

## **Job Performance Appraisals in the Greentown Fire Department**

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## CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

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## **ABSTRACT**

The lack of performance appraisals for the members of the Greentown Fire Department (GTFD) has caused problems within the department with regard to completing probationary periods, issuing discipline, and evaluating members for promotion. The purpose of this descriptive research project was to determine if it would be beneficial, as well as feasible, to implement performance appraisals into the GTFD. The following research questions were developed and evaluated: what criteria can be used to evaluate work performance, what job performance areas need to be evaluated, how departments are using job performance appraisals, and what are the national, state and/or local standards for performance appraisals. The research began with a literature review. The author also gathered information from several books and articles and then developed two surveys. The first survey was distributed to other fire departments across Ohio that were similar in size and makeup to GTFD. The second survey was distributed to all of the members of GTFD. Data was collected and evaluated against the research questions. The results exhibited that a self-assessment with a supervisory review would be beneficial for the members. The recommendation from the author is that it would be beneficial to implement job performance appraisals into the department. Implementation should be gradual, and include training of the pilot group that will ultimately conduct the appraisals. Subsequently, these appraisals should be rolled-out for all members. By gradual implementation, the program would provide members with the feedback needed for self-improvement and development. These appraisals would address the previously mentioned issues with probationary period, discipline, and promotion that face the Greentown Fire Department.

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## INTRODUCTION

### **Statement of the Problem**

A problem facing the Greentown Fire Department (GTFD) is the lack of job performance appraisals to evaluate probationary employees and currently employed members of the fire department. Without criteria to evaluate employees' job performances, it is difficult to identify areas of needed improvement for individuals, and the timing and appropriateness of a pay raise.

The purpose of a probationary period is to allow members to adapt to their new working environment and responsibilities. Because performance appraisals are not utilized, it is difficult to hold employees accountable for their actions and to assure they are meeting job requirements. In addition, without standardized measures for individual performance, the quality or quantity of an employee's work is difficult to measure. The lack of an evaluation system creates challenges for officers in issuing discipline, assessing personnel for career advancement, and evaluating probationary firefighters.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this descriptive research project is to determine if and how performance appraisals would benefit and contribute to the professional development of the members of the GTFD. Furthermore, it will provide information about how evaluations might be established and implemented.

### **Research Questions**

During the course of this descriptive research, the following questions were addressed:

1. What criteria can be used to evaluate work performance?
2. What job performance areas need to be evaluated?

3. How are other departments using job performance appraisals?
4. What (if any) are state, and/or local standards for performance appraisals?

### **BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE**

The Greentown Volunteer Fire Department, Inc. is a private fire company that contracts with the Lake Township Trustees to provide fire and emergency medical service protection for the citizens of Lake Township. Lake Township is located in the county of Stark in northeast Ohio. The primary response district of the GTFD is nine square miles with approximately 10,000 residents and is comprised of mostly residential properties with a small amount of light industrial properties. The department utilizes part-time staffing of forty-five members to respond to approximately 700 calls per calendar year from one centrally located station. The calls break down further into approximately 550 calls that require emergency medical services per year, with fire and public service calls making up the remainder of the call volume.

The GTFD was formed in 1939 as a civic organization to help protect the residents of Greentown from fire. At the time, the department had a Chief Engineer, an Assistant to the Chief Engineer, and two Captains. For six decades, the organization was supported by volunteers and donations from the community members and was managed by a board of trustees.

In 1990, the department underwent changes with the addition of emergency medical services and a new officer structure. The new structure added one new Assistant to the Chief Engineer, two Lieutenants, an EMS Chief, and three EMS Coordinators to the previously existing organization. This officer structure only lasted a few years, until the department moved to a new building and created the officer structure that exists today, which is the Fire Chief, three Assistant Fire Chiefs, three Captains and three Lieutenants under the management of a nine-

member board of directors. The department required no qualifications in order to receive a promotion, and there was no method of testing used to determine adequate knowledge or skills needed to perform a job.

In the past, the promotions in the department were done through favoritism and nepotism, and those that were promoted were selected only by the chief of the department. At present, there remains only one person in a leadership role that was promoted under this system, and he was required to test in order to keep his current position. The next major change occurred in May 2002, when the department entered into a contract with Lake Township to provide twenty-four hour firefighter/paramedic coverage to the department's fire district. A part-time program existed that covered the hours of 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., but this program only offered a basic transport and vehicle crew for the paramedic service, which the township was actively disbanding. This change in coverage allowed for part-time medics to be hired who were not from the Greentown area.

The current Fire Chief, hired in the fall of 2002, decided to relieve certain officers who were no longer fulfilling their obligations within the department. These officers were not taking an active role in the department's transformation, and in some instances, certain officers were not completing the requirements to be members of the department. For the Fire Chief to gain control over the department, he was forced to make all officers accountable or remove them from their positions. The Fire Chief created a testing procedure for the officers' positions. At that time, there were four openings, which meant that the department was in need of three Lieutenants and one Captain. In order to compete for a position, candidates had to meet certain pretest qualifications and then pass a competitive test that included knowledge-based testing, physical agility and interviews.

This new testing procedure was implemented in an effort to promote the best possible candidates. It did result in good officers being promoted, but all had varied backgrounds and levels of experience. The fact that the new officers came from different full-time fire department jobs caused tension at times due to differences of opinion among the officers regarding consistent promotion requirements. For example, annual training for EMS is mandatory for all members due to a requirement by the medical control doctor providing the training; fire training has no stipulations. Most of the calls are EMS calls, and crews tend to be proficient at their jobs. Fire calls are a small part of our annual run volume. Combined with a mixed staff of volunteers, and part-time employees, it is challenging to rate and evaluate each person as to his/her strengths and weaknesses. This issue has caused the Chief of the department some concerns.

Since the Chief had no criteria or a system to evaluate each employee's performance, everyone received the same percentage of pay increases. This action caused some unrest in the ranks. The employees who had additional duties such as community CPR training or fire safety inspections felt they should be compensated at a higher percentage rate than others who did the minimum by showing up on time and running calls. Other issues that are so because of lack of performance appraisals were the absence of training and/or experience on fire and EMS runs. Some employees did not go to trainings and missed developing important skills. This was evident on the fire ground when those individuals failed to adequately perform their duties. Probationary employees had no end of the year evaluation to determine whether they qualified to maintain employment. They simply put in their hours and were sworn in at the end of their one-year term.



*The potential impact this study could have on the GTFD would be to have in place a properly formatted and detailed job performance evaluation/appraisal with the goal of lessening if not completely alleviating, evaluation issues.*

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

A performance appraisal is a process where written communication is given to an employee to evaluate job performance and encourage future improvement. Evaluations are an important part of the effort to help employees fully develop their work potential. The evaluation process establishes benchmarks to measure performance and provide valuable feedback for a supervisor and the employee. Formal evaluations also provide an opportunity for employees to give their supervisors feedback (Walsh, 1995). According to NFPA 1021, the responsibility for formal performance evaluations rests with the company officer. Performance evaluations may be formal or informal and should be done annually (Stowell, 2007). Many members and even some supervisors look upon performance evaluations as a necessary, but undesirable part of the job. If we view evaluations as a way of improving performance, a positive shift in attitude regarding evaluations may occur. The real purpose of performance evaluations is to document the member's performance (Smoke, 2005). Smoke goes on to state that there are a number of systems for evaluating members. Some have a series of questionnaires addressing various traits of the members performance. Others simply ask for a pass/fail assessment.

Mohrman, Resnick-West and Lawler (1989) stated the rationale for performance-based appraisal should be viewed as a process and not simply as a creation of ubiquitous standards. The overriding purpose of these appraisals is to help improve performance, and thus, increase

organizational effectiveness, and if done routinely, will benefit both the organization and employees.

Quast (2013) also supports this view. She states that these evaluations should be looked upon as a constructive, not demotivating event. As a global vice-president of service marketing for a Fortune 500 healthcare company, she says it is her job to coach and to cultivate star performers. When you devote a great deal of time to finding that perfect fit for your organization, you should go one step farther to ensure his or her longevity with your company. Job performance appraisals can ensure this occurs and translate into achieving targets and quotas, ensuring cost control, process improvement, completion of projects, etc (Quast).

Swinehart's (2008) research suggests that fire departments have begun to recognize the role of evaluating employees. Historically, fire departments paid little attention to the annual review process. If a department conducted job performance appraisals, a uniform "cookie cutter" instrument was typically used for all ranks, jobs, and positions. Little distinction was made between the job of a Captain and that of a Firefighter 1. Swinehart (2008) concludes that when fire departments conduct evaluations after probationary periods, organizational and employee growth multiplies. Performance evaluations should be job specific and avoid simple generic evaluations.

"Job performance appraisals aren't just a one-time, one-hour meeting, but in fact something to substantively prepare for. Therefore, it is imperative to establish criteria by which work performance can be evaluated. Significant thought should go into this. What are the key messages you want to convey to your employee? What is the overall feeling you'd like the employee to leave the meeting with" (Quast, p. 2). It is always a good idea to talk to other employees and others in management to get multiple perspectives on an individual's

performance (Lipman, 2012). In an ideal world, if a manager or an officer has been communicating often and candidly with their employee or probationary candidate the evaluation should contain no surprises and be almost an afterthought. “However; our world is real and not ideal, so frequently there are surprises and sensitive issues to address, making these meetings even more important to have” (Lipman, p. 2).

There are many schools of thought over what areas need to be evaluated, but everyone agrees that there needs to be clarity about the objectives. Differing opinions about objectives are often why appraisals flounder. (Lipman, 2012) If the manager or officer and employee disagree on what the expectations are, how can one hope to end up with a constructive meeting of the minds? Therefore, it is vital to be clear about the overall objectives (Lipman, 2012). Ideally, they are measurable (truly objective and not subjective), though that is not always possible. “Ideally, the employee has been involved in their [the objectives] creation from the start, and buys into them” (Lipman, p. 2). If, for some reason none of this has occurred, either because of management changes, function changes and so on, a pre-evaluation conversation about the objectives may well be helpful to set the stage before the more formal appraisal takes place. (Lipman, 2012)

Mohrman, Resnick-West, and Lawler (1989) stated that possibly the most important area is the job description itself. They state that “the description should be reliable, valid, and specific. It should focus on what the probationary candidate as well as the career employee, does and what outcome or outcomes are expected. Responsibilities should be listed in order of importance if possible” (Mohrman, Resnick-West and Lawler, n.p.).

Quast (2013) stated that four key areas, at a minimum, be discussed during a performance appraisal. These serve as a solid foundation and hit key topics that are important when going over a candidate's, or established member's, performance.

A.Past performance. If a new member, especially, has been having difficulty during the probationary period, then it might be likely that this difficulty may persist if allowed to advance. By going over this area now, proper adjustments can be made and additional measures can be taken if necessary. For an existing member, his or her past performance serves as a reference point and can be incredibly helpful in identifying key performers that have the capability to advance and become future leaders within the fire service.

B.Current performance. How is the new member handling their responsibilities within the department? Is he or she demonstrating areas of weakness? Are there specific areas that can be improved on? What are areas of strengths and accomplishment within the department thus far?

C.Goals and objectives. How does that candidate/employee see himself or herself in a year? How does he or she want to improve upon? What steps would be necessary to obtain that goal?

D.Personal development plan. How or in what capacity does he/she see themselves growing in their career? Is there a desire for further education in order to grow within the company? By creating a comprehensive plan for employee development and giving an employee achievements to strive for, it will inspire a higher level of efficiency (Quast, 2013).

Quast (2013) also believes that a performance appraisal should not be one-sided, and that it is important for the officer or whomever is doing the evaluation to remember the following key points.

A. Candid discussion should be encouraged. While this is the time to discuss the officer or supervisor's point of view, the employee should also be given the opportunity to say what he or she thinks. Did something not happen during the evaluation period that they had hoped would? Would they do anything differently or keep things the same? In what areas will they be looking to their superior officers for support and guidance?" (Quast, p. 1)

B. Give praise and credit where it is due. Recognition is one of our basic needs. Giving recognition fulfills a basic human need. It is also a great motivator and gets members to do more and be even more effective. When an employee is shown how his or her performance affects the ability of others in the organization to do their jobs, it helps put his or her own job duties into an overall company context. It helps improve the notion of teamwork among the staff, providing motivation and encouraging cooperation to achieve company goals. (Quast, 2013)

C. Don't shy away from dealing with issues. While a performance appraisal is a great time to recognize a candidate or employee for their exemplary work, it can also serve as a place to reinforce plans for getting an employee back on track. Changes that need to be made in behavior, for example, can be dealt with, and consequences of not changing their behavior can be reiterated. Most importantly, an employee should understand where the comments are coming from. They should all make good and logical sense. (Quast, 2013)

D. Don't close out the appraisal until you are both on the same page. Quast (2013) clearly states that her goal during an appraisal is to make sure she "has a complete understanding about the employees' performance, their achievements and failures/pitfalls, their next year's goals, and their plan for personal growth." (Quast, p. 2) This ensures that the officer or supervisor, as well as the employee, has a clear understanding and a shared view of their working world and future.

There are several capacities in which performance appraisals have been built into departments showing that they are beneficial. Edwards (2005) states that the following exemplify the benefits of performance appraisals: 1) Career development. The employee is able to think ahead and determine what avenues are necessary to advance their career and what education will be needed. 2) Feedback. Employees have a vested interest in how they are doing. 3) Documentation. This is needed so that there is a way in order to publicly praise an employee's behavior, or so that if changes need to be made, they can."(Edwards, p. 156-157)

Of course, there is usually an associated downside to job performance appraisals. Unfortunately, appraisals are not on the top of the list of favorite things to do for either the managers or the employees, and there can be a number of problems with administration of appraisals. These problems can range from officers or superiors not being trained to conduct performance appraisals effectively to the failure to tie performance appraisal expectations to desired results. Therefore it is often a challenge to use this tool effectively (Edwards, 2004).

Richards (2013) stated that one of the most common downfalls is a poorly trained officer or manager conducting the appraisal. Effective performance appraisal doesn't just happen, and organizations and departments shouldn't assume that officers or managers know how to conduct them effectively, even if the officers or managers have many years of experience (Richards, 2013). It is imperative that training is provided to introduce the officers and managers to the philosophy of performance appraisal at the department include a review of the forms, the rating system, and how the data is gathered and then used. (Richards, 2013) This training should take place regularly as a training for both new and experienced officers and managers.

Inter-rater reliability is generally low between managers at any organization. What one officer considers acceptable, another may consider not meeting expectations. This can certainly

be a challenge for any organization and is made more of a challenge in situations where the criteria used are subjective and not based on any measurable performance outcomes (Edwards, 2004).

The purpose of performance appraisals is not only to provide input to employees about how they are doing, but also to provide the department with an indication of areas of employee strength and opportunities for improvement (Edwards, 2004). Unfortunately, few departments actually aggregate and use the results of performance appraisal for performance improvement efforts. By analyzing the results and taking advantage of both best practices in areas where employees are performing well, and opportunities for improvement in areas where they are not, departments can receive maximum value from their performance appraisal efforts (Edwards, 2004).

It is interesting to note that performance appraisals are not a new thing. Bruegman. (2012), suggests that performance appraisals began in the private sector as a way of justifying income. Although many organizations at one time or another have strayed from conducting the evaluations, others have not, and are looking for better and swifter ways to give feedback.

Mozilla, the company that developed the Firefox open-source Web browser, is hardly a staid, old-line firm. However, when it came to performance reviews, it clung to the conventional, age-old ritual. Kaufman (2009) said that employees would write a self-evaluation, the manager would solicit their feedback, and then write a review based on what that person had done for the year. The company's senior director, Daniel Portillo, said "it was pretty inefficient in that it was only done once a year" (Kaufman, p. 1). Now they have implemented a one-on-one feedback session with employees *at least* six times a year; however, this often happens once a month. (Kaufman, 2009)

Mr. Portillo states that if you were really trying to improve and were trying to build a culture of development, all individuals would want to ask questions about how they are doing and what they can do to do better (Kaufman, 2009).

Kaufman (2009) wrote that getting feedback on a continuous basis is something Generation Y employees seem to crave. Young workers in their 20's who've been dubbed the validation generation are often portrayed as "needy and whiney in the workplace" (Kaufman, p. 2).

Kaufman goes on to state that when you're entering the workforce, you want to get feedback. The difference with this generation is that they have "grown up on a constant and steady feedback from school and work, but also of being much more collaborative and interactive with the people around them" (Kaufman, p. 2).

Kaufman states that "the norms of the new generation really are driving into the workforce rapidly. The company has got to look at it different, the employee has got to look at it differently, and really the middle managers and the management of the organization have to look at it differently and that in these economic times, it's more important than ever that employees get what they need to become more productive" (Kaufman, p. 3).

Walsh (1995) points out that it is hard to make people change. The desired outcome is to align the goals of the organization with the performance of the member. Edwards (2004) recommends concluding the performance appraisal meeting on a positive note and focusing on the future. A firm handshake and commitment to work together are good practices upon which to end the meeting.

Evaluations are beneficial to both the employer and employee because it creates and enhances dialogue. Firefighters should be evaluated in order to promote professional



improvement, increase employer and employee satisfaction, and the development of personnel advancement. However, when conducting evaluations there may be hesitation from firefighters who perceive performance evaluations as laying the foundation for termination. Others may view the process as an opportunity for management to initiate a merit pay system. Another perspective is that evaluations serve no legitimate purpose due to the lack of changes implemented (Neely, 2002). The benefits of evaluations far exceed any perceived doubts that can possibly hinder the implementation of the program.

It is clear from the vast amount of information available on job performance appraisals, that they are incredibly beneficial in the development and advancement of fire department members. However, it cannot be quickly set up and implemented without both the officers, supervisors and members all being involved in the careful planning, developing, and training that is needed as well as making sure there is continued review and followup. The GTFD needs to strongly consider all of the positive attributes noted in regard to performance appraisals. With the proper guidance and assistance from each level within the ranks, the members of the GTFD can continue to grow as leaders in the fire service.

## **PROCEDURES**

The purpose of this descriptive research project was to determine if it is feasible to implement a job performance appraisal program for the members of GTFD and how this program could be designed, structured, and enforced. At this point of the project, the research questions have been established and a literature review has been conducted.

The author put together a pilot group of people from the fire service to aid in reviewing the surveys for ease of understanding, clarity and ensuring that the surveys were relevant. This

group consisted of one part-time member and one volunteer member, both of which were members of GTFD, one part-time member who works for a career fire department, one part-time member of another part-time department, and an officer of a career department not affiliated with GTFD. This group was able to review questions and offer their input as to how to improve the wording and structure, if they deemed it necessary.

The first survey (internal) was distributed to all 44 members of the Greentown Fire Department. Of the 44 members, 10 were officers, consisting of 1 chief, 3 assistant chiefs, 3 captains, and 3 lieutenants. The surveys were initially distributed to individual mailboxes on December 1, 2013. Attached to the survey was a brief explanation of the project explaining that the sole purpose was to gather information. The author did not want the members to become overly concerned due to the nature of the topic and thus, becoming hesitant to fill out the survey or to avoid it completely. A follow-up letter was distributed to all members on or about January 2, 2014 reminding them to complete and turn in the survey with the final deadline set as January 15, 2014.

The second survey (external), was sent out via Survey Monkey, to fire chiefs throughout the state of Ohio. These external surveys were distributed on December 1, 2013. A follow-up email was sent on or about January 2, 2014 reminding the fire chiefs to please complete and return the survey with the final deadline set as January 15, 2014. The external surveys could be returned via email or by fax.

### **Definition of Terms**

Performance Appraisal. “A systematic and periodic process of evaluating an individual’s performance by comparing it to existing standards or objectives.” (Bruegman, 2012).

Standard Operating Guidelines (SOG).“Written organizational directives that establish or prescribe specific operational or administrative methods to be performed routinely, but allow deviation from a step-by-step procedure if conditions warrant modifications.” (International Association of Fire Chiefs, 2010).

360° Rating Assessment. “A tool that provides each employee the opportunity to receive performance feedback from his or her supervisor as well as peers, reporting staff members, coworkers, and customers” (United States Office of Personnel Management, 1997).

### **Limitations of the Study**

The author of this paper limited the distribution of the external surveys to departments with approximately the same size and makeup of the GTFD. The hope and intent was to receive data from those departments with similar backgrounds. Since these external surveys were forwarded via email distribution lists, it is unknown just how many persons received a data request.

As mentioned in the background information, the members of the GTFD have not been exposed to any type of performance appraisals, so when asked to determine which type of system would work best for the department, many members were at a loss. Many were unfamiliar with the different types of rating systems.

## **RESULTS**

Once the return data for both surveys passed, the data was organized and entered into an Excel spreadsheet for further evaluation. As previously stated, numerous external surveys were distributed using contacts that corresponded with fire departments located throughout Ohio that were of a similar size and makeup as GTFD’s. Thirteen external surveys were returned to this

author (Appendix 1). Of the fire departments that responded, 85% currently conduct performance appraisals, meaning that 11 of those that responded do conduct some form of appraisals and 2 do not currently perform them.

When asked how long each of these departments have been conducting performance appraisals, the results varied; one department has only been conducting performance appraisals for less than 5 years, while the rest have been conducting them for over six. Of those, six departments have been conducting them for more than fifteen years.

The literature review showed just how important these performance appraisals can be for probationary members. The surveys showed that most departments conduct quarterly or semi-annually reviews for all probationary members, while two departments conduct a review at the end of the probationary year. However, all of the departments reported conducting a semi-annual or annual review for all non-probationary members.

The external survey found that of the departments that conduct performance appraisals, 100% of them conduct appraisals prior to the completion of the probationary period for new members, and that 91% were receiving evaluations prior to completion of the probationary period for promoted members.

The external survey revealed that in most organizations, a member's immediate supervisor conducts approximately 62% of the performance appraisals. Also noted is the fact that in some cases, the fire chief will conduct approximately 38% of the appraisals. One department reported that the command staff personnel will conduct the appraisal. Not one department reported evaluation input from a member's peers.

Each department was questioned in regards to what items or areas were being evaluated during the performance appraisal. Job skills and knowledge ranked highest on the list at 77%.

The departments also reported that the ability to get along with others and the ability to obtain established goals was of high importance as well. Professional appearance and presentation came in with a 31% response.

When questioned if the performance appraisals are applied fairly and equally to all members within the department, 69% said that yes, in fact, they were. In conjunction with this topic, when asked if the appraisals benefit the members of the department, all the departments (100%) said that they did benefit the members.

The external surveys asked what was the single most positive attribute of that department's survey. Garnering the highest response was setting attainable goals for the members at 46%. Also identified was that it encouraged personal development and reinforced communications between the evaluator and the member.

When asked what the single most negative attribute of their appraisal system was, 46% reported that it was used to revisit poor performance areas from the member's past. Two departments stated that it was used to degrade the member by the evaluator, and two departments stated that there were no negative attributes to their system. An interesting result was that two different departments wrote in their own answers. One department stated, "The employee remarks have been used as a medium for employees to be critical of supervisors and/or performance based on the limitations of the organization." Another department stated, "They are not consistent between officers/peers. Opinions can get in the way from time to time rather than consistency throughout."

Sixty-two percent of the returned surveys indicated that they utilize a self-assessment with a supervisory review as the means for their performance appraisals, while less than 1% each chose a numerical rating system or a 360-degree rating system.

Of the returned surveys, nine were from combination part-time and volunteer departments, and three were from combination full-time and part-time departments. One survey was from an all-volunteer department. Of the total number of departments, seven departments consisted of 51-75 members, while six departments had 25-50 members.

Thirty-five internal surveys were distributed to the members of GTFD. Of those 35, 16 were returned to the author yielding a 46% return (Appendix 2). As previously stated, this information was organized and entered into an Excel spreadsheet for evaluation. The questions from the external survey were adapted to reflect the internal environment of the GTFD.

When asked, 15 members, or 94%, of the returned surveys indicated that job performance appraisals would be beneficial to the members of the GTFD. Only one survey indicated that they would not be beneficial. Seventy-seven percent of the surveys indicated that probationary members should receive some sort of feedback on a quarterly basis, while 31% felt that they should receive feedback on a monthly basis. One person replied that probationary members should receive feedback semi-annually, and one person replied they should receive feedback on an annual basis. Sixty-two percent indicated that non-probationary members receive feedback annually, while 54% suggested they receive feedback semi-annually. Only one person stated that non-probationary members receive feedback quarterly.

When asked if performance appraisals should be conducted prior to the completion of probationary periods for new members, the response was a unanimous "yes." In conjunction with this topic, when asked if performance appraisals should be conducted prior to the completion of probationary periods for promoted members, fifteen surveys indicated "yes" they should. Only one person felt that, "no," they should not.

Of the 16 internal surveys returned, 9 felt that the command staff personnel and the peers, respectively, should conduct the performance appraisal. Eight felt that the command staff personnel and the immediate supervisor, respectively, conduct the performance appraisal. Four indicated that the shift commander/battalion chief conduct the appraisal.

Department members were asked what items they felt should be evaluated, if performance appraisals were implemented. All 16 indicated that professional appearance and presentation be considered. In addition, ranking high amongst the list was job skills and knowledge, ability to get along well with coworkers and the ability to obtain established goals respectively.

In correlation with the above-mentioned question as to whether a review system would be beneficial for the department, this survey asked if appraisals should be utilized as a tool when evaluating members for promotions. Again, 15 of the returned surveys indicated a positive response, while only one survey indicated a negative response. Of the returned surveys, 12 indicated that performance appraisals be utilized when evaluating members for raises, while 4 indicated that they should not be utilized.

When asked what the members felt would be the most positive attribute of the performance appraisal, 1 indicated that it would encourage personal development, while 7 felt it would aid in setting attainable goals. Four indicated it would reinforce communication between the evaluator and the member, while only 1 indicated that there would be no positive attributes at all to implementing a performance appraisal. In conjunction with that question, the survey asked what they felt would be the most negative attribute to having a performance appraisal implemented. Seven indicated that it may be used to degrade the member by the evaluator. Four indicated that it may not allow discussion or explanation by the member. Two indicated that

there would be no negative attributes, and 1 stated it might be used to revisit poor performance areas from the members past.

Answering which form of performance appraisal would work best for the members of GTFD is a difficult question, since most have never been exposed to one, nor do they have a frame of reference. However, seven indicated that a 360-degree rating assessment should be used, while 4 agreed that a self-assessment with a supervisory review be implemented. Three indicated a numerical rating system be implemented, while two indicated a self-assessment with peer review.

It is important to note that the members of the department were asked what other areas, if any, should be addressed in a performance appraisal. Three responses were given. One response asked if the member would be willing to come in during off time to complete tasks for the benefit of the department. Another response indicated that the performance appraisal could be used as an open-ended discussion to cover any issues or questions members have regarding policies, procedures, etc. The last response suggested the member be paired with a supervisor or a peer they worked with most often for an accurate review.

Of the returned surveys, 14 indicated that they are a part-time member of the GTFD. Two indicated that they were a volunteer. The largest group of surveys, eight in total, were returned from those having been on the department for 11-15 years. Three had been on the department for 5-10 years, and three had been on the department for less than five years. One member had been on the department for more than 20 years.

All of this data was compiled into tables in an attempt to answer the research questions listed at the beginning of the research project. The author of this paper reviewed the results with the aforementioned pilot group.



## DISCUSSION

The intent of this research paper is to determine if it would be feasible to implement performance appraisals into the GTFD. The information gathered from the literary review as well as the information from the external and internal surveys were organized and studied. (Appendix 3)

In the literary review, Smoke (2005) points out that the real purpose of the performance review is to document how the member is actually performing. Quast (2013) states that when you devote a great deal of time to finding that perfect fit for your organization, you should go one step farther to ensure their longevity. The external surveys that were returned supported that finding. Eighty-seven percent of the external surveys stated that they do currently perform job performance appraisals, with six departments having done job performance appraisals for over 15 years.

A common finding in the literary review, as well as the surveys returned, supported the idea that probationary members should receive an evaluation by a supervisor. There was some degree of variation as to how often these reviews should be conducted. The external surveys returned showed that the majority of them are conducting job performance appraisals on a semi-annual basis. The internal surveys showed that 77% agree that they should be conducted on a quarterly basis, while 31% agree they should be done every month. However, from the GTFD standpoint, conducting the appraisals on a monthly basis may be too quick if some deficiencies are noted and further skill practice is warranted. Conducting a probationary performance review annually may be too long a period to elapse because a member may not realize that there is an area that needs improvement. Kaufman (2009) supports this statement. He says that having a

performance review only once a year is inefficient and suggests implementing one-on-one feedback with members at least six times a year.

Currently, within the GTFD all promoted members, as well as new hires, are placed on a one-year probationary period. As stated at the beginning of this research project, there are no periodic reviews for these probationary members, nor is one conducted prior to the completion of the stated one year. In order to obtain the most production out of the members, Kaufman (2009) suggests getting feedback on a continuous basis. This would be hard to do without performance reviews. The external survey found that 87% of those returned were conducting performance appraisals prior to the completion of probationary periods. One hundred percent of the internal surveys felt these reviews were needed.

Edwards (2005) stated that performance reviews should be designed to improve performance and not focus solely on previous poor actions. Both the internal and external surveys agreed with this statement. The external surveys rated this the highest attribute for conducting an appraisal. (Appendix4) Likewise, the leading negative attribute on both surveys was found to be the fear of bringing up poor past performance or events. If GTFD were to utilize job performance appraisals, the evaluators would need to be trained and encouraged to focus on the positives and work with the negatives. Richards (2013) supports this statement by saying that one of the most common downfalls is a poorly trained officer or manager conducting the appraisal. However, it is understood that by human nature, it is harder to point out the positives and things that the member is doing correctly, and easier to point out their shortcomings.

Who should conduct the reviews was also researched. There was some variation among the results from the internal survey. The highest ranking answers tied for the command staff personnel and peers. Coming in next at another tie was the fire chief and the immediate

supervisor. The external surveys showed favor towards the immediate supervisor. Here again, the concern would be that those conducting an evaluation would focus on a person's negatives and not put much thought into his or her positives.

In an attempt to determine what areas might need to be evaluated, Quast (2013) suggests that four key areas be discussed at a minimum. They are past performance, current performance, goals and objectives, and a personal development plan. Quast (2013) also suggests that a review of all job descriptions, as well as department SOG's be in place for review, stating that if these areas are gone over, then everyone is on the same page and what is expected of the department member is clarified from the beginning. The internal and external surveys supported this statement. The external survey showed that job skills and knowledge ranked the highest, while among the internal surveys, professional appearance and presentation were the highest with job skills and knowledge coming in a close second. (Appendix5)The members of GTFD also felt that the ability to obtain established goals and to get along well with coworkers were both important areas to be discussed in the review.

The author found it interesting that 62% of the returned internal surveys were from department members with 15-30 years of experience. This number is significant because if performance appraisals are implemented in the GTFD, this group would be part of the initial program, but also provide it with sustainability. Most of the officer corps is within this category. Therefore, they would be asked to take on the responsibility of learning how to provide a proper performance appraisal; one that benefits both professional growth for the member and the quality of service provided by the GTFD. (Appendix 6)

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Through the years, much has been written in regards to the benefits of performance appraisals. While conducting the literature review, as well as both the external and internal surveys, there appears to be positive benefits to conducting them at various points in a member's career. It was found that the foundation for a good review should be based on defined job descriptions and well-established department SOGs. In 2013, a committee, made up of members from all levels of the GTFD, updated all job descriptions and SOGs as needed.

The purpose of this research project was to determine if it was feasible to implement performance appraisals for the department. Based on the results from both surveys, this author finds that it would be beneficial to the members, the fire department, and the community to implement them. However, after perusing previous writings on the subject, it would be difficult to simply implement and sustain a system across the board for all 35 members of the GTFD at one time. Based on the results from the internal survey, as well as documentation supporting self-assessment with supervisory review, this was determined to be the best appraisal system generated for the members of GTFD. The pilot group would be made up of the author of this paper, an Assistant Chief, and a senior firefighter. The reasoning lies in the fact that, once fully developed, these members will be the ones presenting this program to the rest of the department. As the pilot group, a self-assessment with supervisor review should be conducted every quarter for the first year. This provides a good self-assessment format, found during the literature review that can be modified to meet the needs of the GTFD.

Once the format and evaluation criteria have been developed, it is recommended that time be allocated during the department-wide officer meetings to introduce and instruct the officer corps on the purpose and intent of these performance reviews. After one year, meaning four

training sessions, the department should implement these performance reviews for all members of the department. As indicated in both the external and internal surveys, all non-probationary members should receive an annual appraisal during their month of hire.

Furthermore, it is recommended that all probationary members, whether newly hired or newly promoted, should be subject to quarterly reviews. The author wants to reiterate that the reasoning for this is to produce a quality employee or supervisor, not to degrade the member. Performance documentation should encourage those performing well and assist those that need guidance.

It is also recommended that the performance reviews be made available to the hiring and promotional committees. Unlike disciplinary action items that are perused as reference material only, these performance reviews should carry a weighted value in the process. The actual percentage would need to be determined. This would provide a purpose, as well as validity, to the entire performance review program.

Lastly, it is recommended that all appraisals are reviewed by a battalion chief, if conducted by a station captain. This should avoid most, if not all, of the pitfalls listed during the literary review. Along with this, all appraisals should be reviewed by a deputy chief, who should stipulate clarity and consistency from all supervisory members.

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**APPENDIX 1 – PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS (EXTERNAL)**

My name is Marc Jackson. I am enrolled in the Ohio Fire Executive program and am conducting an applied research project for which I am collecting data related to job performance appraisals from fire departments across the state of Ohio. Please assist me by completing this brief survey and returning the form to me via either email or fax. I hope to receive all responses by February 15, 2014. Thank you in advance for your time.

Email: MJackson@GreentownFire.com

Fax: (330) 966-7266

1. Does your department currently conduct job performance appraisals? (If no, skip to question 14 )
  - Yes
  - No
  
2. How long has your department been conducting job performance appraisals?
  - 0-5 years
  - 6-10 years
  - 11-15 years
  - 15 years or more
  
3. How often are performance appraisals conducted on non-probationary members?
  - Monthly
  - Quarterly
  - Semi-annually
  - Annually



4. How often are job performance appraisals conducted on probationary members?
  - Monthly
  - Quarterly
  - Semi-annually
  - Annually
5. Who conducts the performance appraisal for probationary members?
  - Fire chief
  - Command staff personnel
  - Battalion chief or shift commander
  - Immediate supervisor
  - Peers
6. In your department, are performance appraisals conducted prior to the completion of probationary periods for new members?
  - Yes
  - No
7. In your department, are performance appraisals conducted prior to the completion of probationary periods for promoted members?
  - Yes
  - No

8. What items are evaluated in your departments' performance appraisals?
  - Ability to get along with others
  - Job skills and knowledge
  - Professional appearance and presentation
  - Ability to obtain established goals
  - Other (explain)
  
9. In your opinion, are performance appraisals applied fairly and equally to all members within your organization?
  - Yes
  - No
  
10. In your opinion, do performance appraisals benefit the members of your department?
  - Yes
  - No
  
11. Which of the following best describes the type of performance appraisal system utilized by your department for non-probationary members?
  - 360° rating system
  - Self-assessment with a peer review
  - Self-assessment with a supervisory review
  - Rating system (numerical evaluation for different topics)
  - Other (explain)

12. What is the single most positive attribute of your performance appraisal system?
- Setting attainable goals for the members
  - Encourages personal development
  - Reinforces communications between the evaluator and the member
  - There are no positive attributes to our appraisal system
  - Other (explain)
13. What is the single most negative attribute of your appraisal system?
- Does not allow for discussion or explanation by the member
  - Used to revisit poor performance areas from the members past
  - Used to degrade the member by the evaluator
  - There are no negative attributes to our system
  - Other (explain)
14. Which of the following most accurately describes your department?
- All career (full-time)
  - Combination (full-time and part-time)
  - Combination (part-time and volunteers)
  - All volunteer

15. How many members make up your department?

- Less than 25 members
- 25-50 members
- 51-75 members
- 76-100 members
- More than 100 members

Department Name (optional): \_\_\_\_\_ Contact (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX 2 – PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS (INTERNAL)**

*Please complete and return by February 15, 2014*

I am Marc Jackson and as part of my Ohio Fire Executive program research, I am collecting information about Performance Appraisals in the fire service. Please help me by answering the following questions.

1. Do you feel that performance appraisals would be beneficial for the members of the Greentown Fire Department?
  - Yes
  - No
2. How often should non-probationary members receive performance appraisals?
  - Monthly
  - Quarterly
  - Semi-annually
    - Annually
3. How often should probationary members receive performance appraisals?
  - Monthly
  - Quarterly
  - Semi-annually
  - Annually
4. Should performance appraisals be conducted prior to the completion of probationary periods for new members?
  - Yes
  - No

5. Should performance appraisals be conducted prior to the completion of probationary periods for promoted members?
- Yes
  - No
6. Who should conduct the performance appraisal for the member?  
(check all that apply)
- Fire chief
  - Command staff personnel
  - Battalion chief/ shift commander
  - Immediate supervisor
  - Peers
7. If implemented, what items should be evaluated in the performance appraisal?  
(check all that apply)
- Ability to obtain established goals
  - Professional appearance and presentation
  - Job skills and knowledge
  - Ability to get along well with coworkers
  - Other (explain)

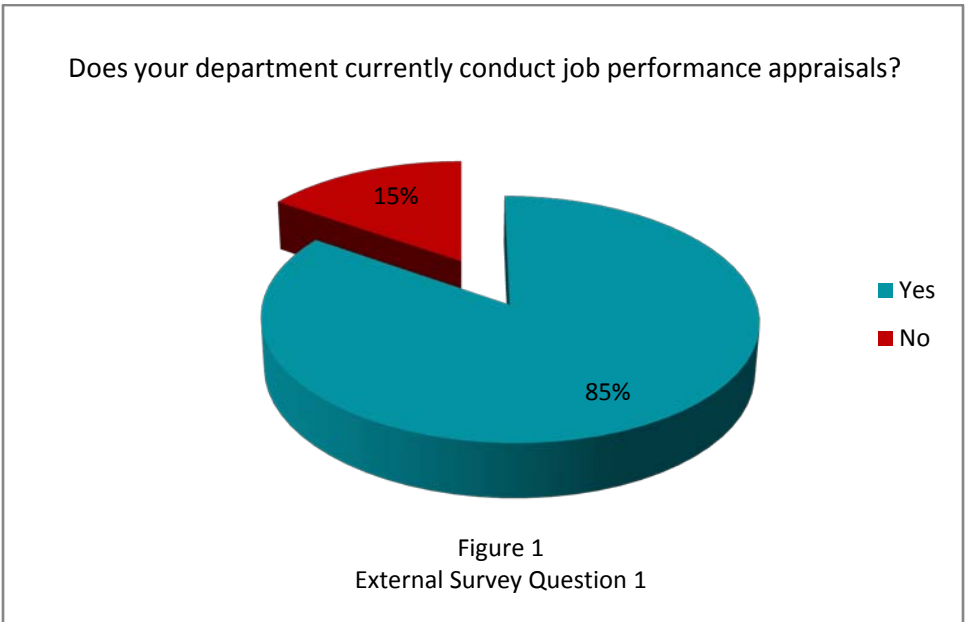
8. If implemented, should performance appraisals be utilized when evaluating members for a promotion?
  - Yes
  - No
9. If implemented, should performance appraisals be utilized when evaluating members for raises?
  - Yes
  - No
10. What do you feel would be the most positive attribute of performance appraisals?
  - Encourages personal development
  - Setting attainable goals
  - Reinforces communication between the evaluator and the member
  - There are no positive attributes to a performance appraisal
    - Other (explain)
11. What do you feel would be the most negative attribute of performance appraisals?
  - May not allow discussion or explanation by the member
  - May be used to degrade the member by the evaluator
  - May be used to revisit poor performance areas from the members past
  - There are no negative attributes to a performance appraisal
  - Other (explain)

12. Which form of performance appraisal would work best for the members of Greentown Fire Department?
- Self-assessment with peer review
  - Self-assessment with a supervisory review
  - 360° rating assessment
  - Rating system (numerical evaluation for different topics)
  - Other (explain)
13. What is your status with Greentown Fire Department?
- Part-time member
  - Volunteer member
14. How long have you been a part time member of Greentown Fire Department?
- Less than 5 years
  - 5-10 years
  - 11-15 years
  - 16-20 years
  - More than 20 years
15. What other areas, if any, should be addressed in a performance appraisal?

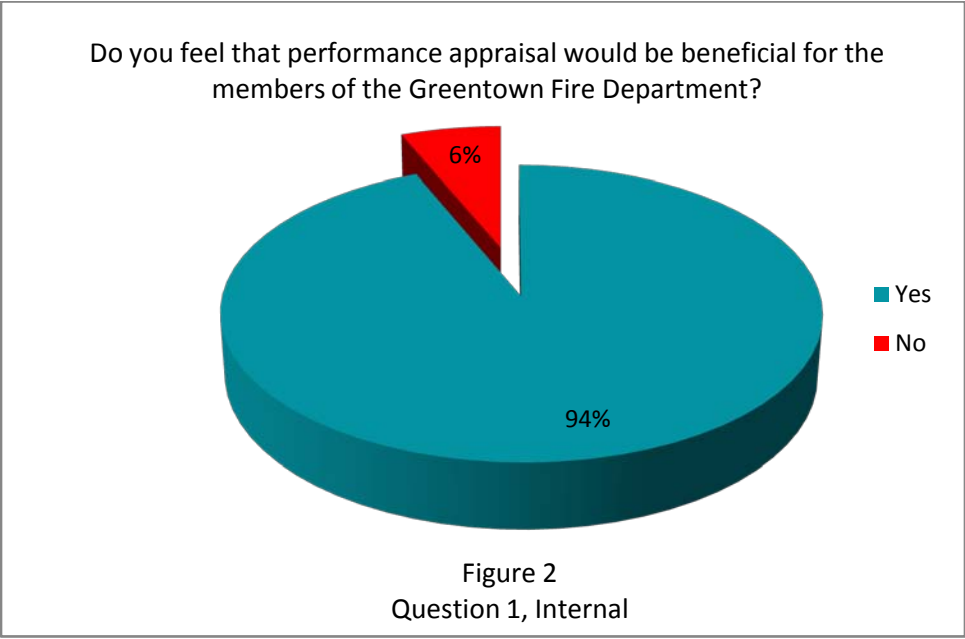
Department Name (optional): \_\_\_\_\_ Contact (optional): \_\_\_\_\_



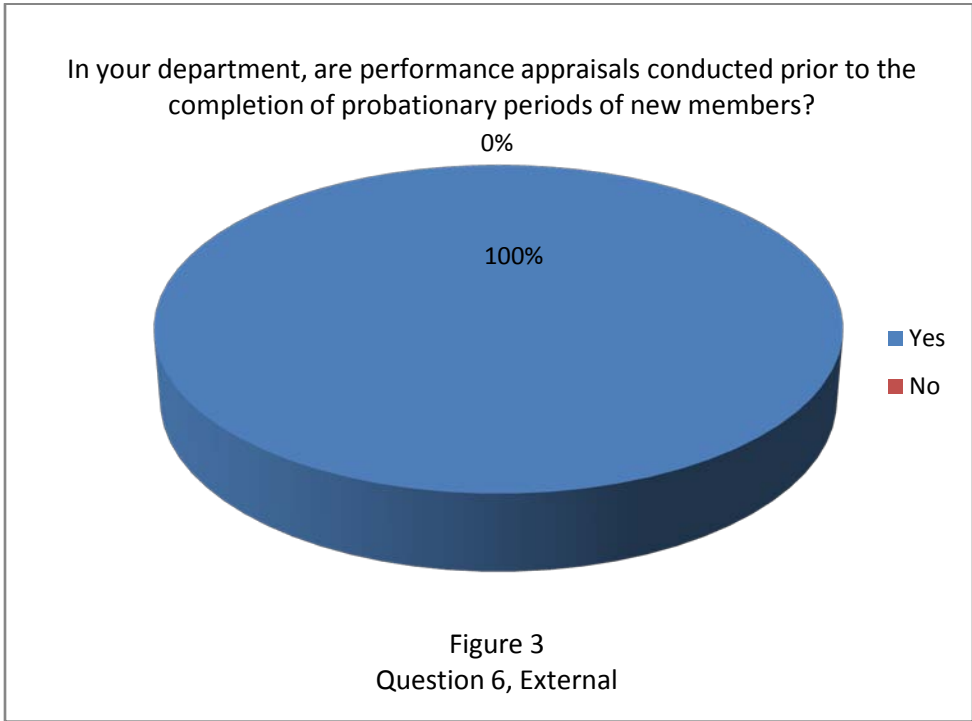
**APPENDIX 3 - DISCUSSION CHARTS**



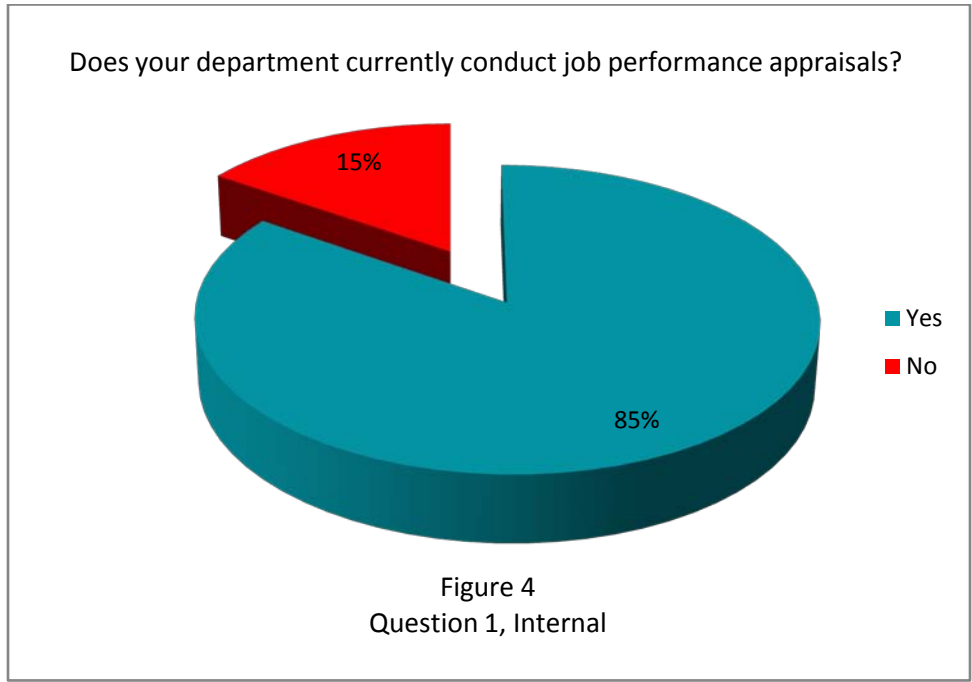
Yes	No
11	2



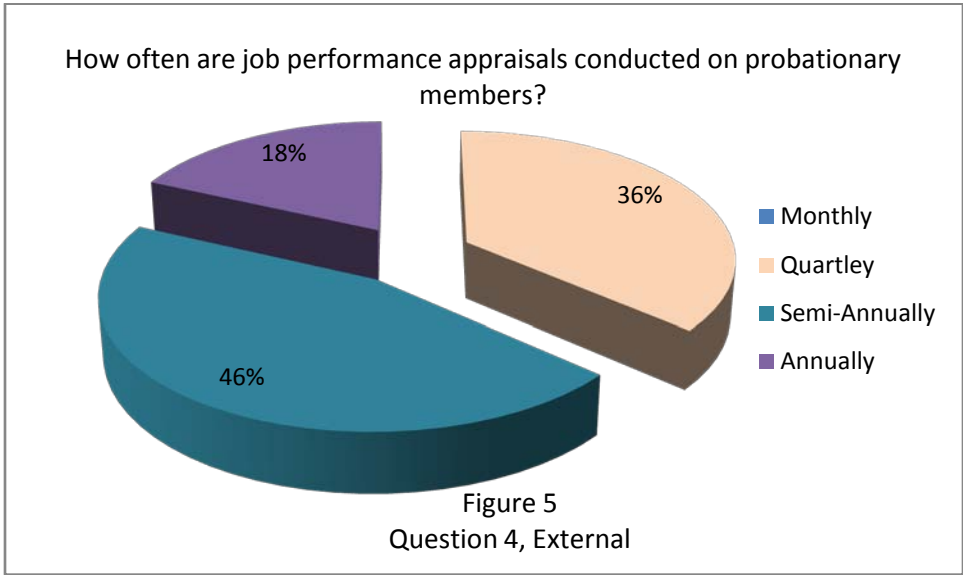
Yes	No
15	1



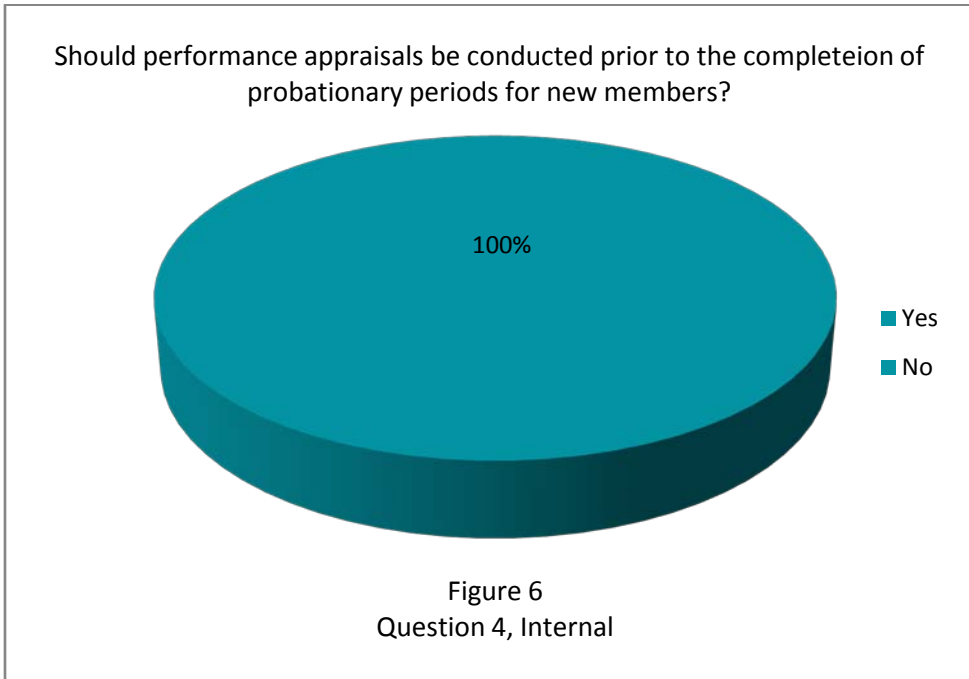
Yes	No
11	0



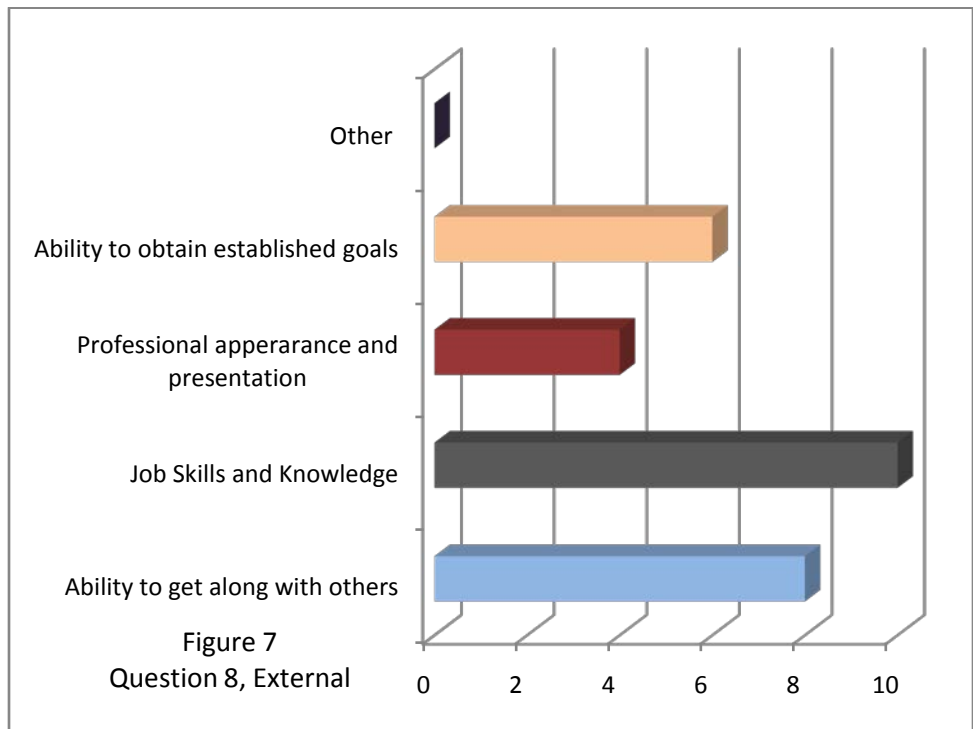
Yes	No
11	2



Monthly	Quarterly	Semi-Annually	Annually
0	4	5	2

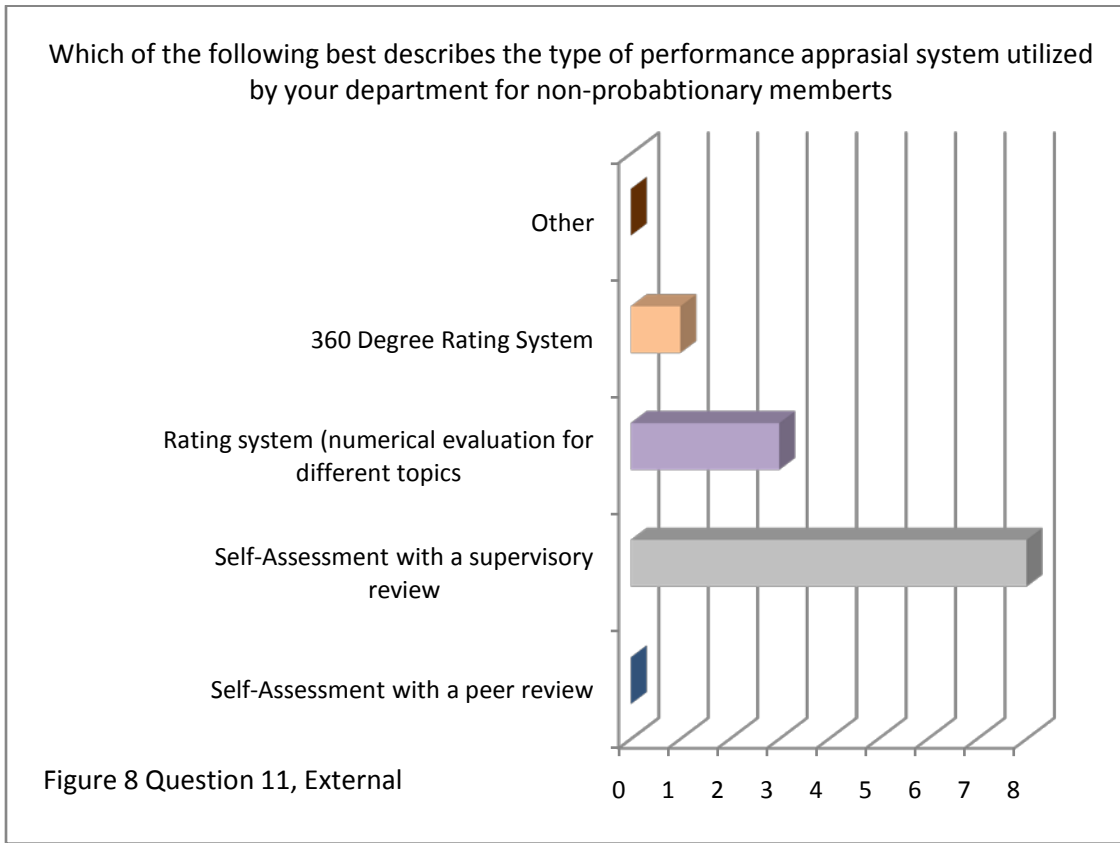


Yes	No
16	0

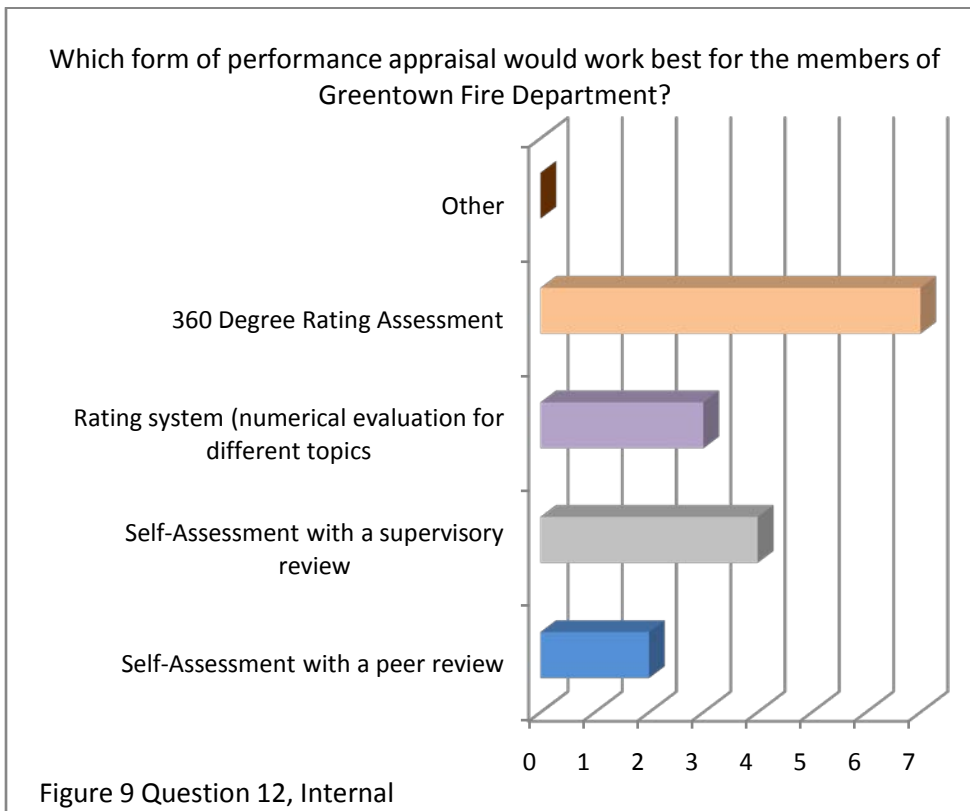


What terms are evaluated in your departments' performance appraisals?

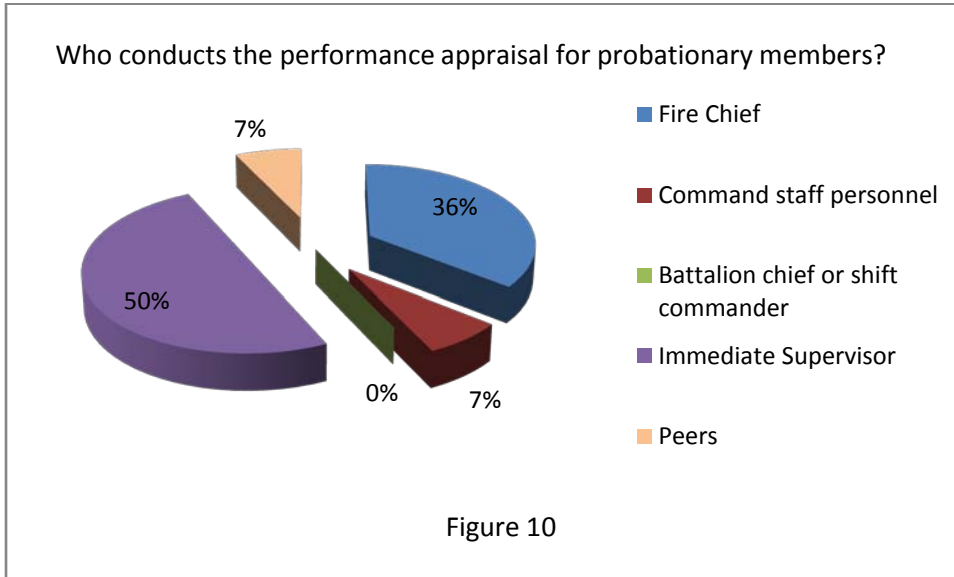
Ability to get along with others	8
Job Skills and Knowledge	10
Professional appearance and presentation	4
Ability to obtain established goals	6
Other	0



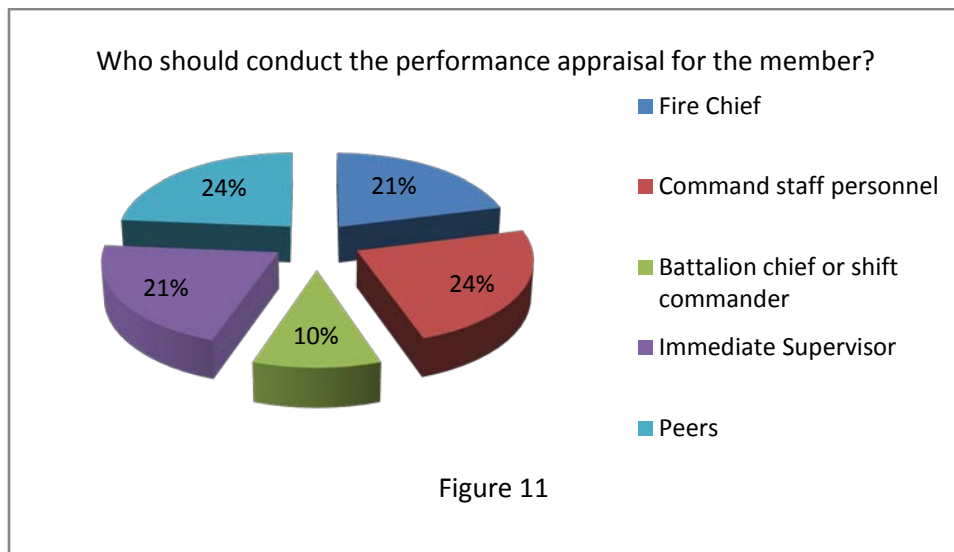
Self-Assessment with a peer review	0
Self-Assessment with a supervisory review	8
Rating system (numerical evaluation for different topics)	3
360 Degree Rating System	1
Other	0



Self-Assessment with a peer review	2
Self-Assessment with a supervisory review	4
Rating system (numerical evaluation for different topics)	3
360 Degree Rating Assessment	7
Other	0



Fire Chief	5
Command staff personnel	1
Battalion chief or shift commander	0
Immediate Supervisor	7
Peers	1



Fire Chief	8
Command staff personnel	9
Battalion chief or shift commander	4
Immediate Supervisor	8
Peers	9

#### APPENDIX 4 - SURVEY RESULTS (EXTERNAL)

1. Does your department currently conduct job performance appraisals? (If no, skip to question 14)	
Yes	<u>11</u>
No	<u>2</u>
2. How long has your department been conducting job performance appraisals?	
0-5 years	<u>1</u>
6-10 years	<u>3</u>
11-15 years	<u>1</u>
15 years or more	<u>6</u>
3. How often are performance appraisals conducted on non-probationary members?	
Monthly	<u>0</u>
Quarterly	<u>0</u>
Semi-annually	<u>2</u>
Annually	<u>9</u>
4. How often are job performance appraisals conducted on probationary members?	
Monthly	<u>0</u>
Quarterly	<u>4</u>
Semi-Annually	<u>5</u>
Annually	<u>2</u>
5. Who conducts the performance appraisal for probationary members?	
Fire Chief	<u>4</u>
Command staff personnel	<u>1</u>
Battalion chief or shift commander	<u>0</u>
Immediate supervisor	<u>7</u>
Peers	<u>1</u>
6. In your department, are performance appraisals conducted prior to the completion of probationary periods for new members?	
Yes	<u>11</u>
No	<u>0</u>
7. In your department, are performance appraisals conducted prior to the completion of probationary periods for promoted members?	
Yes	<u>10</u>
No	<u>1</u>



8. What items are evaluated in your departments' performance appraisal?
- |  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Ability to get along with others         | <u>8</u>  |
| Job skills and knowledge                 | <u>10</u> |
| Professional appearance and presentation | <u>10</u> |
| Ability to obtain established goals      | <u>6</u>  |
| Other (explain)                          |           |
9. In your opinion, are performance appraisals applied fairly and equally to all members within your organization?
- |     |          |
|-----|----------|
| Yes | <u>9</u> |
| No  | <u>2</u> |
10. In your opinion, do performance appraisals benefit the members of your department?
- |     |           |
|-----|-----------|
| Yes | <u>11</u> |
| No  | <u>0</u>  |
11. Which of the following best describes the type of performance appraisal system utilized by your department for non-probationary members?
- |   |          |
|---|----------|
| Self-assessment with a peer review                        | <u>0</u> |
| Self-assessment with a supervisory review                 | <u>8</u> |
| Rating system (numerical evaluation for different topics) | <u>3</u> |
| 360° rating system  | <u>1</u> |
12. What is the single most positive attribute of your performance appraisal system?
- |  |          |
|--|----------|
| Setting attainable goals for the members                   | <u>6</u> |
| Encourages personal development                            | <u>3</u> |
| Reinforces communications between the evaluator and member | <u>2</u> |
| There are no positive attributes to our appraisal system   | <u>0</u> |
13. What is the single most negative attribute of your appraisal system?
- |  |          |
|--|----------|
| Does not allow for discussion or explanation by the member   | <u>0</u> |
| Used to revisit poor performance areas from the members past | <u>6</u> |
| Used to degrade the member by the evaluator                  | <u>2</u> |
| There are no negative attributes to our system               | <u>2</u> |
| Other (explain)  |          |
- The employee remarks have been used as a medium for employees to be critical of supervisors and/or performance, based on their limitations of the organization
  - Not consistent between officers and peers. Opinions can get in the way from time to time rather than consistency throughout

14. How many members make up your department?

Less than 25 members	<u>0</u>
25-50 members	<u>6</u>
51-75 members	<u>7</u>
76-100 members	<u>0</u>
More than 100 members	<u>0</u>

15. Which of the following accurately describes your department?

All career (full-time)	<u>0</u>
Combination (full-time and part-time)	<u>3</u>
Combination (part-time and volunteers)	<u>9</u>
All volunteers	<u>1</u>

### APPENDIX 5 – SURVEY RESULTS (INTERNAL)

- |   |           |
|---|-----------|
| 1. Do you feel that performance appraisals would be beneficial for the members of the Greentown Fire Department?    |           |
| Yes   | <u>15</u> |
| No  | <u>1</u>  |
| 2. How often should non-probationary members receive performance appraisals?  |           |
| Monthly   | <u>0</u>  |
| Quarterly   | <u>1</u>  |
| Semi-annually   | <u>7</u>  |
| Annually  | <u>8</u>  |
| 3. How often should probationary members receive performance appraisals?  |           |
| Monthly   | <u>4</u>  |
| Quarterly   | <u>10</u> |
| Semi-annually   | <u>1</u>  |
| Annually  | <u>1</u>  |
| 4. Should performance appraisals be conducted prior to the completion of probationary periods for new members?      |           |
| Yes   | <u>16</u> |
| No  | <u>0</u>  |
| 5. Should performance appraisals be conducted prior to the completion of probationary periods for promoted members? |           |
| Yes   | <u>15</u> |
| No  | <u>1</u>  |
| 6. Who should conduct the performance appraisal for the member? (check all that apply)                              |           |
| Fire chief  | <u>8</u>  |
| Command staff personnel   | <u>9</u>  |
| Battalion chief/shift commander   | <u>4</u>  |
| Immediate supervisor  | <u>8</u>  |
| Peers   | <u>9</u>  |
| 7. If implemented, what items should be evaluated in the performance appraisal? (check all that apply)              |           |
| Ability to obtain established goals   | <u>11</u> |
| Professional appearance and presentation  | <u>16</u> |
| Job skills and knowledge  | <u>15</u> |
| Ability to get along well with coworkers  | <u>14</u> |

Other (explain)	<u>Initiative</u>
8. If implemented, should performance appraisals be utilized when evaluating members for a promotion?	
Yes	<u>15</u>
No	<u>1</u>
9. If implemented, should performance appraisals be utilized when evaluating members for raises?	
Yes	<u>12</u>
No	<u>4</u>
10. What do you feel would be the most positive attribute of a performance appraisal?	
Encourages personal development	<u>11</u>
Setting attainable goals	<u>7</u>
Reinforces communication between the evaluator and the member	<u>4</u>
There are no positive attributes	<u>1</u>
Other (explain)	<u>0</u>
11. What do you feel would be the most negative attribute of performance appraisals?	
May not allow discussion or explanation by the member	<u>4</u>
May be used to degrade the member by the evaluator	<u>7</u>
May be used to revisit poor performance areas from the members past	<u>1</u>
There are no negative attributes	<u>2</u>
Other (explain)	
-Nepotism or bias/negative bias from evaluator could negatively affect attitude/performance	
-Member having negative attitude towards poor reviews	
-Subjective (can be "buddy-buddy" and not fair)	
12. Which form of performance appraisal would work best for the members of the Greentown Fire Department?	
Self-assessment with peer review	<u>2</u>
Self-assessment with supervisory review	<u>4</u>
360° rating system	<u>7</u>
Rating system (numerical evaluation for different topics)	<u>3</u>
Other (explain)	<u>0</u>
13. What is your status with the Greentown Fire Department?	
Part-time member	<u>14</u>
Volunteer member	<u>2</u>

14. How long have you been a part time member of the Greentown Fire Department?

Less than 5 years	<u>3</u>
5-10 years	<u>3</u>
11-15 years	<u>8</u>
16-20 years	<u>0</u>
More than 20 years	<u>1</u>

15. What other areas, if any, should be addressed in a performance appraisal?

-Is the member willing to come in, frequently, during off time to complete tasks for the benefit of the department?

-Could be used as an open-ended discussion to cover any issues or questions members has regarding policies and procedures

-Member should be paired with supervisor or peer that they work with the most often for an accurate review

## APPENDIX 6 - SAMPLE PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

Job Standards:

### 1. Driving Emergency Vehicles:

Outstanding:	Shall have no violations/citations or vehicle related property damage incidents during the previous 12-month period. Seeks out additional EVOC training and certifications related to driving and operating emergency apparatus. Obtains EVOC or related course instructor certification(s). Helps train/instruct other staff on proper vehicle operation. Makes suggestions to management on how to reduce incidents/accidents.
Excellent:	Shall have no chargeable violations/citations or vehicle related property damage incidents during the previous 12-month period. Seeks out additional EVOC training and certifications related to driving and operating emergency apparatus.
Satisfactory:	Shall have no chargeable violations/citations or vehicle incidents resulting in property damage during previous 12-month period.
Marginal:	Has property damage incident while driving MFD apparatus during previous 12-month period.

Unsatisfactory: Loss or suspension of driver's license. Has violations/citations and property damage incidents while operating emergency vehicles during the previous 12-month review period.

**2. Firefighting Skills and Knowledge:**

Outstanding: Is ambitious and a self-starter performing as a team leader and mentor in the firefighter role pursuant to Marysville Fire Policy & Procedure and Union County SOG without supervision. Recognized in MFD and/or in the general fire service community as a go-to Firefighter regarding knowledge and skill. Provides input to MFD management for possible improvements to Policy and Procedures.

Excellent: Is ambitious and a self-starter and serves as a mentor performing firefighter role pursuant to Marysville Fire Policy & Procedure and Union County SOG without supervision. Provides input to MFD management for possible improvements to Policy and Procedures.

Satisfactory: Performs firefighter role pursuant to Marysville Fire Division Policy & Procedure and Union County SOG without supervision.

Marginal: Has difficult or challenges while performing firefighter role pursuant to Marysville Fire Division Policy & Procedure and Union County SOG with minimal supervision.

Unsatisfactory: Unable to perform firefighter role pursuant to Marysville Fire Policy & Procedure and Union County SOG with direct supervision.

### **3. Apparatus Operations:**

Outstanding: Operates vehicle and associated equipment without supervision. Has the ability to improve, adapt, and overcome situational problems or crisis that may occur. Is fully aware of the maintenance requirements, troubleshooting techniques, and problem solving operational difficulty. Firefighter serves in a mentoring capacity in this area. Always anticipates the needs of crew and command on the fire ground. Provides input to MFD management for possible improvements to Policy and Procedures.

Excellent: Operates vehicle and associated equipment without supervision. Has the ability to improve, adapt, and overcome situational problems or crisis that may occur. Often anticipates the needs of crew and command on the fire ground.



Satisfactory:	Operates vehicle and associated equipment without supervision. Often anticipates the needs of crew and command on the fire ground.
Marginal:	Operates vehicle and associated equipment but requires frequent supervision and/or has challenges in performing tasks.
Unsatisfactory:	Operates vehicle and associated equipment but requires constant supervision. Lacks the ability to improve, adapt, and overcome situational problems or crisis that may occur. Individual lacks constant awareness of the needs of the crew and command on the fire ground.

#### 4. **Training:**

Outstanding:	Completes and actively participates in all daily and mandated Fire and EMS training. Early to training sessions, asks question as appropriate and adds to the learning environment. Actively seeks additional training in both categories. Develops training classes and frequently leads training sessions.
Excellent:	Completes and actively participates in all daily and mandated Fire & EMS training. Actively seeks additional training and leads training periodically.

**Satisfactory:** Completes and participates in all daily and mandated Fire and EMS training. Actively seeks additional training in both categories and occasionally will lead a training session.

**Marginal:** Completes and participates in all daily and mandated Fire and EMS training, but is late for training on occasion and/or demonstrates a low desire to learn. Does not seek additional training and does not lead training sessions.

**Unsatisfactory:** Has a poor attitude towards training and lacks participation during training sessions. Does not seek additional training and does not lead training sessions. Has a deficiency in required training hours.

**5. Apparatus Readiness:**

**Outstanding:** Performs thorough daily and weekly checks of the apparatus. Highly reliable with a keen attentiveness to details. Troubleshoots and resolves problems with no supervision. Functions as a team leader and mentor in this area. Provides input to MFD management as to improvements of apparatus readiness.

Excellent:	Performs thorough daily and weekly checks of the apparatus. Highly reliable and a keen attentiveness to details. Troubleshoots and resolves problems with no supervision.
Satisfactory:	Performs thorough daily and weekly checks of the apparatus. Highly reliable and a keen attentiveness to details. Troubleshoots and resolves problems with minimal supervision.
Marginal:	Performs daily and weekly checks of the apparatus but frequently lacks attention to detail or overlooks and/or ignores problems.
Unsatisfactory:	Seldom completes thorough daily and weekly checks of the apparatus. Poor documentation. Requires constant supervision.

## **6. General Station Maintenance:**

Outstanding:	Completes daily & weekly tasks with no direct supervision and no required follow-up in a timely matter. Will frequently self-identify and take care of other areas requiring time and attention. Will plan and act in the Team Leader role for special projects outside normal work assignment tasks. Generally has the attitude and exhibits action that the station should be a show-case fire facility. Provides input on facility improvements.
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Excellent: Completes daily & weekly tasks with no direct supervision and no required follow-up in a timely matter. Will frequently self-identify and take care of other areas requiring time and attention.

Satisfactory: Completes daily & weekly tasks with no direct supervision and no required follow-up in a timely matter.

Marginal: Completes daily & weekly tasks with occasional direct supervision and frequent follow-up and/or completes tasks to an unacceptable level.

Unsatisfactory: Fails to complete daily & weekly tasks as assigned on a consistent basis despite direct supervision and frequent follow-up.

## 7. **EMS Skills:**

Outstanding: Performs EMT/Paramedic role without direct supervision. Frequently serves as mentor and trainer and serves in a Team Leader role. No documentation and reporting errors. Trains and assists others with FH documentation/incident reporting.

Excellent:	Performs EMT/Paramedic role without direct supervision. Frequently servers as mentor and trainer. No documentation and reporting errors.
Satisfactory:	Performs EMT/Paramedic role without direct supervision. Little to no documentation and reporting errors.
Marginal:	Performs EMT/Paramedic role but requires occasional direct supervision. Some documentation and reporting errors.
Unsatisfactory:	Unable to perform EMT/Paramedic role despite direct supervision. Protocol deviations. Frequent documentation and reporting errors.

## **8. Professional Conduct:**

Outstanding:	At all times interacts professionally with administration, supervisors, crew members, public, and outside agents of the Division. Is an advocate for MFD Fire & EMS services our mission. Always seeks to resolve conflict and offer solutions. Knows and applies our City core values and promotes the same among peers as a leader/mentor.
Excellent:	At all times interacts professionally with administration, supervisors, crew members, public, and outside agents of the

Division. Often seeks to resolve conflict and offer solutions.

Knows and applies our City core values and promotes the same among peers.

Satisfactory: At all times interacts professionally with administration, supervisors, crew members. Knows and applies our City core values.

Marginal: Fails to consistently act professionally with administration, supervisors, crew members, public, and outside agents of the Division. Often has professional conflicts or shows lack of respect that adversely affect crew performance or the mission of the Division.

Unsatisfactory: Constant or recurring inappropriate or unprofessional behavior.

## 9. **Public Relations:**

Outstanding: Develops and implements programs within the community.

Excellent: Assists in development of Public Relations programs and events.

Satisfactory: Participates appropriately in Public Relations events.

Marginal: Lacks minimal participation at PR events.

Unsatisfactory: Fails to participate in PR events and/or inappropriate behavior at PR events.

#### **10. Appearance and Grooming:**

Outstanding Member is a role model for the entire MFD, exhibits great hygiene, and is clean shaven at all times during normal tour of duty. This also applies to any off-duty details, ceremonies, or other occasions where members are acting as representatives of the Fire Division, whether in or out of uniform. Uniform and related articles are always clean, crisp, non-faded, and exceptional/professional appearance.

Excellent Member exhibits excellent hygiene, and is clean-shaven at all times during normal tour of duty. This also applies to any off-duty details, ceremonies, or other occasions where members are acting as representatives of the Fire Division, whether in or out of uniform. Uniform and related articles are always clean, crisp, non-faded, and excellent appearance.

- Satisfactory:** Member exhibits good hygiene, and is clean-shaven at all times during normal tour of duty. This also applies to any off-duty details, ceremonies, or other occasions where members are acting as representatives of the Fire Division, whether in or out of uniform. Requires occasional reminder of uniform and related articles needing attention and/or replacement.
- Marginal:** Frequent reminders of acceptable hygiene and/or not clean-shaven at all times during normal tour of duty. This also applies to any off-duty details, ceremonies, or other occasions where members are acting as representatives of the Fire Division, whether in or out of uniform. Requires frequent reminders of uniform and related articles with bad appearance.
- Unsatisfactory:** Constantly fails to have acceptable hygiene and/or not clean-shaven at all times during normal tour of duty. This also applies to any off-duty details, ceremonies, or other occasions where members are acting as representatives of the Fire Division, whether in or out of uniform. Uniform and related articles frequently have bad appearance.



**11. Documentation:**

Outstanding: Completes all required paperwork in a timely fashion with no errors. Requires no follow-up. Acts as a trainer and mentor in this area. Edits or develops new form data if needed.

Excellent: Completes all required paperwork in a timely fashion with no errors. Requires no follow-up. Acts as a trainer and mentor in this area.

Satisfactory: Completes all required paperwork in a timely fashion with no errors. Requires no follow-up.

Marginal: Completes all required paperwork in a timely fashion with minimal errors. Requires minimal follow-up.

Unsatisfactory: Fails or is unable to complete required paperwork. Has many significant errors and requires constant direct supervision.

**12. Computer Use and Technology:**

Outstanding: Follows Technology Use Policy, completes documentation with outstanding working knowledge of software and programs.

Implements and develops programs, or directs others, researches potential software or programs.

**Excellent:** Follows Technology Use Policy, completes documentation with excellent working knowledge of software and programs with minimal errors.

**Satisfactory:** Follows Technology Use Policy, completes documentation with good working knowledge of software and programs with occasional errors.

**Marginal:** Follows Technology Use Policy, completes documentation with working knowledge of software and programs with frequent errors and problems.

**Unsatisfactory:** Fails to follow Technology Use Policy. Difficulty completing documentation with minimal knowledge of software and incident reporting programs. Frequent errors and problems.

### **13. Supervisory / Leadership**

**Outstanding:** Performs supervisory skills in assigned leadership position in the daily operations of the Division with no supervision and mentors others in the area. Functions as a Team Leader and mentor in this

area. Is considered a formal and/or informal leader among his/her peers.

Excellent: Performs supervisory skills in assigned leadership position in the daily operations of the Division with no supervision.

Satisfactory: Performs supervisory skills in assigned leadership position in the daily operations of the Division with minimal supervision.

Marginal: Performs supervisory skills in assigned leadership position in the daily operations of the Division but requires frequent guidance.

Unsatisfactory: Lacks leadership skills and cannot perform supervisory skills.

#### **14. Attendance**

Outstanding: In early, out late when required. His/her profession and providing quality safety service is paramount and leaves no room for “clock watching.”

Excellent: In early, out late when required and prepared consistently.

Satisfactory: On time and prepared.

Marginal: On time, 1 excused occurrence

Unsatisfactory: Greater than 2 excused occurrences. Unexcused occurrence(s)

## **15. Safety**

Outstanding: Always follows the safety requirements set forth in the Marysville Fire Division Policy & Procedure and City Policy and insures that those around him/her do the same. Identifies and reports safety issues and violations up the chain of command in a timely fashion and frequently makes suggestions to improve safety and eliminate reoccurrences.

Excellent: Always follows the safety requirements set forth in the Marysville Fire Division Policy & Procedure and insures that those around him/her do the same. Identifies and reports safety issues and violations up the chain of command in a timely fashion and occasional makes suggestions to improve safety and eliminate reoccurrences.

Satisfactory: Always follows the safety requirements set forth in the Marysville Fire Division Policy & Procedure. Identifies and reports safety issues and violations up the chain of command in a timely fashion.

**Marginal:** Receives warnings or discipline for failure to follow the safety requirements set forth in the Marysville Fire Division Policy & Procedure manual.

**Unsatisfactory:** Receives more than one disciplinary action for failing to follow the safety requirements set forth in the Marysville Fire Division Policy & Procedure manual. Individual projects a careless overall approach to general safety.

#### **16. Core Values:**

**Outstanding:** Highly reliable and attentive to details and continuously focuses department/division resources and efforts on “Quality Customer Service, Accountability throughout the Organization, Respect, and Proactive Communication. Seldom needs supervision. Resolves problems with no supervision.

**Excellent:** Highly reliable and attentive to details and continuously focuses department/division resources and efforts on “Quality Customer Service, Accountability throughout the Organization, Respect, and Proactive Communication. Seldom needs supervision.

**Satisfactory:** Constantly focuses department/division resources and efforts on “Quality Customer Service, Accountability throughout the

Organization, Respect, and Proactive Communication. Seldom needs supervision.

**Marginal:** Occasionally focuses department/division resources and efforts on “Quality Customer Service, Accountability throughout the Organization, Respect, and Proactive Communication. Seldom needs supervision.

**Unsatisfactory:** Seldom focuses department/division resources and efforts on “Quality Customer Service, Accountability throughout the Organization, Respect, and Proactive Communication.