



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Washington, D.C. 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

DIRECTOR'S ORDER NO. 187

Subject: Performance-Based Awards

Sec. 1 What is the purpose of this Order? This Order establishes Service policy, procedures, and authorities/responsibilities for granting awards based on performance appraisals and summary ratings under the recently implemented 5-Level Performance Management System.

Sec. 2 What are the authorities for this program?

- a. 370 DM 430, Performance Management System.
- b. Department of the Interior Performance Appraisal Handbook, 370 DM 430.

Sec. 3 To whom does this Order apply? This Order applies to all non-Senior Executive Service (SES) employees covered under the 5-Level Performance Management System.

Sec. 4 When is an employee eligible to receive recognition under the 5-Level Performance Management System? An employee must be rated at Level 4 (Superior) or Level 5 (Exceptional) to be eligible for an award for sustained superior performance under the 5-Level Performance Management System.

Sec. 5 Are supervisors required to recognize employees who receive a Level 4 or 5 summary rating? At a minimum, supervisors must consider employees rated at Level 5 (Exceptional) for an award for sustained superior performance.

Sec. 6 Do supervisors have flexibility in the type of recognition they provide to employees? Supervisors have the flexibility to recognize employees using any of the following forms of recognition, or a combination thereof:

- a. **Level 5 (Exceptional):** Eligible for an individual cash award ranging from 3 to 5 percent of base pay, a Quality Step Increase, a Time-Off Award, or other appropriate equivalent recognition.



b. **Level 4 (Superior):** Eligible for an individual cash award ranging from 1 to 3 percent of base pay, a Time-Off Award, a non-monetary award, or other appropriate recognition.

Sec. 7 What are the types of awards available and the processes and approvals necessary to recognize employees based on a Level 4 or Level 5 summary rating?

a. **Cash Award:** A cash award is a lump sum monetary award of \$50 or more, gross amount. The Special Thanks for Achieving Results (STAR) award is the appropriate mechanism for recognizing employee performance based on a Level 4 or 5 performance appraisal summary rating.

(1) You can grant this award for overall performance, and the amount of the award should be commensurate with the value of the individual accomplishments.

(2) Use FWS Form 3-2207 (Award Certification) to document a cash award. Mark the Performance Award section of the form indicating the summary rating assigned and the dollar amount of the award.

(3) Use the completed 5-level performance appraisal as the justification for the award. The appraisal must include a narrative summary describing the employee's performance for each critical element rated as exceptional or superior.

(4) Supervisors and managers may approve cash awards from \$50 to \$2,000 based on a Level 4 or 5 performance summary rating.

(5) Assistant Directors, Regional Directors, and the California/Nevada Operations Office (CNO) Manager and their designees may approve cash awards based on a Level 4 or 5 summary rating up to and including \$5,000. In Regional Offices/CNO, the Regional Director/CNO Manager may delegate the authority to grant cash awards ranging from \$2,001 to \$5,000 to a level no lower than Assistant Regional Director/CNO Assistant Manager.

(6) The Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks must approve cash awards from \$5,001 up to and including \$10,000. You must route awards requiring the approval of the Assistant Secretary through the Division of Human Resources to the Director.

(7) Refer to 224 FW 4, Monetary Awards, for information about when a cash award is inappropriate.

b. **Quality Step Increase (QSI):** A QSI is an additional within-grade salary increase. This form of monetary recognition immediately benefits the recipient by raising the employee's basic rate of pay.

(1) Use FWS Form 3-2207 to document a QSI.

(2) Use the completed 5-level performance appraisal to serve as the justification for the award. The appraisal must include a narrative summary describing the employee's performance for each critical element rated as exceptional or superior.

(3) The same approval levels for cash awards described above apply for QSIs.

(4) Refer to 224 FW 4, Monetary Awards, for information about when it is appropriate or inappropriate to give an employee a QSI.

c. **Time-Off Award:** A Time-Off award is an excused absence given to an employee without charge to leave or loss of pay.

(1) Use FWS Form 3-2207 to document a Time-Off Award.

(2) Use the completed 5-level performance appraisal to serve as the justification for the award. The appraisal must include a narrative summary describing the employee's performance for each critical element rated as exceptional or superior.

(3) Make the number of hours granted for a Time-Off Award proportionate to a cash award, but do not exceed the allowable percentages of base pay, depending on the annual summary rating.

(4) The limitations on Time-Off Awards described in 224 FW 5 (both for a single award (40 hours) and the total allowed in a leave year (80 hours) do not apply to Time-Off Awards based on a Level 4 or Level 5 performance rating.

(5) The official one level higher than the nominating official can approve a Time-Off Award.

d. **Other Appropriate Equivalent Recognition:** Other appropriate equivalent recognition includes, but is not limited to, Honor Awards such as the Superior Service Award. Refer to 224 FW 3 - FW 7 for information on other types of employee awards and recognition.

e. **Nonmonetary Award:** Nonmonetary awards include such items as plaques, key chains, paperweights, ball caps, tickets to events, coffee cups, brief cases, or other appropriate items.

(1) When possible these items should include the Service or Department logo, title, or mission.

(2) Nonmonetary recognition should be of nominal value so that the employee does not incur a tax liability. We define nominal value as less than \$50.

(3) A supervisor may award items of significant value (\$50 or more); however, tax withholdings are made from the employee's gross wages.

(4) Use FWS Form 3-2207 to document a nonmonetary award.

(5) Use the completed 5-level performance appraisal as the justification for the award. The appraisal must include a narrative summary describing the employee's performance for each critical element rated as exceptional or superior.

(6) The approval authorities are the same as those for cash awards. Refer to 223 FW 5 for additional information on nonmonetary recognition.

Sec. 8 Is there any time when a supervisor can recognize a Level 5 performer with a cash award of less than 3 percent of base pay? Because of the transition from a 2-level performance management system to a 5-level system in FY 05, supervisors may give cash awards of less than 3 percent for the **FY 05 performance appraisal cycle only.**

Sec. 9 What is the time limit for initiating recognition for employees under the 5-Level Performance Management System? Supervisors and other rating officials must initiate nominations no later than 60 days from the due date of annual performance ratings. The due date for issuing annual performance ratings is October 30, unless an extension is warranted and justified for good cause (i.e., the appraisal period may be extended for up to 90 days past the normal end date if the employee has not been under performance standards for at least 90 days).

Sec. 10 Are cash awards based on employee performance under the 5-Level Performance Management System subject to the annual threshold described in 224 FW 3, which requires the Director's approval for each monetary award over the annual limit of \$5,000 per employee per performance year? Cash awards under the 5-Level Performance Management System are not counted against the \$5,000 annual awards limit.

Sec. 11 Who should I contact if I have questions about recognition based on the 5-Level Performance Management System? Contact your servicing Human Resources Office if you have questions regarding awards based on the 5-Level Performance Management System.

Sec. 12 Can the Service use the STAR award to grant monetary recognition for reasons other than overall performance based on annual summary ratings and performance appraisals? Yes, we can grant STAR awards for special projects or one-time occurrences or acts.

a. We can grant STAR awards of this type at any time of the year following the contribution.

b. To grant this type of STAR award, we require a written justification that reflects the employee's accomplishment relative to the special project or one-time occurrence/act. The justification must be personalized and specific to include details and outcomes of the employee's actions.

c. The amount of the award should be commensurate with the value of the individual accomplishment considering the overall benefit to the Government.

d. Getting approval for STAR awards for special projects or one-time occurrences/acts differs from getting approval for STAR awards for overall performance. You can find more information about approval authorities for this type of STAR award at 224 FW 3.

Sec. 13 Does this Order amend any Service Manual chapters? Yes. This Order amends 224 FW 3 through 7.

Sec. 14 When is this Order effective? This Order is effective immediately. We will incorporate its contents into the Fish and Wildlife Service Manual. The Order remains in effect until December 31, 2006, or until it is amended, superseded, or revoked.



Deputy
DIRECTOR

Date: November 14, 2005