

TEAM LEADERS' ROLES IN PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

In response to the National Performance Review's emphasis on less hierarchical, "flatter" organizations which are led by a small cadre of managers, the concept of "team leader" has evolved from an informal assignment of work to a more recognizable, formal, work assignment subject to position classification with position classification standards developed by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). Often, and confusingly, the formal term is used right along with the informal one. Further, in the Department of Energy Headquarters, persons may be "team leaders," but non-supervisors, and therefore members of the bargaining unit; and "team leaders" and limited supervisors, and thus out of the bargaining unit. Supervisors, of course, are out of the bargaining unit as well.

A special word about limited supervisors: A limited supervisor is a term that is used within the Department of Energy. It is used to distinguish between employees whose functions meet the definition of "supervisor" in the Federal labor law, Title 5, United States Code, section 7103(a)(10). That definition says, in part, that the individual has authority to hire, direct, assign, promote, reward, transfer, furlough, layoff, recall, suspend, discipline, or remove employees. Only one such function needs to be exercised in order for the employee to be considered a supervisor for labor relations purposes and therefore out of the bargaining unit. However, some employees, while exercising one or more of these authorities, do not meet OPM's definition of "supervisor." These employees are termed limited supervisors.

The following, from OPM's General Schedule Leader Grade Evaluation Guide, contrasts "team leaders" and supervisors:

For a position to be classified as supervisory and evaluated in OPM's [General Schedule Supervisory Guide], the requisite supervisory and related managerial responsibilities involve the accomplishment of work through combined technical and administrative direction of others, and must constitute a major duty occupying at least 25% of the supervisor's time. Supervisory work, at a minimum, includes responsibility for: planning and scheduling work; assigning work to employees; accepting, amending or rejecting completed work; assuring that production and accuracy requirements are met; appraising performance and recommending performance standards and ratings; approving leave; and effecting minor disciplinary measures. Additionally, the duties of a supervisor typically include prioritizing and scheduling work, and findings ways to improve the quality and/or quantity of the work directed.

Leadership and supervision may be thought of as points along a continuum from nonsupervisory to managerial work. The range of duties a team leader may be assigned is very flexible, i.e., duties may be just sufficient to meet the minimum for coverage to almost sufficient to warrant a supervisory classification.

TEAM LEADERS: (may be in or out of bargaining unit depending on duties; see below)	SUPERVISORS: (always out of bargaining unit)
Explain team goals and objectives to assigned team members and assist team in organizing to accomplish work.	Set team goals, select team leaders, assign team members and administratively and technical direct the work of subordinates.
Coach, facilitate, solve work problems and participate in the work of the team.	Plan, assign, review and accept, amend or reject work done by teams and subordinates.
Provide information to the supervisor on performance of the team.	Assign performance ratings, approve awards and take performance-based corrective actions.
Communicate assignments, milestones and deadlines to the team and individuals based on supervisor's instructions.	Make work assignments, set or negotiate deadlines and completion dates.
Observe training needs and relay training needs and requests to supervisor.	Schedule and approve funding for team and individual training.
Inform supervisor of attendance and behavioral problems.	Counsel employees on behavior and initiate disciplinary actions if required.
Relay request for resources and supplies.	Allocate resources to teams.

The following describes certain types of team leaders that function within the Department of Energy Headquarters , and their responsibilities for performance management. **Regardless of the "type" of team leader assigned to the team, it is imperative that the rating official, team leader, and employees understand fully what responsibilities the team leader may/must exercise!**

1. The team leader with no supervisory responsibilities. This matches the left side of the chart above. Specific responsibilities related to performance management could include:

- transmitting work assignments from rating official to team mates
- distributing work on a rotational basis
- checking on measures such as quantity, timing of production
- solving problems within the team related to work assignments
- solving disputes regarding work distribution, differences of opinion regarding procedures
- functioning as the technical expert of the team
- reporting on progress of team effort to rating official

The team would be well aware of the team leader's activities and his/her interactions with the rating official. The signature authority the team leader would have would be related to work distribution, progress reports, etc. This team leader would be in the bargaining unit. Accordingly, the team leader is not authorized to provide information on individual performance, since that responsibility is reserved to management officials and/or supervisors.

2. The team leader who is a **limited supervisor** with **no** authority to rate employees. This team leader would perform the same performance management functions as the team leader described in 1. above along with other, more traditional, supervisory functions. This team leader is out of the bargaining unit.

The reason for his/her being classified a limited supervisor may be exist for other than performance management reasons. For example, he/she might have authority to approve all types of leave for up to thirty days. Or, in the alternative, performance management responsibilities may be the reason for the classification; he/she may have the authority to **assign** work. Further, the team leader may have the responsibility of **providing written assessments of employee performance** or may **recommend a performance rating** to the supervisor, with supporting reasons. If the team leader has this responsibility, the rating official may request that the team leader be present at progress reviews and at performance appraisal discussions. Because of the sensitivity that such discussions may entail, it is recommended that the employee be consulted as to his/her wishes; as stated above, the employee must be informed as to the extent of the team leader's input and receive copies of written assessments.

3. The team leader who is a **limited supervisor with** authority to rate employees. This type of team leader would probably be classified as a limited supervisor not because of the limits on his/her performance management authority but because of other limits. For example, he/she may have not authority to select employees, to approve funding, to allocate resources or to discipline. This team leader is out of the bargaining unit.

The performance management responsibilities of the limited supervisor team leader with authority to rate employees would include: **work planning, assigning work, setting deadlines, providing feedback to employees during the performance period, and assigning performance ratings (i.e., functioning as the rating official).** These responsibilities must be reflected in the team leader's position description.