

2. Documentation

Documentation is used for:

- Positive Feedback and Acknowledgement
- Career Development
- Showing Patterns of behavior
- Probationary Determinations
- Performance Evaluations
- Disciplinary Actions
- Corrective Actions

Documentation should:

- Be a clear record of one-on-one discussions with employees regarding their performance/conduct.
- Be factual and objective.
- Be timely (close to the date of the event being documented.)
- Be dated and signed/initialed by the supervisor/manager.
- Be kept in a supervisory file set up for each employee, and consulted in the areas listed above.

Documentation should not:

- Be personal or subjective judgments or opinions.
- Be too informal or anecdotal (it may be used by others in conduct or performance cases.)
- Be used unless it has been shared with the employee.

NOTE: SUPERVISORY FILES ARE PUBLIC RECORDS

A. What is documentation?

Documentation is any record that is kept regarding an employee's performance or conduct – whether the record pertains to accomplishments or areas of concern. Documentation may consist of copies of actual work products, written statements by or about employees, and your notes of meetings with employees.

The record you keep when investigating alleged misconduct is also considered documentation.

B. What should be documented?

You should document **BOTH** the positive and negative issues that come to your attention:

If an employee has done a good job (e.g., completed work on a special project, maintained an excellent error rate, was effective with a difficult customer), document these observations and share them with the employee. Positive documentation is a powerful incentive for people to continue to achieve a high level of performance.

If an employee has exhibited poor work habits, has tardiness or attendance problems, isn't meeting quality or quantity standards, is discourteous, or has other such performance or conduct problems, you should document your observations relative to these problems and promptly share them with the employee. This sort of documentation should be presented in a constructive manner to assist the employee in improving.

C. What is the benefit to me as a supervisor?

- Many times, simply documenting and sharing problems with employees helps to resolve them.
- You cannot expect improvement on an employee's part if you do not share your concerns that a problem exists and discuss alternatives for their performance or conduct.
- If the problem persists and you must take corrective or disciplinary action, the documentation is necessary to serve as a record of your previous efforts to bring the problem to the employee's attention and to assist him or her in resolving the problem.
- Documentation is an invaluable tool to help you more quickly and effectively prepare comprehensive and meaningful performance evaluations. It is much easier to review a written file than to try to remember an entire year of employee performance.

D. Management review of supervisors

With regard to documentation, Directors need to ensure that each supervisor that reports to them has established a file for each of his or her own direct reports that contains:

1. A copy of the employee's standards and objectives dated as to when they were shared with the employee.
2. Procedures or plans for workload reviews, work in process reviews or customer surveys.
3. Documented meetings with the employee where internal memoranda or department procedures were introduced and discussed.
4. A schedule for periodic meetings with the employee to discuss performance and conduct issues.
5. A supervisor may meet with an employee on a more frequent basis (e.g. weekly) while meeting with other employees in the unit less frequently (e.g. biweekly.).
6. Feedback given to the employee, in written form, regarding the employee's progress in meeting the standards, exceeding them, or their deficiencies.
7. A performance appraisal prepared within the last year, which covers one year (unless it was a Special Review or a probationary evaluation.).

E. Description of files to be maintained

This section explains what the various files are, where they are maintained in the City, and what types of materials should be placed in each file.

1. The **Civil Service Personnel File** is the official personnel record for each employee and is maintained in the Civil Service and Personnel Department. This file contains the original copy of all personnel actions, Leave of Absence forms, performance evaluations, disciplinary letters, warnings, signed policies, training certifications, and other records of an employee's employment history. An employee must be provided with a copy of any document to be placed in this file. Additionally, any FMLA or Medical Certification is maintained in the Civil Service and Personnel Department. (These records are maintained in a separate medical file for every employee).
2. **Department Personnel Files** are maintained in most departments to provide immediate access to records. These files contain the same material as the Civil Service Personnel file (The original must be in the **CSP** File and copies in the departmental file).
3. **Supervisory Files** are the informal files maintained by supervisors for each of their employees. These files contain records of a temporary nature. Supervisors may also



wish to maintain a record of the name and phone number of an individual designated by the employee to contact in case of emergency.

Documents to be maintained on a temporary basis include notes made by the supervisor regarding the employee's performance or conduct (positive or negative), memos from the supervisor to the employee confirming counseling sessions, memos or notes from third parties regarding the employee, and samples of completed work products. These notes, memos, and work samples form the basis for regular performance discussions, and should be used in preparing evaluations and recommending personnel actions. Any documentation of performance/conduct problems or of superior performance should be shared with the employee as soon as possible. Once an employee has corrected a problem, notes relative to that problem should be removed and maintained in a separate inactive supervisory file. For example, documentation of an employee's attendance problem should be removed from the active supervisory file once that employee's attendance record indicates he or she has corrected the problem (and place those files in a separate inactive supervisory file) or removed per the appropriate Collective Bargaining Agreement or Records Retention Schedule.

If an employee transfers within his or her department, the supervisory file should be forwarded to the new supervisor, after being purged of any extraneous or outdated records, pursuant to Public Records Law.



Example #1: Probationary Rejection for Attendance

Supervisory Notes – [Employee Name]

[Position Classification] (# of hours - probationary period)

9-7-15 (Monday, 9 a.m.) – I met with Jane Smith who started her City employment today. We went over the list of written expectations I provided which include department-specific expectations as well as generic expectations as a City employee. We then reviewed the resource materials including the reference manual and her training schedule for the next four weeks. I encouraged her to take notes during our meetings and to keep them in the resource binder that also includes desktop procedures and additional reference materials. We reviewed her work schedule that we had already discussed (8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. with lunch from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 pm). She provided me her home phone, cell phone, and emergency contact information for our departmental personnel files. I let her know to come to me if she has any questions and/or concerns regarding any instructions given. I explained that we'd initially meet each week to review her work. I then introduced her to her coworker Ben who has been in the department for several years and can provide her assistance in my absence.

9-22-15 (Tuesday, 11 a.m.) – I reviewed the work she had completed the past week that included setting up project files for me and preparing handouts for the meeting last Friday. She also set up the room including the equipment for a PowerPoint presentation by one of the attendees. She handled that last minute request promptly and efficiently and I told her how helpful that was for me. Jane thanked me for the positive feedback. She then provided me an overview of her pending assignments and what she expects and/or needs to complete by Friday.

10-1-15 (Thursday, 9:20 a.m.) – Jane was twenty minutes late to our meeting because she was handling a difficult client on the phone and had emailed me during that call about the situation saying she'd be right in after the phone call. When she arrived, we discussed the phone call and whether further action was needed. She felt she had addressed the client's concerns but wanted suggestions on how best to handle difficult calls in the future. I provided suggestions that I have found to be effective and recommended she take the City training "Conflict Resolution: Dealing with Difficult People" which others in the department have found useful. I told her I would enroll her. I encouraged her to review the course catalog to see if there were any other courses she'd be interested in taking. We then reviewed her work the previous week. I commented that the draft proposal document she had typed for Mary, the department director, was completed on time. However, it had several grammatical and typographical errors. Jane explained she couldn't read Mary's writing and didn't want to bother me to clarify what was written. I told her that that was all right and appropriate to ask



for clarification before submitting the final draft to me for review. She assured me that she would do so in the future and expects she'll improve in this area as she becomes more accustomed to Mary's writing. Since I will be on vacation next week, we scheduled our next supervision for 10/12/15.

10-12-15 (Monday, 2 p.m.) – I met with Mary this morning to review what occurred while I was out last week. Mary mentioned Jane's attendance last week during my vacation. Jane was late on Thursday (10/11/10 – twenty minutes,) which had been brought to Mary's attention by Ben, as he had to open the office and cover the reception desk until Jane arrived; he was unable to assist Mary on a project until Jane arrived. Jane had not told Mary that she was going to be late nor did she notify her when she arrived to work. Since Jane had not notified Mary about her being tardy when she arrived, Mary asked Jane to come to her office at 9:30 a.m. and let her know she was aware that she was late that morning. Jane explained she set her alarm clock incorrectly so she left her home fifteen minutes late. Mary asked Jane if she was aware of our expectations about calling in no later than thirty minutes prior to start time if she was going to be late. Jane explained she was aware of this expectation and assured Mary it wouldn't happen again. Jane asked Mary if she could shorten her lunch to forty minutes to make up the time and her request was granted. During our meeting today, I again asked if she had any questions and/or needed clarification about expectations regarding her work schedule and/or calling in if there was any change to that schedule. She told me she understood what's expected of her and had no further questions. We then reviewed the work she completed during my vacation and let her know that Mary was pleased with the meeting minutes she had prepared for her last week. No additional revisions were needed and Mary was able to distribute them as needed. Jane then asked me if she could change her work hours from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. I told her that our office hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and she's responsible for opening the office and covering the reception desk. I told her I could not adjust her work schedule.

10-23-15 (Friday) – Jane called me at 9 a.m. to say she was sick and would not be coming in. She told me she would bring in a doctor's note when she returned to work on Monday.

10-26-15 (Monday, 9 a.m.) – I met with Jane to discuss her two unscheduled absences since she started. I explained that it's crucial that she is reliable; it makes a big impact when she's not here. I also reiterated that she needs to call Mary or me by 7:30 a.m. – within thirty minutes of her start time – if she's not coming in so we have time to make alternate arrangements for front desk coverage. Her absence last Friday was her second unscheduled absence. She initially became upset and said that I wasn't being fair. I told her that the expectations given to her were the same expectations given to other employees in the department and I'm treating her no differently and expect the same from her. She agreed to comply with these expectations and said she would call Mary or me by 7:30 a.m. if she's late



and/or not coming in. I told Jane that minimum improvement would be no more than two unscheduled absences, which includes tardies, in any three-month period.

11-6-15 (Friday) – I met with Jane and we reviewed her work for the previous week and the project due by 11/20. She had typed up the meeting agenda and still had to make copies of the handouts and articles to be included in the participants’ packets – twenty total. She attended the City training course about dealing with difficult people and explained how she can incorporate the information and tips she learned in that class into her work.

11-12-15 (Thursday, 3 p.m.) – I met with Jane and reviewed her “To Do” list for the meeting next week. She’s made the copies of the handouts and still needs to copy the five articles. She expects to complete the participants’ packets by close of business Monday. I told her if she needed any help to ask Ben or me. She said she has everything under control and does not anticipate any difficulties getting the packets done.

11-13-15 (Friday, 3 p.m.) – Left work two hours early – headache.

11-18-15 (Wednesday, 2 p.m.) – I met with Jane and reviewed her work regarding yesterday’s meeting. The packets were completed on time yesterday and the meeting room was set up as I had requested. During the meeting, she periodically checked in with me to see if I needed anything. I told Jane I appreciated her extra efforts.

12-4-15 (Friday) – Jane was a no show/no call (AWOL). I left her messages on her home phone and cell phone around 9 a.m. informing her to call me back immediately. She called me at 12:00 p.m. to say she was too tired and wouldn’t be in. She told me she didn’t call me earlier because she slept in and forgot to call. I told her to plan to meet with me when she returned to work.

12-7-15 (Monday, 10 a.m.) – I met with Jane regarding her AWOL (absence without Leave) last Friday. I explained that her AWOL last Friday was unacceptable and will not be tolerated. I advised her that I had verbally counseled her regarding her attendance about her three unscheduled absences; yet I had not seen any commitment on her part and her unscheduled absence last Friday was considered AWOL. Due to attendance concerns, I advised Jane that she was being rejected during her probationary period, and I gave her a letter prepared by Human Resources to that effect. If she wanted to resign, she had until tomorrow at 10 a.m. to submit her resignation, and the rejection would be changed to a resignation.