

Memorandum

To:

From: Personnel Officer

Subject: One-Year Probationary Period for New Supervisors and Managers

The success of Federal Government programs depends in large measure on the caliber of its supervisors and managers. For this reason, the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978, instituted a probationary period for newly-appointed supervisors and managers as a means of providing an opportunity to assess their performance in the supervisory or managerial aspects of their jobs. Because supervisory and managerial positions require unique skills and abilities that cannot be readily taught or developed in other kinds of positions, new supervisors and managers are selected on the basis of their potential for performing supervisory or managerial duties. The probationary period is intended to bridge the gap between perceived potential and actual performance. It provides an opportunity to assess new supervisors' or managers' development on the job and return them to nonsupervisory or nonmanagerial positions without undue formality if they fail to perform satisfactorily in the supervisory or managerial aspects of the job.

You were recently selected for a supervisory or managerial position, subject to satisfactory completion of a probationary period. Your selection was based on an assessment of your potential to perform the supervisory or managerial duties of your position. The probationary period (1 year) provides an opportunity for your immediate supervisor to assess your development of supervisory or managerial skills on the job and for you to demonstrate that you can perform satisfactorily in the supervisory or managerial aspects of the job.

During the probationary period, both you and your immediate supervisor have certain responsibilities. Your supervisor must develop performance standards, appraise your supervisory or managerial performance, give you periodic feedback, and bring any problems to your attention. You must demonstrate that you can successfully perform such supervisory/managerial functions as planning and organizing the work of your unit; assigning, directing, and reviewing work performed by your subordinates; and selecting, promoting, training, rewarding, and disciplining employees, as necessary. In addition, you must develop performance standards with your employees (if this has not already been done), and you must counsel them about their performance. Regulations provide that supervisory/managerial duties must be performed at an acceptable level in order for your performance to be judged satisfactory.

If, at any time during the probationary period, your supervisor determines that you are not performing at an acceptable level in the supervisory or managerial aspects of your job, he/she will discuss the matter with you and consult with the servicing personnel office to determine whether remedial action is necessary. If your supervisory or managerial performance fails to improve to an acceptable level, you may be returned to a nonsupervisory or nonmanagerial position of no lower grade and pay than the one you left to accept the supervisory or managerial position. Employees who take a change to lower grade to accept a supervisory position will be returned to a position of no lower grade than the position currently held.

Approximately 60-90 days prior to completion of the probationary period, your servicing personnel office will send your supervisor a probationary certification form to evaluate your supervisory or managerial performance and determine whether you have satisfactorily completed the probationary period. If you have, your supervisor will certify to that effect. If your supervisor cannot certify that you have performed at an acceptable level, you may be returned to a nonsupervisory or nonmanagerial position, as described above.

We hope that this information will assist you in carrying out your responsibilities as a newly-appointed supervisor or manager. If you have any questions concerning this information or about the probationary period in general, you may contact your supervisor or servicing personnel management specialist.

cc: Your supervisor
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