

Chapter 1

Overview of Supervisory Responsibilities

DSS supervisors have many responsibilities. In general, anyone who supervises other employees has a responsibility to uphold and fairly apply all agency policies and procedures, as well as all legal requirements. While it is impractical to provide a comprehensive list of job-specific expectations, the following are responsibilities that are generally expected of all supervisors:

- Contribute to accomplishing the goals of DSS, such as providing quality service to consumers, maximizing resources in order to operate the department in an efficient and effective manner, etc.
- Demonstrate ethical standards of behavior.
- Create a productive work environment that fosters quality, open communication, efficiency, effectiveness and one that values diversity.
- Treat applicants and employees fairly and consistently.
- Ensure that employees clearly understand what is expected of them and provide them with the training and resources needed to carry out their duties.
- Manage employee performance by establishing clear performance expectations, recognizing and rewarding good performance, promptly addressing inadequate performance or unacceptable conduct, and taking corrective action when necessary.
- Remain current on agency policies, procedures and news in order to inform and update employees.
- Ensure that employees follow sign-in procedures and that time sheets are accurate and reflect hours worked.
- Ensure that employee position descriptions are accurate and updated as required, recognizing that signatures on position descriptions attest to the accuracy and that falsification of position descriptions violates Civil Service rules and can result in disciplinary action.
- Take supervisory training, as mandated by Civil Service’s Minimum Supervisory Training Requirements Program (Gen. Circular 1721). The program, required courses, etc., may be found on the Department of Civil Service’s website at:
<http://www.civilservice.la.gov/HRHandbook/MandatoryTraining/HRHMinSuperTrainPolicyFUL.L.asp>
- Finally, supervisors in State government must be fully aware of the following myths that may negatively impact their effectiveness as supervisors:

COMMON MYTHS

MYTH: CIVIL SERVICE PROTECTS EMPLOYEES FROM BEING FIRED, REGARDLESS OF HOW THEY PERFORM THEIR JOBS.

The Civil Service system is designed to prevent political influence in employment decisions, ensure equal pay for equal work, protect employees against unlawful discrimination, and protect employees from being disciplined unless cause exists. “Cause” can be defined as anything that impairs the efficiency of service. For this reason, the Department of State Civil Service seeks to promote good performance, professional conduct, excellent customer service, and personal

accountability. Employees can be disciplined, up to and including removal from the job. An employee's best protection is good performance in the job, as determined by the supervisor.

MYTH: AN APPEAL IS THE SAME THING AS A GRIEVANCE.

A grievance is an internal agency procedure that is usually used when an employee has experienced some dissatisfaction on the job which is not related to Civil Service rule violations, disciplinary actions, unlawful discrimination or a PPR disagreement. The Civil Service Commission handles appeals of rule violations, disciplinary actions and unlawful discrimination; PPR disagreements are handled by agency review, and then by Civil Service review.

MYTH: MERIT INCREASES ARE AUTOMATIC.

Merit increases are not automatic or guaranteed. Civil Service Rule 6.14(a) states that an employee MAY be granted a merit increase on his anniversary date provided that his performance merits the increase; the decision to grant the increase is at the discretion of the appointing authority or his designee (usually the employee's supervisor). It is not a disciplinary action to withhold or postpone a merit increase. Any employee who receives an overall rating of below "Meets Requirements" on his PPR is not eligible to receive a merit increase. Even if the employee receives an overall rating of "Meets Requirements" or above, however, a supervisor does not have to recommend the granting of a merit increase; it may be withheld because one or more areas need improvement as noted on the PPR.

MYTH: ALL EMPLOYEES MUST BE TREATED THE SAME.

As a general rule, employees in similar circumstances should be treated in a similar manner. However, people are different and this can affect how the supervisor deals with each. Employees with problem behavior can be held to standards not applied to others.

MYTH: THE LEAVE THAT EMPLOYEES EARN CAN BE USED WHENEVER THEY WANT.

State employees have fairly generous leave earning and accrual benefits. Most supervisors accommodate employee leave requests as much as possible. Supervisors should, however, remember that:

- Requests for leave must be presented in accordance with DSS Policy 4-04, which generally requires advance notice for annual leave and non-emergency sick leave.
- Supervisors must consider the greater good of other employees and customer service; they should not approve non-emergency leave during peak work periods or for times when many other employees have already had leave approved. Supervisors can ask why the leave is needed and **can deny annual leave requests**.
- Legitimate sick leave use cannot be denied. Sick leave is for use by the employee for the employee's own illness or visit to the doctor; it cannot be used to stay home with sick family members.
- Supervisors may ask employees to bring acceptable proof of the need for sick leave, such as a doctor's certification or statement. Supervisors can require this for an employee who used sick leave frequently. Failure to produce the doctor's statement

within the specified time frame can result in the employee being placed on leave without pay and being disciplined.

- Supervisors must be familiar with DSS's Family and Medical Leave Policy (04-11), which explains certain leave rights for eligible employees, as provided by the Family and Medical Leave Act.

MYTH: EMPLOYEES HAVE A GRACE PERIOD TO GET TO WORK ON TIME.

Employees are to be "duty-ready" at their workstations at the beginning of their scheduled workday. There is no such thing as a grace period to be late for work.

MYTH: EMPLOYEES ARE ALLOWED TO SPEND AS MUCH TIME AS NEEDED ON PERSONAL MATTERS.

Most employers understand that a certain amount of interaction among employees is important to morale and that most employees will have the occasional personal business that must be handled during the day. DSS policy 04-20 (Work Hours for DSS Personnel) allows employees two 15-minute breaks during the day, although such breaks are not required by Civil Service Rules. The following types of activities should cause the supervisor to question whether an employee is wasting too much work time:

- Often reads the newspaper
- Often away from his or her desk
- Frequent personal phone calls, and/or excessively long personal calls
- Too many breaks
- Frequently late from lunch
- Frequent usage of computer for personal reasons

MYTH: LETTERS OF INSTRUCTION (COUNSELING, COACHING, REPRIMAND, WARNINGS) SUPERVISORY PLANS, AND VERBAL WARNINGS ARE DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS.

The above-mentioned items are not disciplinary actions, and are NOT placed in an employee's official personnel record in the Human Resources Office UNLESS they are subsequently used to support a disciplinary action. These items may, however, be retained by the supervisor in the employee's productivity file. There are only four disciplinary actions:

- Suspension without Pay
- Reduction in Pay
- Involuntary Demotion
- Dismissal

An employee who receives a written letter of warning, counseling, etc., has the right to respond, in writing, to the letter, and the Civil Service Rules require that the supervisor keep a copy of the employee's written response with the letter.

MYTH: PROMOTIONS ARE BASED SOLELY ON SENIORITY.

Civil Service rules do not require that the senior employee be promoted ahead of others. Seniority is one factor of several which should be considered. The most important job-related, objective factors to be considered are the applicant's skills, knowledge and abilities. The goal is to select the candidate who demonstrates the highest level of competencies required for successful performance of the position being filled.

MYTH: AN AGENCY CANNOT CHANGE AN EMPLOYEE’S SHIFT.

An agency can change the shift of an employee, or the work location, or even the work hours.

MYTH: AN AGENCY CANNOT REQUIRE AN EMPLOYEE TO WORK OVERTIME.

Civil Service Rule 11.3.1 states: “An employee in the classified service may be required by his appointing authority to work overtime.” Employees in positions that are “non-exempt” must be compensated in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act; employees in positions which are “exempt” must be compensated in accordance with Civil Service Rules.

MYTH: EMPLOYEES HAVE NON-COMPETITIVE REEMPLOYMENT RIGHTS.

Civil Service Rule 8.18 permits an agency to non-competitively rehire a former, permanent classified employee. This is properly known as non-competitive reemployment eligibility. It is NOT a right or entitlement. It is one of several options an agency may exercise in hiring, all of them equally legal.

MYTH: SUPERVISORS CAN ONLY REQUIRE THAT THE EMPLOYEE PERFORM THE DUTIES INCLUDED IN THE EMPLOYEE’S POSITION DESCRIPTION.

The supervisor, not the employee, determines what duties the employee will perform. The supervisor has the right to assign duties, even if they are not in the job description. It is insubordination for the employee to refuse to perform assigned duties.

However—the duties and responsibilities contained in the employee’s position description determine the employee’s job title, pay, qualifications for other jobs, PPR expectations and ratings. The supervisor should not assign duties for longer than a month that would be assigned a higher job title and pay.

If these types of duties will exceed a month, the employee must be detailed to the higher job. If these duties are to become a permanent part of the position, then the employee’s position description should be updated.

Supervisors as well as employees should be aware that an increase in work volume does not necessarily mean that a position should be upgraded. A position description should be prepared as a cooperative effort that includes the employee, the supervisor and the Human Resources Office, if there are significant, ongoing duty changes that are of a higher level of responsibility, or that require the use of additional skills, such as typing.

Source: Department of State Civil Service (www.civilservice.la.gov)

COMMON SENSE TIPS FOR THE NEW SUPERVISOR

Many DSS employees are promoted into their first supervisory position from a lower level position within the agency. In many cases, the new supervisor is now responsible for the performance (or lack thereof) of former coworkers, peers or even personal friends. Former coworkers who understand the new supervisor’s accountabilities will cooperate and strive to support you. Others may not for various personal reasons or resentment at not getting the promotion themselves. With those employees who fail to cooperate, you may try to explain that you take your job seriously, are now

responsible for others' work, want to succeed, want their support/cooperation, will treat everyone fairly, etc. You may need to have one or more of these meetings to try to win the employee's support. Should all efforts fail, however, and an employee remains uncooperative, fails to produce expected results, or causes office morale problems, you will need to explain to the employee that your relationship must now change from a personal to a formal, business one and that you will document actions the employee takes or fails to take and begin progressive disciplinary steps. The most important action you can now take is to follow through and not allow any employee whose performance or conduct is unacceptable to "get away with it." Failure to act will result in the loss of respect from your good employees, poor office morale and low productivity.

Absent problems with individual employees, the first action a new supervisor should take is to become familiar with DSS Human Resources policies, available on the agency's intranet and listed below. Although supervisors are expected to be familiar with all HR policies, those policies in bold print indicate those with which you must become immediately knowledgeable to supervise your staff, maintain time and attendance records, conduct performance reviews, administer leave, maintain work schedules, etc.

REFERENCES TO DSS POLICIES

DSS Policy Manual

PART: 4 - HUMAN RESOURCES

4-1 Dress Code

4-2 DSS Time and Attendance

4-3 Substance Abuse Testing for DSS Employees

4-4 Accrual and Use of Leave for Classified Employees

4-5 Individual Pay Adjustments and Premium Pay Awards

4-6 Appointment and Pay of Student Employees

4-7 Disciplinary Actions

4-8 Drug Free Workplace

4-9 Employee Performance Planning and Review

4-10 Human Resources Procedures for Disaster Operations

4-11 Family and Medical Leave Act

4-12 Grievance Procedures

4-13 Hiring Rate for Extraordinary or Superior Qualifications-Credentials

4-14 Miscellaneous Insurance Solicitation

4-15 Overtime Compensation

4-16 Promotional Policy Statement

4-17 Rewards and Recognition

4-18 Verification of Credentials

4-19 Return to Work

4-20 Work Hours for DSS Personnel

4-21 DSS Policies and Procedures for the Crisis Leave Pool

4-22 Optional Pay Adjustments

4-23 Disclosure and Retention of Human Resources Records

4-24 Reference Checking

4-25 Rate of Pay Upon Demotion

4-26 DSS Direct Deposit

4-27 Unscheduled Absences

4-28 Recoupment of Overpayments

4-29 Permanent Status Attainment

4-30 Selective Service Registration Requirement

4-31 Conditional Offer of Employment

4-32 Prohibited Materials in the Work Place

4-33 Pro Bono Legal Services Provided by DSS Employees

After reviewing the policies, you should discuss with your supervisor what he/she expects insofar as staff supervision, productivity levels, etc. If there are aspects of any agency policy you do not understand or need further explanation, you should also contact your agency Human Resources office. Once you are familiar with agency policies and understand what is expected of you, the next step is to clearly explain expectations to your staff. Depending on staff size, this may be done individually or in a staff meeting. You may want to begin by expressing your enthusiasm for your new job, your admiration for staff's past accomplishments/achievements, expectations for future performance goals, or in the case of past substandard performance or noted deficiencies, your

goals/expectations for improvement. You of course want to solicit their support and cooperation and provide opportunities to ask questions. Once the generalities are discussed, the following topics should be addressed in accordance with any agency policies that exist on a given topic:

- ***Call-in procedures---to whom, by what time should absences be reported***
Away from desk procedures---when employees should let who know when they'll be away from desk for more than a few minutes (i.e., who should employees tell if going to meeting, etc.)
- **Breaks**---specific times or general guidelines (i.e., two 15-minute breaks, one in the a.m/other in p.m.)
- ***Personal phone/computer usage***
- ***Staffing needs***---minimum staffing for each work day, during lunch, around holidays, etc. (i.e., everyone can't break at same time, can't be off day before holiday to get long weekend-- - whether these will be approved on the basis of seniority or first-come, first-served, etc.)
- ***Performance expectations***---schedule individual meetings to review, discuss and/or revise individual performance expectations on PPR forms
- ***Sign-in procedures/leave requests***
- ***Personal appearance/dress code***
- ***Office housekeeping***---office appearance, noise levels, radios/music, food, etc.
- ***Communications***---how often/when/where staff meetings will be held; how agency policies/direction will be communicated; whether you will maintain an "open-door" policy by which any employee can come to you at any time with any problem or whether you will block off certain periods of the day to meet with employees.

QUICK AND EASY READING FOR SUPERVISORS/MANAGERS

The Department of Civil Service issues an on-line Workforce Horizons newsletter each month, all of which may be found at:

<http://www.civilservice.la.gov/PROGASST/WorkforcePlanning/workforcehorizons.asp>

While the newsletter's primarily focus is on workforce planning (see Chapter 12 of this handbook), it frequently includes articles on general management topics that are interesting, useful and quick reads. Some of the articles you may wish to read are:

What Makes a Great Leader

<http://www.civilservice.la.gov/PROGASST/WorkforcePlanning/vol3issue23.pdf>

Are You Suffering from Meetings Overload? And Management Tips from the U.S. Marines:

<http://www.civilservice.la.gov/PROGASST/WorkforcePlanning/vol2issue21.pdf>

Five I's-Non-monetary Ways to Motivate Employees:

<http://www.civilservice.la.gov/PROGASST/WorkforcePlanning/vol2issue15.pdf>

Tips on Goal Setting & Leadership Development and Creating a High Performance Government Organization:

<http://www.civilservice.la.gov/PROGASST/WorkforcePlanning/vol2issue19.pdf>

Tips on Improving Employee Engagement and Attention

<http://www.civilservice.la.gov/PROGASST/WorkforcePlanning/vol2issue14.pdf>

Dealing With Change Successfully

<http://www.civilservice.la.gov/PROGASST/WorkforcePlanning/vol2issue18.pdf>

Improving Employee Motivation

<http://www.civilservice.la.gov/PROGASST/WorkforcePlanning/vol2issue17.pdf>

Common Myths about Work and Employee Motivation

<http://www.civilservice.la.gov/PROGASST/WorkforcePlanning/vol2issue11.pdf>

What Supervisors Can Do to Retain Employees

<http://www.civilservice.la.gov/PROGASST/WorkforcePlanning/vol2issue10.pdf>

Making Use of the Mature Workforce and Tips for Onboarding New Employees

<http://www.civilservice.la.gov/PROGASST/WorkforcePlanning/vol3issue25.pdf>

Generational Differences-Are They Real and Do They Matter?

<http://www.civilservice.la.gov/PROGASST/WorkforcePlanning/vol3issue26.pdf>

The Emergent Employer—Meeting the Challenge of Retaining the Best Employees and Why Do Employees Stay?

<http://www.civilservice.la.gov/PROGASST/WorkforcePlanning/vol1issue6.pdf>

Check each month for new articles.

SUPERVISORY TRAINING

As previously stated, all DSS supervisors are required to take certain supervisory courses, such as Essentials of Supervision, Civil Service Myths (some of which were previously discussed), Documenting for Performance and Discipline, Controlling Absenteeism and Tardiness, Conducting PPR's, etc. The program, required courses, etc., may be found on the Department of Civil Service's website at:

<http://www.civilservice.la.gov/HRHandbook/MandatoryTraining/HRHMinSuperTrainPolicyFULL.asp>. Course schedules and descriptions are available at the Comprehensive Public Training Program (CPTP) website <http://www.doa.louisiana.gov/cptp/cptp.htm>. Employees should schedule these courses through their agency's CPTP liaison.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The DSS Employee Handbook as well as this guide provides useful and basic information for supervisors. DSS's intranet provides access to all agency policies. The Department of Civil Service's website (www.civilservice.la.gov) provides rules, job aids, and numerous other supervisory guidelines. Supervisory training is available as explained above. Additional assistance or information may also be obtained from the appropriate Agency Headquarters' Human Resources office.