent by the employee's commander to the Human Resources Division for inclusion into the employee's permanent personnel file.

d. An employee receiving a counseling form shall sign the form to acknowledge its receipt and that a supervisor has reviewed it with the employee.

e. The employee may request in writing to have counseling forms removed from the local administrative file after a period of one (1) year from the date of origination.

## 3. **Letters of reprimand**

a. Shall be incorporated by reference into the employee's next Performance Appraisal Report, and shall require a deduction on the employee's PAR;

b. Shall be maintained in the appropriate Division, Area, Section or District general administrative file, that is confidential pursuant to IC 5-14-3, except to the employer and affected employee;

c. Shall be forwarded electronically to the IIS;

d. Shall be forwarded to the Human Resources Division for inclusion into the employee's permanent personnel file.

e. An employee receiving a letter of reprimand shall sign the letter to acknowledge its receipt and that a supervisor has reviewed it with the employee.

f. The employee may request in writing to have letters of reprimand removed from the local administrative file after a period of one (1) year from the date of origination.

C. This procedure is to be used in conjunction with all relevant Department regulations, rules, policies and procedures.