

**The Feasibility of Implementing Performance Appraisals
in the Jackson Township Fire Department**

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A proposed research project submitted to the Ohio Fire Executive Program

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CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

I hereby certify that the following statements are true:

1. This paper constitutes my own product, that where the language of others is set forth, quotation marks so indicate, and that appropriate credit is given where I have used the language, ideas, expressions, or writings of another.

2. I have affirmed the use of proper spelling and grammar in this document by using the spell and grammar check functions of a word processing software program and correcting the errors as suggested by the program.

Signed: Timothy G. Bobczuk

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ABSTRACT

The lack of performance appraisals for the members of the Jackson Township Fire Department (JTFD) has caused some problems as it pertains to; the completion of probationary periods; issuing discipline; evaluating members for promotion. The purpose of this descriptive research project was to determine if it would be feasible, as well as beneficial, to implement performance appraisals into the JTFD. The following research questions were developed and evaluated; are other fire departments utilizing performance appraisals; in what capacity are performance appraisals being used in the fire service; what types of performance appraisals are being utilized within the fire service; if being utilized, what performance areas are being evaluated. The research began with a literature review. Several articles and books, as well as a webinar were found to be very informative. After gathering this information, the author developed two surveys; one that was distributed to other fire departments throughout northern Ohio; one that was distributed internally to all members of the JTFD. The data was collected and evaluated against the research questions. It was found that a self-assessment with supervisory review would be beneficial for the members. The recommendation from the author is that it would be feasible to implement performance appraisals into the department. However, it should be gradual, starting with a small pilot group and those entering into a probationary period. It is further recommended that after supervisors and senior managers have received training and guidance, that these performance appraisals should be implemented for all members. By gradual implementation, the program would provide members with feedback needed for self-improvement and development. These appraisals would address the fore mentioned problems facing the Jackson Township Fire Department.

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INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

A problem facing the Jackson Township Fire Department (JTFD) is the lack of performance appraisals. This has caused some supervisors to struggle as members complete probationary periods, issue discipline up to and including termination, and evaluate those seeking promotion.

The purpose of a probationary period is to allow members to adapt to new working conditions or responsibilities. Since supervisors do not perform appraisals, there currently are no documented indications noting satisfactory completion or reasoning to extend a member's probationary period. In conjunction, the issuance of discipline has been a difficult task. Some employees have been reassigned due to performance or personnel problems. Although verbal discussions have taken place, with the lack of written performance appraisals, progressive problems have not been formally addressed. A moral issue seems to arise with each promotional cycle. The promotional selection committee spends time debating each candidate's performance, attitude, and department commitment. Here again, due to the lack of written performance appraisals for reference, some strengths and weakness are never considered.

These are some of the controversies that have arisen due to the lack of appraisals within the JTFD. Leaders should promote strengths and attempt to correct weaknesses as well as motivate and assist its members in developing a career path. It is quite possible that the use of performance appraisals would be a good place to start.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research project is to determine if performance appraisals would be feasible and beneficial in the professional development of the members of the JTFD. Upon completion, the findings and recommendations will be presented to the Fire Chief for approval.

Research Questions

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

1. Are other fire departments utilizing performance appraisals?
2. In what capacity are performance appraisals being used in the fire service?
3. What types of performance appraisals are being utilized within the fire service?
4. If being utilized, what performance areas are being evaluated?

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

The 36 square miles that make up Jackson Township are located in the northwest portion of Stark County, Ohio. Up until the 1960s, this area consisted of mostly farm land. Due to the expansion of I-77, which runs north and south connecting northern Ohio to West Virginia, passing right through Jackson Township, there has been a drastic change. The township currently consists of residential, industrial, and commercial shopping areas. The residential population is estimated to be 42,000 people. Jackson Township is the main shopping area of the county with the Westfield Belden Village Mall; many strip style shopping complexes, and restaurants as well as numerous lodging facilities. During peak times of the year such as during the Professional Football Hall of Fame festivities and the Christmas shopping season, it has been estimated that the township's daily population reaches 100,000 people.

The township is governed by a board of three part-time elected trustees. There is a part-time elected fiscal officer, who oversees all expenditures of the township. The board of trustees is assisted by a full-time administrator that is appointed by them. This administrator oversees the police, fire, highway, and administration departments. There are no designated full-time human resource personnel. The administrator, with advice from the law director, handles all human resource functions for the township. The department heads are staffed with full-time personnel.

The Jackson Township Fire Department (JTFD) was formed in 1952 by two small communities located within the 36 square mile boundaries of Jackson Township. Historical records state that there were twelve original members. This group actually paid yearly dues of .50 cents in order to be members. Records also indicate that during the first year, the department responded to just fewer than 100 calls.

Volunteer members were utilized in a declining manner until the early 1990s. One of the benefits of a volunteer type department was the fact that all of the members resided within the community. As found in other volunteer organizations, these original members were very dedicated and willing to give much of their time for the greater good for no monetary compensation. The common practices utilized by these members were not written down or measured by any standard.

The department's first career members were hired in 1972. To date, the JTFD is managed by a career fire chief and two deputy chiefs. The department is a combination department, meaning it consisting of 72 career and 35 part-time members. The department is divided into three battalions that are scheduled 24 hours on-duty and 48 hours off-duty. A designated battalion chief supervises each of these battalions. Each of the five stations has a captain and two firefighter-paramedics assigned, all of which are career members. Although the

current career and part-time members are just as dedicated as the founding volunteer members, they are required to obtain certifications and qualifications that must be adhered to that the founding members never had too. All career members are required to maintain the state of Ohio Firefighter II certification, based on the National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) 1001 standard and Emergency Medical Technician Paramedic (EMTP) level certifications. The part-time members must also maintain the state of Ohio Firefighter II certification, but are only required to obtain the Emergency Medical Technician Basic (EMTB) level certification. By union contract, these part-time members add to, but do not replace the battalion career member staffing levels. Also the union contract stipulates that these part-time members are only assigned to the central station. The department is also staffed with four career fire inspectors, certified based on the NFPA 1031, that are assigned to a 40 hour, Monday through Friday schedule. These four members are also required to maintain a certificate of completion as fire investigators, based on the NFPA 1031 standard, and work in conjunction with the state fire marshal's office in determining the cause and origin of all fires within the township.

Since the JTFD has become their primary income for all the career members, they require compensation for obtaining as well as maintaining these skills. However, members are not required to show competencies based on the standards that established these certification levels. The JTFD has established Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs), which are reviewed and updated every few years. Most of the established SOGs deal with operational issues. Here again, there are no periodic reviews or appraisals that indicate a member's performance weighed against these SOGs. A member is provided with no feedback indicating just how the individual's performance is compared to the national standards found in NFPA 1001 or the local SOGs.

In 2010, the JTFD responded to 5,014 calls out of five staffed fire stations strategically placed throughout the 36 square miles that still make up the township. Four of the five stations house an engine and an advanced life support (ALS) medical unit. The personnel assigned cross-man both units depending on the type of incident. This means that the crew is assigned to both apparatus and responds with the appropriate unit required to mitigate the nature of a presented problem. The remaining station houses a dedicated rescue unit, a tower unit, as well as an ALS medical unit. In the same fashion as the other stations, the tower unit personnel cross-man the medical unit.

The current \$10 million budget is mostly funded by a levy that requires approval every three to five years by the residence of the township. Due to recent changes, the township is losing a portion of the personal property tax as it is being abolished by the state. This personal property tax is to be phased out over several years at a declining rate. The other main source of revenue is the subsidized collection from emergency medical service (EMS) transport billing. The department has operated using the same annual revenue numbers since 2006. To date, the department has had only one levy fail, but was able to rebound the next cycle and single handedly obtain approval from the voters.

Although townships in Ohio are not subject to civil service rules, both the hiring and promotional processes consist of many of the attributes commonly followed by most municipalities. The process followed for employment as a part-time member consists of a written exam covering both basic fire and EMS knowledge. This is followed by a physical agility test, a background check, an oral interview, and a medical physical exam. As career positions become available, part-time members interested are again interviewed, given a physical agility test, and subjected to a psychological exam. To date, only part-time members are eligible

to enter the career hiring process. No career positions are filled from outside the part-time ranks. The promotional process from career firefighter to captain consists of a written exam, an assessment center, and an oral interview by a selection committee. The deputy chief and fire chief positions have been appointed at the discretion of the township board of trustees after completion of several oral interviews. Here again, there are no performance appraisals to assist in evaluating candidates at any level, whether it be for consideration of career hire or promotion.

All newly appointed part-time, career, and promoted members are subjected to a one year probationary period. Currently, a member becomes aware of successfully completing this probationary period by obtaining an increase in one's biweekly paycheck. No formal performance appraisals are completed. Probationary, as well as non-probationary, personnel are not given feedback as to how well they are performing. They are not provided with any written documentation indicating that the probationary period has ended or reviewed to determine if more evaluations are needed. This leaves the impression that all position level skill competencies have been satisfied. For some, this simply is not the case. The command staff, along with several fire officers, has expressed concern. Some members require further guidance or training in certain areas. Unfortunately, formal feedback is not provided. Thus, for some, there are continued deficient actions or behaviors. On the other hand, there are those that are perform at high competency levels, but here again, no formal recognition is provided.

As time passes, some of these deficient actions or behaviors can go unnoticed by members of the departments command staff as well as the company officers. Even worse, if one of these deficient items is noted and discussed, improvements are seldom monitored. This leaves the command staff without any documentation showing improvement or detractions. In the past, when these issues have been discussed, some members have even expressed feeling as though

they are being harassed. This drives a wedge of misunderstanding and distrust within the organization.

The significance of this study is to determine if there is a way, through applying performance appraisals, to provide guidance and professional development to current and future members of the JTFD.

The problem that this research project will address is that there currently are no performance appraisals being conducted within the JTFD. The research method to be used will be descriptive. The potential impact this study could have on the JTFD is to provide an avenue for members at all levels to receive feedback in regard to their performance, thus, assisting in the professional development of each member.

LITERATURE REVIEW

While evaluating whether performance appraisals would be feasible and beneficial for the members of the JTFD, articles and text books from several fire related publishers, as well as a webinar were studied. Most articles and text material reviewed agree that some sort of appraisal should be conducted for all members, especially those newly hired. Willing (2010) indicates that many departments have actually done away with the appraisal system beyond probationary periods. She states that several departments were using systems that were inadequate and the only accomplishment seemed to be the added frustration to both supervisors and those being evaluated. Swinhart (2008) disagrees with doing away with appraisals. He feels that outside of the probationary period, performance appraisals are a valuable tool for organizational as well as individual growth. When not conducted formally, members complete their own evaluation. It is human nature to size-up one's personal performance against others (Walsh, 1995).

In an attempt to address the proposed questions for this research, a common foundation was needed in defining exactly what a performance appraisal was and how were they being applied. At first, it appeared that private and public sector entities that are conducting appraisals might view them differently. Bruegman (2012) states that performance appraisals began in the private sector as a method of justifying income. Original appraisal processes were linked to the amount of physical product that one could produce. Edwards (2004) relates these appraisals to the public sector by evaluating how well a member performs in relationship to a standard instead of production. In a roundabout way, his perception of appraisals is linked to income justification as well. If a member is performing as expected, then the individual will continue to receive an income. Without any type of performance appraisal in place, there is no formal means to justify retaining or removing the member. Meaning, there appears to be a need for evaluating whether or not to continue providing an income regardless of being a private or public sector member. Edwards (2004) remarks that the main goal of an appraisal system should be to improve the performance of individual members and the organization as a whole, not just to increase one's income. Bruegman (2012) supports this by stating that both private and public sector members placed performance and achieving goals ahead of income when asked to rank them in order of importance.

Walsh (1995) states that the supervisor's responsibility is to be an advocate for the member, meaning the supervisor needs to encourage change, not look for ways to place blame. The main purpose of an appraisal should be aimed at finding ways to improve performance in the future, not dwell on actions that have already occurred. This is providing that any shortcomings are dealt with at the time of infraction. A good example related to the fire service is apparatus driving. If an apparatus operator is noted using excessive speeds during a response, it is up to the

immediate supervisor to make immediate corrections and not wait several months, blindsiding the member during the performance appraisal. Muhr (2011) mentions several times that there should be no surprises when the time comes to conduct the performance appraisal meeting. The performance appraisal meeting should not be the first time a member learns of a minor indiscretion that had occurred. Walsh (1995) suggests that the supervisor should perform less as a judge and more like a coach. Providing there are no further occurrences, then the issue should not be an item found in the member's performance appraisal. While this seems logical, Willing (2010) points out that some of the current appraisal systems are flawed because their require areas for evaluation that do not match a members' job description such as having a member assigned to the department's operations section describe what's in the local fire code book. This is why several of the authors indicate that preparing for an appraisal can be time consuming for the supervisor. Walsh (1995) goes a step further by stating that no two members can be evaluated the same.

One of the questions being utilized during this research is attempting to determine the capacity in which performance appraisals are being utilized within the fire service. Edward (2005) lists the following benefits and achievements of performance appraisals:

- Feedback and recognition: Employees want to know how they are performing.
- Personal development: Can reveal good or bad performance in individual employees.
- Goal setting: Establishing a development plan.
- Career development: Setting long-term planning to include promotional and educational goals.
- Documentation: Needed in order to publicly praise or adversely improve a member's behavior.

Walsh (1995) lists these items as well, pointing out that documentation is the most important factor, especially for members currently, or who someday may be, considered for promotion or transfer. To expand on the importance of documentation in relevant to performance appraisals, Willing (2010) feels that too many members are simply given passing appraisals without real guidance early in their careers. This happens either because the supervisors did not want to take the time needed or they were not schooled in how to perform a proper performance appraisal. If these members are denied promotion or transfer, they fall back on performance appraisals established earlier. Many municipalities have dealt with legal issues because of situations such as this (Walsh, 1995). Muhr (2011) adds that items addressed or ignored during performance appraisals have been the bases for many legal issues especially during promotional processes. Swinhart's (2008) approach to performance evaluations attempts to avoid this from happening. The member is evaluated by not only superiors, but coworkers and even subordinates. He goes on to state that this is a useful tool for improving personal development but avoids its use for promotional purposes.

Eversole (2003) indicates that some sort of evaluation is warranted prior to the completion of any probationary period and having a member being covered by any labor contract. If the new member has difficulty during the probationary period, then they probably are going to be a problem at some point during their career if allowed to advance. By conducting a performance appraisal, a probationary period can be extended or, in some cases especially for new employees, the member may have to be released. Muhr (2011) points out that both of these options can be avoided if departments take the time to hire the right people from the beginning. Looking beyond the initial probationary period, Swinhart (2008) states that appraisals can be

invaluable in identifying those that have the potential of becoming future leaders within the fire service.

Walsh (1995) agrees that there should be a formal appraisal prior to the completion of any probationary period. However, members should be introduced to their new position for three to six months without formally being evaluated. This is the time frame where the probationary member is attempting to understand just what the responsibilities and assignments really are as well as how they fit into the organization. Walsh (1995) further points out that if there are long term performance problems with a member that this is where they seem to originate. Some supervisors do not provide enough upfront information, or provide too much too fast so it leaves the probationary member guessing. In conjunction, most new employees are afraid to ask questions.

Eversole (2003) and Bruegman (2012) point out that there are several steps that should be accomplished prior to conducting a performance appraisal. The first is that there should be a job analysis, which describes the work and the personnel requirements needed to perform each position. For the JTFD, these are referred to as job descriptions. In the JTFD, there is a job description for each position from part-time firefighter to the fire chief position that lists job requirements and minimum qualifications (Appendix 1). Muhr (2011) suggests that it is a good practice to have both the supervisor and each member review their job description, modify if needed, and agree to it prior to initiating the process. Walsh (1995) presents this as part of frontloading the member with knowing what is expected during the course of employment.

The second step is the development of the performance standard. Job expectations and quality of work need to be stated. For the members of the JTFD there are some task sheets developed based the department's standard operating guidelines (SOGs) and apparatus

manufacture specifications. However, these task sheets are used mostly for instructional purposes. When utilized, each member participating receives a passing mark indicating completion of the task with no written feedback provided. Just as Muhr (2011) previously stated during the development of the performance appraisal, it is a good idea for both the member and supervisor collectively determine what requirements and qualifications should actually be reviewed. Again, this should be based on a written standard.

The third step is to conduct the actual appraisal meeting. Bruegman (2012) states that the three steps, meaning the job analysis, the review of requirements and qualifications, and the appraisal are interrelated. The appraisal meeting should be based on the first two steps. Also, each step should reflect the vision, values, and mission statement of the organization. One of the elements that should come out of the appraisal meeting is the development of a list of goals for the member to strive. Muhr (2011) calls these S.M.A.R.T. goals. This is an acronym that stands for specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time sensitive. The goals should have meaning and be given a specific time frame to be completed.

As stated, Walsh (1995) advocates that a review should not take place during the first three to six months of a newly placed member. Many articles and text books have indicated that a formal, systematic appraisal should be provided just prior to the completion of any probationary period for the new, young members of the fire service. IAFC (2010) feel that the immediate supervisor sets the stage for the entire career of the new members and that the probationary period creates the foundation for the younger member's entire career. They place the responsibility of introducing the expectations on the supervisor. They go on to point out that to an extent, a fire department is responsible for a member's off-the-job behavior simply because

it may be a reflection of the fire department itself. Again, it is up to the immediate supervisor to point this out early in their careers.

Most probationary periods are for one year. IAFC (2010) point out that due to the volume of subject matter a probationary member is required to absorb more frequent evaluations should be conducted. Modifications to training may be needed for these members. This leads to the research question regarding the types of appraisals being utilized within the fire service.

Bruegman (2012) points out that the 'Graphic Rating Scale' is the easiest to develop and administer when simply evaluating skills on a checklist. However, it provides for very little feedback or comment. Edwards (2004) states that this is the most widely used system within the fire service. The usual rating scale is 1 (unsatisfactory) to 5 (outstanding). Walsh (1995) indicates that this type of system usually lists traits (team player, dependable, responsible) or categories to be scored. Willing (2010) notes some discrepancies with this system. A member may be performing very well; the supervisor may view this as above average. As years pass by, another supervisor, while evaluating the same member, performing at the same level, may view the performance as being what is expected and give a rating as average. This type of system lacks the opportunity for feedback and Edwards (2004) believes that descriptive words for different categories may have different meanings for different raters.

When evaluating probationary members, Edwards (2004) describes the "Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scale" as a system that rates the member's performance against specific job behavior expectations. In this type of system, each category is rated using a scale such as "complete" or "incomplete." The author indicates that this is a good system when being evaluated by different company officers, such as in the case within the JTFD. Probationary career members are utilized as fill personnel for all five stations as daily vacancies are created by

vacations, earned days off, and last-minute sick days. A probationary member could move through each station several times during the course of a month and not see the same supervisor more than once during that time.

As mentioned, Swinhart (2008) explains how the “360° Evaluation” is not just a top-down evaluation but includes coworkers and subordinates. He states that this is a good system for improving personal and professional growth. In order to involve all members in an organization, a simple checklist style evaluation form is utilized. In this fashion, anonymity is provided to subordinates that may fear repercussions when asked to evaluate superiors. Conversely, without a venue for explanation, this type of appraisal should not be used for promotional purposes.

Both Bruegman (2012) and Edwards (2004) indicate that the “Management by Objectives” (MBO) has become very popular within the fire service. This style is more suited for the non-probationary members. Eversole (2003) states that the organizations can assist in developing recently promoted company officers using this method. Utilizing this style, working together, the member and supervisor define the objectives to be achieved during a specified time frame as well as the process and education that should occur. Walsh (1995) describes how MBO can be used when evaluating teams. In the fire service engine and ladder companies comprise of members that make up a team. The concepts are in line with the MBO style. In this capacity, given an objective, such as stretching an attack hose to the second floor of a dwelling and discharging water, the team is rated based its entire performance. This means that it is up to each team to perform a self-assessment and make improvements where need be. Eversole (2003) points out that the Generation Y groups, which are the current younger members of the fire service, are more excepting of the MBO style. They enjoy being a part of the decision making

and having some control over the working environment. They are completely immersed in the information age, computers, and education. Edwards (2004) points out that the downside is that MBO can be very time consuming for the supervisor. Each member's objectives may be different. Examples might be that one member wants to be a better pump operator, while others aspire to be company officers. Realistic goals need to be set for each member.

While attempting to address the performance areas that are being evaluated, Edwards (2004) notes that the demonstration of knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) as those found in NFPA 1001 (firefighter requirements) may assist in establishing a skills list. In addition, IAFC (2010) suggests that other areas need to be evaluated to include local fire prevention codes, department standard operating procedures, progress of learning the fire district, as well as other tasks such as housekeeping and paperwork requirements. Walsh (1995) notes that regardless of which type of system utilized, two of the most challenging areas to evaluate revolve around the member's attitude and work habits.

Eversole (2003) makes the observation that mid-level officers are promoted based on their abilities to perform at urgent, time sensitive events. In contrast, they are expected to learn how to manage and lead personnel during the non-urgent times through trial and error. Edwards (2004) refers to the immediate supervisor as one of the most important elements in the process. This individual should be the person in the best position to evaluate and conduct the appraisal. Without proper preparation and training, the entire process could be a waste of time. Favoritism should be eliminated, but as long as humans are involved, it will always be present to some degree. However, Muhr (2011) points out that if the immediate supervisor does not work in close proximity to the member being evaluated, then maybe the "360° evaluation" style of appraisal should be considered the best option.

IAFC (2010), along with Edwards (2004), suggest some of the ways for a supervisor to prepare for the annual appraisal. The first is to keep a journal for each member's activities. Both authors discuss the use of log book or a T-account to document both positive and negative items. Eversole (2003) points out that open communications is essential. Informal performance appraisals should be conducted throughout the entire year, if that is what is determined to be the review period. Both IAFC (2010) and Edwards (2004) guard against applying the following characteristics:

- Halo/Horn: Evaluating based on only one trait.
- Central Tendency: Rating everybody the same.
- Leniency: Giving everybody high ratings.
- Contrast: Comparing members, instead of rating to a standard.
- Frame of Reference: Applying personal standards of the rater.

Willing (2010) states that these complications occur due to inadequate or absent training being provided to the supervisor, whether it is a formal or informal one.

Walsh (1995) suggests that when actually conducting the performance appraisal, it is important to discuss a member's strengths first. The author emphasizes that this session should be a discussion, not a lecture. It is important for the supervisor to be an active listener. The member may point out some shortcomings on their own. This will give an avenue for establishing areas of needed improvement for the next appraisal period. If not mentioned, the supervisor may have to be forthcoming with some of these items. Since both the supervisor and member should be involved with the process from the beginning, Muhr (2011) emphasizes that there should be no surprises. Walsh (1995) tells supervisors not to argue with a member.

Willing (2010) states that it is important to be open and honest. Any shortcomings should be backed up with facts and examples, not simply based on hearsay.

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 focus on the future. A firm handshake and commitment to work together is always a good idea.

After completing this literature review and seeing just how much has been written in regard to performance appraisals, it is easy to see how important they are in the development and advancement of fire department members. However, it cannot be written and simply put into place. Both supervisors and members need to be involved in the development, implementation, continued review and follow-up required. The JTFD needs to strongly consider all of the positive attributes noted in regards to performance appraisals. With the proper guidance and assistance from each level within the ranks, the members of the JTFD can continue to grow as leaders in the fire service.

PROCEDURES

The purpose of this applied research project is to determine if it is feasible, as well as productive, to implement a performance appraisal system for the members of the Jackson Township Fire Department (JTFD). At this point of the project, the research questions have been established, an extensive literature review has been conducted, and two surveys have been distributed. The author has collected data from each of these surveys and evaluated them against the previously established research questions.

The first survey, referred to as the external survey, was sent to the northeastern, north central, and northwestern district representatives for the Ohio Fire Chief's Association. These individuals in turn had previously agreed to assist in emailing the survey out to the departments they represent. These external surveys were initially distributed on February 24, 2012 and were followed up with a reminder email on or about March 15, 2012. In order to keep the project moving forward, a return deadline was given for March 31, 2012. Although several external emails were returned via email, most were returned using the fax.

The second survey, referred to as the internal survey, was distributed to all 105 members of the JTFD, to include the command staff, company officers, career firefighters, career inspectors, support staff, and part-time members, via interdepartmental email. In the initial email, it was emphasized that this applied research project is for informational gathering purposes. The author did not want the department members to panic and become overly concerned, because of the topic, which may have caused some members to avoid completing the survey. As with the external survey, these surveys were distributed initially on February 24, 2012 and were followed up with a reminder email on or about March 15, 2012 and were given a return deadline of March 31, 2012 was also given. All of the returned internal surveys were received via the interdepartmental mail; none were returned via email.

As both of these surveys were being developed, a pilot group was assembled made up of three firefighters, two captains, three inspectors, and the fire prevention secretary. The three inspectors for the JTFD are also part-time officers on neighboring fire departments. This pilot group reviewed each survey for clarity, relevance, and ease of understanding. Several questions were reworded or moved within each survey based on their input.

All of the data from both the external and internal surveys was entered into previously established excel spreadsheets for evaluation. By using this tool, it was easier to review and evaluate the results, as well as create charts and graphs.

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).

Emergency Medical Technician Paramedic. “A healthcare professional that works in emergency medical situations able to provide an advanced level of care for medical emergencies and trauma” (Mosby's Paramedic Textbook, Third Edition, 2005).

Emergency Medical Technician Basic. “A healthcare professional that works in emergency medical situations able to provide a basic level of care for medical emergencies and trauma” (Mosby's EMT Textbook, Second Edition, 2011).

Standard Operating Guidelines. “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 modification” (Fire Officer, Principle and Practice, Second Edition, 2010).

S.M.A.R.T. “An acronym that stands for Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time sensitive” (Muhr, 2011).

Management by Objective. “A management system in which the objectives of an organization are agreed upon so that management and employees understand a common way forward” (www.businessdictionary.com, 2011).

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 the three northern districts of the state of Ohio. The hope and intent was to receive data from those departments with similar political and economical type backgrounds. Since these external surveys were forwarded via email distribution lists, it is unknown just how many persons received a request for data.

As mentioned in the background information, the members of the JTFD have never been exposed to any type of performance appraisals, so when being asked to determine which type of system would work best for the department, most members were at a loss. Consequently, several of the internal surveys were returned without an answer for question number 12.

RESULTS

Once the return date for both surveys passed, the data was 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 northern Ohio. A total of 38 surveys were returned to this author (Appendix 3). Of the fire departments that responded, 74% currently conduct performance appraisals, meaning that 28 of those that responded do conduct some form of appraisals and 10 currently are not performing them.

When asked how long each of these departments have been conducting performance appraisals, the results varied; four departments have only been conducting appraisals for less

than five years, while the rest has been conducting them for more than six. Of those, ten departments have been utilizing them for over fifteen years.

It was noted while conducting the literature review just how important these performance appraisals can be for probationary members. Some are being conducted monthly, but most are found in the quarterly and semi-annually categories. Two departments reported that they only hold annual evaluations for their probationary members. However, all the departments reporting state that they conduct annual reviews for all non-probationary members.

Of the 28 departments that conduct some sort a review, 26 operate under a collective bargaining agreement. Only four of these entities address the purposes, as well as the specific areas being evaluated by the department.

The external survey found that 93% of all new members were receiving evaluations prior to completing their probationary periods and 86% of all newly promoted members were receiving evaluations prior completing their probationary periods.

The external survey revealed that in most organizations, a member's immediate supervisor conducts a majority of the performance appraisals, approximately 84%. Also noted is the fact that in some cases, in addition to the immediate supervisor, command staff members provide feedback in regards to performance. Not one department reported evaluation input from a member's peers.

Each department was questioned in regards to what items or areas where being evaluated during the performance appraisal. Job skills and knowledge, along with the ability to obtain established goals ranked high up on the list, receiving a 78% response. Personality skills received 57% attention. However, professional appearance and presentation was never chosen as a response.

When questioning how much weight these reviews carried when evaluating members for promotion, it was found to be split almost even. Sixteen of the departments were reviewing the appraisals during the promotional process and twelve were not currently. In conjunction with this topic, when asked if reviews felt that their systems were being applied fairly and equally to all members within the department, the split was exactly the same as the previous response.

In contradiction to the previous response, when considering whether performance appraisals benefit the members of a department, 71% felt that yes there was a benefit. The most positive attributes regarding their reviews were in the areas of encouraging personal development and reinforcing communications between the evaluator and the member. Four responses indicate that there are no positive attributes to their current evaluation systems. When looking for the most negative attributes to appraisal systems, just under half of the responses indicated that there were no negative attributes. Ten of the returned surveys stated that their appraisal systems were used to revisit poor performance areas from a members' past.

79% of the surveys returned, indicate that their departments utilize a numerical rating system style of performance reviews. Four responses state conducting self-assessment with a supervisory review. There were two surveys returned stating that a large portion of the performance review included a narrative response to specific areas.

Of the external surveys returned, 86% include career members. Fourteen of these are combination departments that are staff with part-time personnel. A very small portion, only four surveys, indicated that their departments are either part-time or volunteer. The majority of the returned surveys operate with 25 to 50 members, six stated having up to 75 members, but there were none close to 100.

Of the 105 internal surveys that were emailed to the members, 36 were returned to this author, yielding a 34% return (Appendix 4). As stated, this data was entered into an excel spreadsheet for evaluation. The questions from the external survey were adapted to reflect the internal environment of the JTFD.

When asked, 100% of the members returning surveys indicated that a performance appraisal system would be beneficial for the department. 70% of the surveys indicated that probationary members should receive some sort of feedback on a quarterly basis, while 27% feel that monthly feedback would be best, and one person stated semi-annually.

22 of the 36 members, meaning 61%, felt that performance reviews for non-probationary personnel should be conducted annually. 22% stated that semi-annual reviews should be conducted and 14% indicated quarterly. One person replied that non-probationary members should receive monthly appraisals.

Of the 36 internal surveys returned, all of them indicated that the immediate supervisor should conduct the appraisal. However, just as with the external survey, five of them added that either the battalion chief level or a member from the command staff level should provide input, as well. Two surveys indicated that a member's peers should have some input to the appraisal system.

In the categories regarding whether or not performance appraisals should be conducted prior to completion of a probationary period for both new members and newly promoted members, it was unanimous with 36 surveys indicating that they should be done. Contraindication to this finding, when asked if members should be evaluated prior to being transferred or reassigned, the returned surveys were split evenly with this subject.

Department members were asked what items they felt should be evaluated, if performance appraisals were implemented. 100% noted that job skills and knowledge should be one of the areas. Of the returned surveys, 92%, meaning 33 of the 36, listed professional appearance as an important area. The ability to obtain established goals was considered by 83% of the responses. Having the ability to get along with coworkers received attention on 72% of the surveys. Four of the returned internal surveys submitted items in the other category and listed being ethical, mindful of attendance, and physical fitness as areas to consider.

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 promotion. Again, 100% of the returned surveys indicated in the positive response.

When asked to list positive and negative attributes of performance appraisals, multiple results were obtained. Encouraging personal development received the most responses with 28 of the 36 returned surveys. 33%, referring to 12 of the 36, indicated that another positive attribute was in the area of reinforcing communications between the evaluator and the member. Another positive area was setting attainable goals for the member, this received 28% of the responses. On the negative side, 28 members stated concern in that they felt that an evaluator may use the system to degrade those being evaluated. A small percentage, 17% to be exact, stated concern that revisiting poor performance from a members' past may resurface during a review session. An even smaller percentage, meaning 11%, fear that during an appraisal session, that no discussion would be allowed in regards to the actions being evaluated. 13 of the 36 returned surveys indicated that they feel that there are no negative attributes to implementing performance appraisals within the JTFD.

Answering which form of performance appraisals would work best for the members of the JTFD is a difficult question since most have never been exposed to one, nor do they have a frame of reference. However, 42% of the returned surveys indicated that a self-assessment with a peer review was favored. eight of the 36 felt that a numerical rating system was warranted. After contacting this author for an explanation, seven felt that a self-assessment with a supervisory review was needed. Only two surveys indicated that a self-assessment with a peer review would be functional for the department. One returned internal survey stated that goal setting should be used as a form of performance appraisal.

Of the 36 returned internal surveys, six were from part-time personnel, which is approximately 17%. The remaining 30 returned internal surveys were from career members. All of the part-time personnel that returned surveys were members of the department for less than five years. Of the career surveys returned, ten of the members have been with the department for 16 to 20 years. This group comprised of the majority of the returns with 28%. The next largest group of returned career surveys consisted of seven from the less than five year personnel. Five of the members returning surveys have concluded more than 20 years of career service with the department. The remaining eight returned surveys split with four being career members serving five to ten years and the other four serving eleven to fifteen years.

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

DISCUSSION

While the main intent of this research project is to determine if it would be feasible to implement performance appraisals into the JTFD, much of the finding in the literature review and both of the surveys were studied. It is interesting to see how some the results correlate with each other.

In the literature review, Willing (2010) points out that many departments that have utilized a performance appraisal system in the past have actually done away with them beyond the probationary period. Of the external surveys returned, large percentages are utilizing them (Appendix 6, Figure 1). In fact, the survey found that 87% have been doing so for more than six years. Of these, 71% feel that they are a benefit to their members. Each of the returned internal survey indicated that the members are in favor of some sort of performance review being performed.

The external surveys returned note that a majority of the departments operate under a collective bargaining agreement. However, most do not address limitations or purposes of these evaluations, such as utilizing them as a tool for promotion. All 36 of the internal surveys submitted by collective bargaining members state that if implemented, this is one of the utilizations of the appraisal.

One of the common findings while conducting the literature review was that even if not formal, probationary members should receive an evaluation by a supervisor or mentor. An area that presents variation is in the frequency that they should be performed. Currently, most departments are conducting these reviews most often on a quarterly basis. The internal survey results appear to be consistent and in favor with these findings. From the JTFD standpoint, this time frequency would appear to be appropriate. An evaluation each month 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 due to the fact that a member may not even realize that there is an area that needs improvement. The external survey questioned whether non-probationary members were receiving appraisals prior to duty or station transfers; 93% are not. Interestingly, when asked on the internal survey as whether members felt that this should occur, the surveys were split directly at 50% either way.

Currently, within the JTFD all promoted members are placed onto one year probation. 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. Walsh (1995) indicated that these were imperative in order to obtain the most production out of promoted members. The immediate supervisor should be a coach and assist in development. This would be hard to do without any performance reviews. The external survey found that 86% of those returned were performing them prior to the completion of all probationary periods. 100% of the internal surveys felt that these reviews were needed.

Edward (2005) stated that performance reviews should be aimed at improving performance and not dwell on previous poor actions. Both the surveys consistently agreed with this statement. The external surveys rated this as the highest attribute for conducting an appraisal (Appendix 6, Figure 2). A graph for the internal survey finding would be very similar. Likewise, the leading negative attribute found on both surveys was the fear of bringing up poor past performance or events. If utilized within the JTFD, evaluators will have to be encouraged to focus on positives and work with the negatives. By human nature, it is harder to point out things others do correctly than it is to note the items they do poorly.

While attempting to determine who should be conducting the reviews, Muhr (2011) suggests that the immediate supervisor is in the best position. Both survey indicated the same results (Appendix 6, Figure 3). However, several surveys also note that command staff personnel should have some input to a member's performance review. The graph indicates that a few department members were in favor of peer involvement in the appraisal process. Here again, the concern would be that those conducting an evaluation would focus on a persons' negatives and not put much thought into their positives. For the newly hired probationary JTFD members, it may be somewhat difficult for the immediate supervisor to solely conduct these reviews, either on a quarterly, semiannual, or just prior to the end of a year due to the fact that these members are normally utilized to fill vacancies at any of the five stations. The newly hired probationary member may not be with the same supervisor for too many consecutive working shifts in any given month. The 35 part-time members of the department also fall into this same situation. Even though these members are only assigned to the central station, depending on the shifts that they are working, the station officer may be different each time. These part-timer members are not assigned to one direct supervisor. For promoted probationary members, this process would function properly. Each officer within the ranks of the JTFD currently reports directly to a supervisor; whether it is a captain reporting to a battalion chief, or a battalion chief reporting to a deputy chief, or a deputy chief reporting to the chief of the department.

In the course of this research, the author reviewed several types of performance review processes. When consulting the writing from Bruegman (2011) and Edwards (2011), this author found that the graphic rating scale utilizes a numerical system and can be utilized as a check list style of evaluation. The first thought is that for the newer members and part-time members that this system would be the easiest and fairest one to consider. In fact, of the returned external

surveys, 79% of the departments conducting appraisals follow this type of format. However, as depicted in the graph (Appendix 6, Figure 4), 54% of the members from the JTFD feel that a self-assessment with a supervisory review might be the best type of evaluation for the members. Again, when evaluating the newly hired probationary and part-time members, this is worth considering. The self-assessment places some of the job development back on to the member. For newly promoted probationary members, as well as all non-probationary members, the self-assessment style could also include some goal setting areas.

In an attempt to determine what areas might need to be evaluated, Saunders (2006) points out that a good place to start is a review of all job descriptions, as well as department SOGs. 79% of the external surveys found that job skills and knowledge were the items most often evaluated for its members (Appendix 6, Figure 5). For the internal survey this percentage was higher, 100% felt that this area was critical to evaluate. Moreover, the JTFD members also feel that many other areas, as depicted in this graph, are important to review. Four of the surveys added ethics, attendance, and physical fitness.

This author found it fascinating that 100% of the internal surveys returned via the part-time staff had less than five years of service with the department. Even though these surveys were submitted anonymously, one of the members requested time to review the responses and provide further feedback. This member felt that obtaining established goals, again based on job descriptions and department SOGs would assist in personal professional growth. Of the returned internal surveys from the career members, 28% were from those between sixteen and twenty years of service. This factor is significant due to the fact that this group, if performance appraisals are implemented, would not only be part of initiating the program, but also provide it with sustainability. Most of the officer core 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 JTFD.

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 2011, performed by a committee made up of members from all levels of the organization, the JTFD updated all job descriptions and SOGs as needed.

The purpose of this research project was to determine if it is feasible to implement performance appraisals for the department. Based on the results from both surveys, this author finds that it would indeed be beneficial to the members, the fire department, and the community to conduct them. However, after perusing previous writings on the subject, it would be very difficult to simply implement and sustain a system across the board for all 105 members of the JTFD at one time. Based on the results from the internal survey, a self-assessment with supervisor review should be generated. The two deputy chiefs, three battalion chiefs, and volunteers from the previously mentioned committee should be the pilot group. 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. Eversole (2003) provides a good

self-assessment format; found during the literature review, that can be modified to meet the needs of the JTFD.

Once the format and evaluation criteria have been developed, it is recommended that time be allocated during the quarterly department-wide officer meetings to introduce and instruct the officer core 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 full-time 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 impact 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 literature review. Along with this, all appraisals should be reviewed by a deputy chief, who should stipulate clarity and consistence from all supervisory members.

As found in most communities, the members of the JTFD are looked at as highly motive, dedicated professionals. While conducting this research project, it was found that, if conducted properly and managed correctly; a performance review would provide direction and improve the quality of each member, thus address the fore mentioned problems facing the JTFD.

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APPENDIX 1 – JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Part-Time Firefighter/EMT Job Description

General Statement of Duties: Engages directly in firefighting activities to protect and safeguard lives and property from fire. Also responsible for the operations of an ambulance and care of patients including basic medical care to injured or ill persons prior to the patient receiving professional medical care or hospitalization under the direction of a paramedic or fire officer. Required to assist in the maintenance or repair of assigned equipment, operates communication equipment, and other related work as required.

Distinguishing Features of the Class: A firefighter/EMT is responsible for performing dangerous tasks during emergency conditions under the direction of a supervisor. A portion of the work consists of the performance of various duties in the maintenance of fire stations and the preventative repairs of assigned apparatus. A firefighter/EMT must become familiar with modern firefighting and current emergency medical technician (EMT) skills. Required to follow direction from supervisor, paramedic, or medical control as required. However, there are times when some actions must be determined by the firefighter/EMT. Such items include the proper use of personal protective equipment, hose deployments, ladder operations, and other duties required to mitigate unwanted situations.

Required Knowledge, Skills, & Abilities: All Firefighter/EMTs must have the following:

- Ability to get along well with others
- Willingness to perform any task assigned in the certified field
- Ability to understand and follow instructions (both oral and written)
- Ability to keep records and make reports
- Aptitude for mechanical work under adverse conditions
- Good physical condition

Acceptable Experience & Training: Requirements include:

- High school diploma or equivalent
- Possession of a valid Ohio driver's license
- Certified EMT in good standings with the state of Ohio
- Certified Firefighter II in good standings with the state of Ohio
- Certification level experience preferred

Career Firefighter/Paramedic Job Description

General Statement of Duties: Engages directly in firefighting activities to protect and safeguard lives and property from fire. A firefighter/Paramedic is responsible for the operation of an ambulance and care of patients including extensive emergency care to injured or ill persons prior to the patient receiving professional medical care or hospitalization. Assists in maintenance and repair of fire stations and equipment, operates commutations equipment, or does related work as required.

Distinguishing Features of the Class: A firefighter/ Paramedic is responsible for performing hazardous tasks under emergency conditions. A portion of the work consists of the performance of various duties in the maintenance of the fire station and the preventative and corrective maintenance of engines, trucks, medics, and all assigned equipment. A firefighter/paramedic must readily become familiar with modern firefighting and prevention methods, as well as current paramedic standing orders. Superiors and/or medical control make assignments of specific tasks and indicate methods and procedures to be followed. Work is under close supervision most of the time, but there are times when courses of action must be determined by the firefighter/paramedic during the absence of a superior. Each firefighter/paramedic is expected to become a skilled pump operator, ladder-man, aerial operator, watch tower operator, salvage worker, rescuer, EMT-Paramedic, and be familiar with the 'Ohio Fire and building Code' regulations.

Required Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities: All firefighter/paramedics must conform to the following:

- Have the ability to get along well with others
- Willingness to perform any task assigned
- Ability to understand and follow oral, as well as written instructions
- Ability to keep records and make reports
- Aptitude for mechanical work under adverse conditions
- Be in excellent physical condition.

Acceptable Experience and Training: Must possess the following:

- High school graduate, (or equivalent)
- Be 21 years of age
- A valid state of Ohio driver's license
- Maintain Emergency Medical Technician-Paramedic certification within the state of Ohio
- Maintain the Firefighter II certification within the state of Ohio

Career Fire Captain (Operations) Job Description

General Statement of Duties: Responsible for the direction and supervision during emergency responses of a combination fire/EMS (or tower/rescue) company, all station activities, as well as overseeing all other related work as required or assigned.

Distinguishing Features of the Class: A Fire Captain is responsible for establishing command at the scene of any emergency. After the arrival of any chief grade officer, command is maintained until a *transfer of command* is completed. He/she is also responsible for the proper placement of equipment, as well as assigned personnel. He/she leads in the performance of physical tasks involved in firefighting with a high degree of responsibility for the protection of life and property. The work also involves responsibility for the maintenance of fire station equipment. The Fire Captain is further responsible for the inspection and readiness of all assigned equipment to include all apparatus and EMS units. Duties require a thorough knowledge of firefighting practices, also to plan and direct the work of firefighters under possible hazardous conditions. The work is carried out according to general procedures outlined in department '*Standard Operating Guidelines*', which gives the Fire Captain latitude to exercise independent judgment where needed. Supervision is exercised over firefighters while performing specific assignments. Ensuring completion of these assignments or tasks is the responsibilities of the Fire Captain.

Required Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities: All Fire Captains (Operations) must have the following:

- The ability to hazards in different types of incidents
- A thorough knowledge of modern firefighting equipment and methods
- Ability to quickly develop a plan and lay out work for subordinates in order to mitigate a situation
- Ability to maintain discipline and control of subordinates
- Ability to communicate effectively with the public
- The ability to get along well with others
- Be in excellent physical condition
- Awareness of all items found in the current 'Firefighter Job Description'

Acceptable Experience and Training: *Minimum* Requirements include:

- Five (5) years experience as a non-probationary firefighter/paramedic for the JTFD
- Possession of a valid Ohio driver's license
- Certified EMT-Paramedic in good standings with the state of Ohio
- Certified Firefighter II in good standings with the state of Ohio

Battalion Chief (Shift Commander) Job Description

General Statement of Duties: This position involves both supervisory and administrative staff activities. Duties directly involve:

- Making duty assignments
 - o Scheduling shift personnel
- Commanding both suppression and emergency medical activities
 - o Responsible for the proper deployment of units assigned to emergencies
 - o Provide command and control of assigned personnel
- Coordinating fire prevention functions

- Coordinating administrative functions such as
 - o Assisting the command staff with planning and directing the organization
 - o Provide general direction within the established policies and procedures

Distinguishing features Of The Class: Supervises all firefighting personnel during an assigned shift; plans, reviews, monitors, and conducts training; evaluates all personnel; responsible for reported needed station maintenance; prepares records and takes appropriate corrective action as needed.

Responds to structural and other selected fires and emergencies on an assigned shift; assumes command of operations and directs personnel at the incident until relieved by a superior; evaluates personnel for the purpose of making recommendations for training, promotion, and other personnel actions.

Participates in the preparation of the budget and the formulation of policies, rules, guidelines, and regulations related to firefighting and related emergency activities; supervises the maintenance of records and preparation of reports; assumes the duties of command staff members in case of absence or as otherwise delegated.

Insures compliance with policies, procedures, guidelines, rules, and regulations; maintains discipline; institutes or recommends personnel actions; must insure that shift objectives in the area of inspections, training, and planning are met.

Assists in investigating the origin and cause of suspicious fires; gathers evidence and takes statements; investigates citizen complaints and answers inquiries.

Assists in planning for future fire and EMS requirements; conducts research and prepares reports on topics related to fire administration and operations; makes recommendations for improvements in staffing, organization, procedures, guidelines, and general operations; keeps abreast of new techniques through independent study.

Provide effective and efficient customer service that promotes and maintains responsive community relations.

Performs all related duties as assigned.

Required Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities: Minimum requirements include:

- Five (5) years experience as a Captain for the JTFD
- Completed college level course work in fire science, public or business administration
- Possession of a valid Ohio driver's license
- Certified EMT-Basic in good standings with the state of Ohio
- Certified Firefighter II in good standings with the state of Ohio
 - o Through knowledge of the principles, practices, and methods of firefighting and fire science
- Certified Fire Safety Officer in good standing with the state of Ohio
 - o Through knowledge of applicable codes, resolutions, rules, and regulations

- Certified Fire Instructor in good standings with the state of Ohio
 - o Considerable knowledge of the principles and practices of personnel training and development
- Considerable knowledge of the principles and practices of fire administration
 - o Ability to communicate effectively; both oral and in writing
 - o Ability to maintain records and prepare reports
 - o Ability to plan, organize, and direct administrative, firefighting functions, and EMS activities
- Ability to supervise and review the work of subordinates
- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with others
- Ability to meet such physical requirements as may be established by competent authority

Inspector of Fire Prevention Bureau Job Description

General Statement Of Duties: Performs administrative and skilled firefighting work under the supervision of the Deputy of Staff.

Distinguishing features Of The Class: This is important administrative work in the protection of life and properties from fires and the direction of a program for the prevention of fires. The position requires a broad knowledge of modern firefighting and fire prevention methods. Duties include:

- Inspecting and making recommendations to businesses
- Presenting fire prevention programs to the public
- Assisting in the preparation of the annual report

In the event of the outbreak of fire, the member has the responsibility of determining the cause and origin. Where need by, the member must be able to coordinate efforts with other agencies as needed, such as the Jackson Police Department's Detective Bureau and the State Fire Marshall's Office.

Examples Of Work: (Illustrative Purpose)

- Analyzes and takes action on such information in order to improve overall operations
- Responds to major alarms as directed by superiors
- Investigates the cause and origin of all fires
- Directs the inspection of buildings and other properties for fire hazards
- Enforces fire prevention regulations and takes action to secure the abatement of fire hazards
- Enforces laws and ordinances in regards to the following:
 - o The prevention of fires
 - o The storage and use of explosives and flammables
 - o The installation and maintenance of automatic or other private fire alarm and fire extinguishing equipment
 - o The maintenance and regulation of fire escapes

- The maintenance of protection and the elimination of hazards in buildings or structures under construction
- The means and adequacy of exit in case of fire from places of assembly such as factories, schools, hotels, motels, medical facilities, churches, halls, theaters, and all other places in which numbers of persons may work, live, or congregate for any purpose
- Determining the cause and origin of fires

Required Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities: Each inspector is responsible for the following:

- Communication Files- Any communications (written, printed, typed, etc) that concerns the fire service, primarily the Fire Prevention Bureau (FPB) shall maintain a copy within the file
- All inspections that are written or typed must have three copies. One copy goes into the business file, one to the Deputy Chief of Staff, and the third copy must be placed into the inspection report
- Each inspector is responsible for maintaining current contact information and records for all assigned businesses. This contact information must be available immediately to the command staff as needed
- Any purposed inspections, not during regular work hours, shall be submitted and approved by the Deputy Chief of Staff
- Daily route sheets from each inspector must be turned in each morning prior to leaving the office. Any deviations due to unexpected events, the Deputy Chief of Staff shall be notified
- A monthly calendar shall be posted indicating scheduled company walkthroughs, safety programs, fire extinguisher demonstrations, inspector vacations, and comp time
- Anything an inspector needs from an operational company shall be submitted in writing to the Deputy Chief of Staff for approval
- Any inspector leaving the township for a meeting or class shall notify the Deputy Chief of Staff prior to the event
- All members of the FPB are responsible for the equipment assigned. The investigation unit shall be inspected once a week by a member of the FPB on a rotating basis. Any broken, missing, or items that require maintenance shall be reported in writing to the Deputy Chief of staff
- Each Friday, all inspectors shall meet with the Deputy Chief of Staff in order to discuss any problems, exchange ideas, promote better working understanding, and communicate any items that addressed
- An Inspector's monthly report is due to the Deputy Chief of Staff on the first Friday of the following month
- Regarding the release of information to the public and newspapers; the prepared items for release shall be submitted to the Deputy Chief of Staff, who will forward them to the office of the Fire Chief for approval. Copies shall be made and filed for future reference

Acceptable Experience And Training: Must possess the following:

- High school graduate, (or equivalent)
- Be 21 years of age

- A valid state of Ohio driver's license
- A minimum of five years firefighting experience
- Maintain Emergency Medical Technician-Basic certification within the state of Ohio
- Maintain the Firefighter II certification within the state of Ohio
- Be certified as a Fire Safety Inspection Officer with the state of Ohio
- Some college course relating to the fire service preferred

Deputy Fire Chief

Job Description(s)

Deputy Chief of Staff/Support directs the efficient and orderly operations of Fire Prevention, Training, Paramedic Coordination and other personnel not assigned to shifts. He also assists the Fire Chief in formulating policy, plans, records and training procedures and shares responsibility for management, achieving goals and objectives of the department. Regarding personnel, he assists in screening applications based on qualifications; interviews and reference checks then will make recommendations for selecting or rejecting applications.

Deputy Chief of Operations oversees apparatus repair, building maintenance, scheduling, work assignments and deadlines. He also assists the Fire Chief in devising acceptable standards and procedures for recruitment and selection of department members. Regarding personnel, he assists in screening applications based on qualifications; interviews and reference checks then will make recommendations for selecting or rejecting applications. He further assists the Fire Chief in developing budget goals, plans and objectives, projects, forecasts and estimates in reviewing expenditures and revenues. Inventory management and communications/radio equipment are also his responsibility.

Fire Chief

Job Description

The Fire Chief must possess a broad knowledge of Fire Division administration and modern firefighting and fire prevention methods and techniques. Some of the duties performed are:

- Plan departmental operation with respect to equipment, apparatus and personnel and supervises the placing of such plans into effect.
- Issue orders for improvement of work methods and for enforcing rules and regulations.
- Keep informed of personnel, property and operation of the department and analyze and take action on such information in order to improve operations.
- Prepare budget estimates of anticipated expenditures and needs.
- Assign personnel and equipment to such duties and uses as the service requires.
- Evaluate the need for and requisition new apparatus and supplies.
- Respond to major alarms and personally direct firefighting operations.

All Job Descriptions Reviewed and Updated: January, 2012

APPENDIX 2 – PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL SURVEY (EXTERNAL)

As part of an applied research project, I am collecting data from fire departments located across the state of Ohio related to the use of performance appraisals. Upon completion, please return this form either via email or fax to me at tberczik@jacksontwp.com or (330) 834-3958. I will be receiving data until March 31, 2012. Thank you in advance for taking the time to complete this short survey.

1. Does your department currently conduct performance appraisals? (If 'no', proceed to question 19.)
 - Yes
 - No

2. How long has your department been conducting performance appraisals?
 - 0 – 5 years
 - 6 – 10 years
 - 11 – 15 years
 - More than 15 years

3. How often are performance appraisals conducted on probationary members?
 - Monthly
 - Quarterly
 - Semi-annually
 - Annually

4. How often are performance appraisals conducted on non-probationary members?
 - Monthly
 - Quarterly
 - Semi-annually
 - Annually

5. Does your department operate under a collective bargaining agreement?
 - Yes
 - No, (skip items 6 and 7)

6. Are the purposes for your performance appraisals addressed in the collective bargaining agreement?
 - Yes
 - No

7. Are the areas being evaluated in your performance appraisals addressed in the collective bargaining agreement?
 - Yes
 - No

8. In your department, are performance appraisals conducted prior to the completion of probationary periods for new members?
 - Yes
 - No

9. Who conducts the performance appraisal for probationary member?
 - Peers
 - Immediate supervisor
 - Battalion chief / shift commander
 - Command staff personnel
 - Fire chief

10. In your department, are performance appraisals conducted prior to the completion of probationary periods for promoted members?
 - Yes
 - No

11. In your department, are members evaluated when transferred or reassigned?
- Yes
 - No
12. What items are evaluated in your departments' performance appraisals?
- Job skills and knowledge
 - Personality skills (meaning ability to get along with others)
 - Professional appearance and presentation
 - Ability to obtain established goals
 - Other: (explain)
13. Are performance appraisals utilized when evaluating members for promotion?
- Yes
 - No
14. In your opinion, are performance appraisals applied fairly and equally to all members with your organization?
- Yes
 - No
15. In your opinion, do performance appraisals benefit the members of your department?
- Yes
 - No
16. What is the single most positive attribute of your performance appraisal system?
- Encourages personal development
 - Reinforces communications between the evaluator and the member
 - Setting attainable goals for the member
 - There are no positive attributes of our appraisal system

17. What is the single most negative attribute of your appraisal system?

- Used to degrade the member by the evaluator
- Used to revisit poor performance areas from members past
- Does not allow for discussion or explanation by the member
- There are no negative attributes to our system

18. 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
- Self-assessment with a supervisory review
- 360° rating assessment
- Rating system, (numerical evaluation for different topics)
- Other: (explain)

19. Which of the following most accurately describes your department?

- All career (full-time)
- Combination (full- and part-time)
- Combination (part-time and volunteer)
- All volunteer

20. How many members make up your department?

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

Department Name(Optional) _____ Contact(Optional) _____

APPENDIX 3 – Performance Appraisal Survey (Internal)
Please Complete and Return By March 31, 2012

1. Do you feel that performance appraisals would be beneficial for the members of the Jackson Township Fire Department?
 - Yes
 - No (skip to item 13)

2. How often should probationary members receive performance appraisals?
 - Monthly
 - Quarterly
 - Semi-annually
 - Annually

3. How often should non-probationary members receive performance appraisals?
 - Monthly
 - Quarterly
 - Semi-annually
 - Annually

4. Who should conduct the performance appraisal for each member, (check all that apply)?
 - Peers
 - Immediate supervisor
 - Battalion chief / shift commander
 - Command staff personnel
 - Fire chief

5. Should performance appraisals be conducted prior to the completion of probationary periods for new members?
 - Yes
 - No
6. Should performance appraisals be conducted prior to the completion of probationary periods for promoted members?
 - Yes
 - No
7. Should members be evaluated prior to being transferred or reassigned?
 - Yes
 - No
8. If implemented, what items should be evaluated in the performance appraisal? (select all that apply)
 - Job skills and knowledge
 - Personality skills (meaning ability to get along with coworkers)
 - Professional appearance and presentation
 - Ability to obtain established goals
 - Other: (explain)
9. If implemented, should performance appraisals be utilized when evaluating members for promotion?
 - Yes
 - No

10. What do you feel would be the most positive attribute of performance appraisals?
- Encourages personal development
 - Reinforcing communications between the evaluator and the member
 - Setting attainable goals for the member
 - There are no positive attributes to a performance appraisal
11. What do you feel would be the most negative attribute of performance appraisals?
- May be used to degrade the member by the evaluator
 - May be used to revisit poor performance areas from members past
 - May not allow discussion or explanation by the member
 - There are no negative attributes to a performance appraisal
12. Which form of performance appraisals would work best for the members of the Jackson Township Fire department?
- Self-assessment with a peer review
 - Self-assessment with a supervisory review
 - 360° rating assessment
 - Rating system, (numerical evaluation for different topics)
 - Other: (explain)
13. What is your current status with the Jackson Township Fire Department?
- Part-time member (skip item 14)
 - Career member (skip item 15)

14. How long have you been a career member of the Jackson Township Fire Department?

- Less than five years
- Five to ten years
- Eleven to fifteen years
- Sixteen to twenty years
- More than twenty years

15. How long have you been a part-time member of the Jackson Township Fire Department?

- Less than five years
- Five to ten years
- Eleven to fifteen years
- Sixteen to twenty years
- More than twenty years

APPENDIX 4- DATA SURVEY COLLECTION (EXTERNAL)

1	Does your department currently conduct performance appraisals? (If 'no', proceed to question 19.)	
	Yes	<u>28</u>
	No	<u>10</u>
2	How long has your department been conducting performance appraisals?	
	0 – 5 years	<u>4</u>
	6 – 10 years	<u>14</u>
	11 – 15 years	<u> </u>
	More than 15 years	<u>10</u>
3	How often are performance appraisals conducted on probationary members?	
	Monthly	<u>6</u>
	Quarterly	<u>10</u>
	Semi-annually	<u>10</u>
	Annually	<u>2</u>
4	How often are performance appraisals conducted on non-probationary members?	
	Monthly	<u> </u>
	Quarterly	<u> </u>
	Semi-annually	<u> </u>
	Annually	<u>28</u>
5	Does your department operate under a collective bargaining agreement?	
	Yes	<u>26</u>
	No, (skip items 6 and 7)	<u>2</u>
6	Are the purposes for your performance appraisals addressed in the collective bargaining agreement?	
	Yes	<u>4</u>
	No	<u>22</u>
7	Are the areas being evaluated in your performance appraisals addressed in the collective bargaining agreement?	
	Yes	<u>4</u>
	No	<u>22</u>

8	In your department, are performance appraisals conducted prior to the completion of probationary periods for new members?	
	Yes	<u>26</u>
	No	<u>2</u>
9	Who conducts the performance appraisal for each member?	
	Peers	<u> </u>
	Immediate supervisor	<u>24</u>
	Battalion chief / shift commander	<u>4</u>
	Command staff personnel	<u>6</u>
	Fire chief	<u>6</u>
10	In your department, are performance appraisals conducted prior to the completion of probationary periods for promoted members?	
	Yes	<u>24</u>
	No	<u>4</u>
11	In your department, are members evaluated when transferred or reassigned?	
	Yes	<u>2</u>
	No	<u>26</u>
12	What items are evaluated in your departments' performance appraisals?	
	Job skills and knowledge	<u>22</u>
	Personality skills (meaning ability to get along with others)	<u>16</u>
	Professional appearance and presentation	<u> </u>
	Ability to obtain established goals	<u>22</u>
	Other: (explain)	<u> </u>
13	Are performance appraisals utilized when evaluating members for promotion?	
	Yes	<u>16</u>
	No	<u>12</u>
14	In your opinion, are performance appraisals applied fairly and equally to all members with your organization?	
	Yes	<u>16</u>
	No	<u>12</u>
15	In your opinion, do performance appraisals benefit the members of your department?	
	Yes	<u>20</u>
	No	<u>8</u>

16	What is the single most positive attribute of your performance appraisal system?	
	Encourages personal development	<u>14</u>
	Reinforces communications between the evaluator and the member	<u>8</u>
	Setting attainable goals for the member	<u>4</u>
	There are no positive attributes of our appraisal system	<u>4</u>
	Other: (explain)	<u>2</u>
17	What is the single most negative attribute of your appraisal system?	
	Used to degrade the member by the evaluator	<u> </u>
	Used to revisit poor performance areas from members past	<u>10</u>
	Does not allow for discussion or explanation by the member	<u>2</u>
	There are no negative attributes to our system	<u>12</u>
	Other: (explain)	<u>6</u>
18	Which of the following best describes the type of performance appraisal system utilized by your department?	
	Self-assessment with a peer review	<u> </u>
	Self-assessment with a supervisory review	<u>4</u>
	360° rating assessment	<u> </u>
	Rating system, (numerical evaluation for different topics)	<u>22</u>
	Other: (explain)	<u>2</u>
19	Which of the following most accurately describes your department?	
	All career (full-time)	<u>10</u>
	Combination (full- and part-time)	<u>14</u>
	Combination (part-time and volunteer)	<u>2</u>
	All volunteer	<u>2</u>
20	How many members make up your department?	
	Less than 25 members	<u>2</u>
	25 to 50 members	<u>20</u>
	51 to 75 members	<u>6</u>
	76 to 100 members	<u> </u>
	More than 100 members	<u> </u>

APPENDIX 5- DATA SURVEY COLLECTION (INTERNAL)

1	Do you feel that performance appraisals would be beneficial for the members of the Jackson Township Fire Department?	
	Yes	<u>36</u>
	No	<u> </u>
2	How often should probationary members receive performance appraisals?	
	Monthly	<u>10</u>
	Quarterly	<u>25</u>
	Semi-annually	<u>1</u>
	Annually	<u> </u>
3	How often should non-probationary members receive performance appraisals?	
	Monthly	<u>1</u>
	Quarterly	<u>5</u>
	Semi-annually	<u>8</u>
	Annually	<u>22</u>
4	Who should conduct the performance appraisal for each member?	
	Peers	<u>2</u>
	Immediate supervisor	<u>36</u>
	Battalion chief / shift commander	<u>4</u>
	Command staff personnel	<u>1</u>
	Fire chief	<u> </u>
5	Should performance appraisals be conducted prior to the completion of probationary periods for new members?	
	Yes	<u>36</u>
	No	<u> </u>
6	Should performance appraisals be conducted prior to the completion of probationary periods for promoted members?	
	Yes	<u>36</u>
	No	<u> </u>
7	Should members be evaluated prior to being transferred or reassigned?	
	Yes	<u>18</u>
	No	<u>18</u>

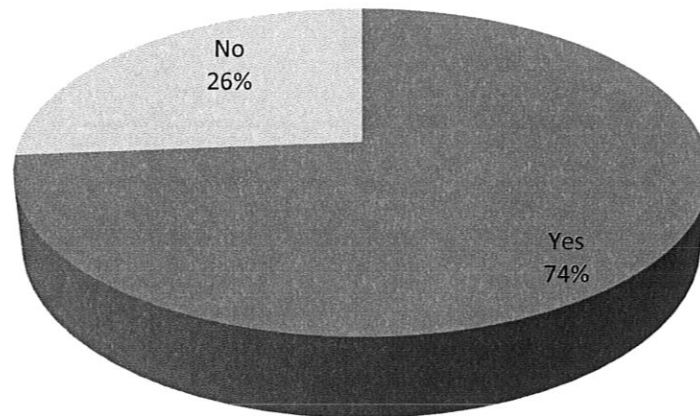
8	If implemented, what items should be evaluated in the performance appraisal? (select all that apply)	
	Job skills and knowledge	<u>36</u>
	Personality skills (meaning ability to get along with coworkers)	<u>26</u>
	Professional appearance and presentation	<u>33</u>
	Ability to obtain established goals	<u>30</u>
	Other: (explain) Ethics / Attendance / Fitness	<u>4</u>
9	If implemented, should performance appraisals be utilized when evaluating members for promotion?	
	Yes	<u>36</u>
	No	<u> </u>
10	What do you feel would be the most positive attribute of performance appraisals?	
	Encourages personal development	<u>28</u>
	Reinforcing communications between the evaluator and the member	<u>12</u>
	Setting attainable goals for the member	<u>10</u>
	There are no positive attributes to a performance appraisal	<u> </u>
11	What do you feel would be the most negative attribute of performance appraisals?	
	May be used to degrade the member by the evaluator	<u>21</u>
	May be used to revisit poor performance areas from members past	<u>6</u>
	May not allow discussion or explanation by the member	<u>4</u>
	There are no negative attributes to a performance appraisal	<u>13</u>
12	Which form of performance appraisals would work best for the members of the Jackson Township Fire department?	
	Self-assessment with a peer review	<u>2</u>
	Self-assessment with a supervisory review	<u>15</u>
	360° rating assessment	<u>7</u>
	Rating system, (numerical evaluation for different topics)	<u>8</u>
	Other: (explain) (goal setting)	<u>1</u>
13	What is your current status with the Jackson Township Fire Department?	
	Part-time member	<u>6</u>
	Career member	<u>30</u>

14 How long have you been a career member of the Jackson Township Fire Department?

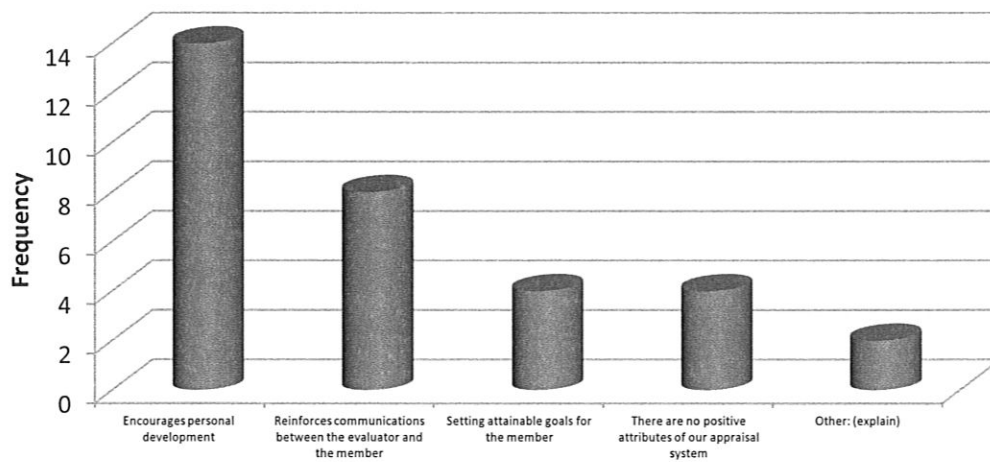
Less than five years	<u>7</u>
Five to ten years	<u>4</u>
Eleven to fifteen years	<u>4</u>
Sixteen to twenty years	<u>10</u>
More than twenty years	<u>5</u>

15 How long have you been a part-time member of the Jackson Township Fire Department?

Less than five years	<u>6</u>
Five to ten years	_____
Eleven to fifteen years	_____
Sixteen to twenty years	_____
More than twenty years	_____

APPENDIX 6 – DISCUSSION CHARTS**Number of Departments Utilizing Appraisal Systems****Figure 1**

External Survey, Question 1
Does your department currently conduct performance appraisals?

Positive Attributes of Performanc Appraisals**Figure 2**

External Survey, Question 16

What is the single most positive attribute of your performance appraisal system?

Who should conduct performance appraisals?

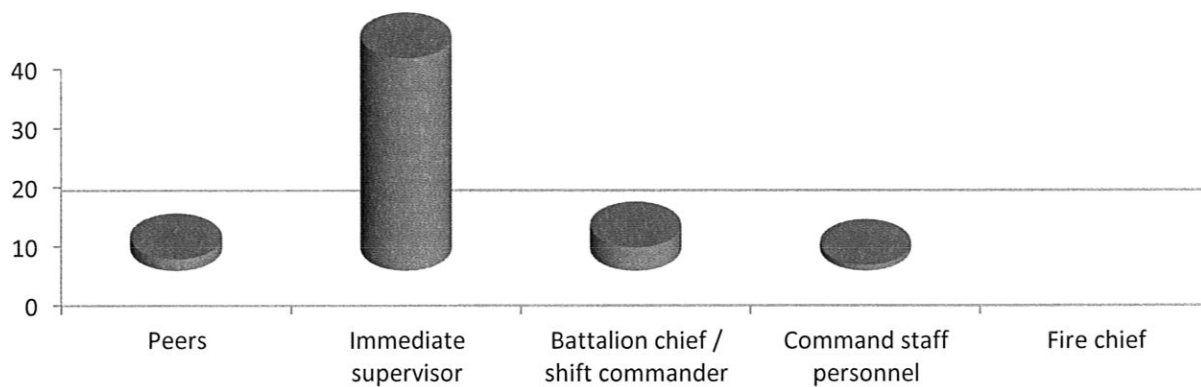


Figure 3

Internal Survey, Question 4

Who should conduct the performance appraisal for each member?

What type of appraisal would work best?

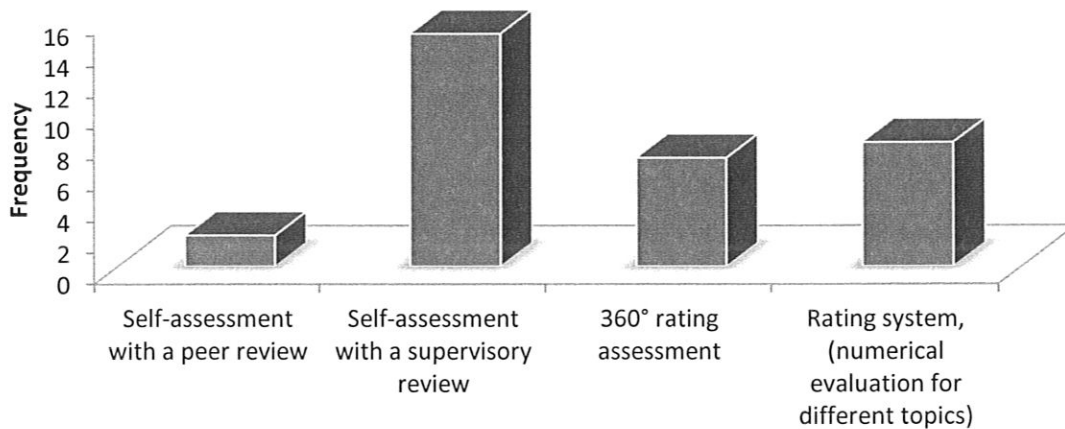


Figure 4

Internal Survey, Question 12

Which form of performance appraisals would work best for the members of the Jackson Township Fire department?

Items that should be evaluated

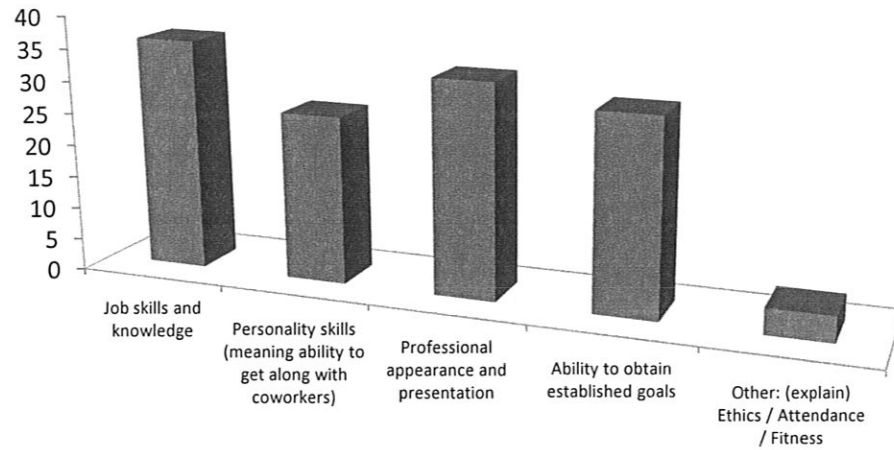


Figure 5

Internal Survey, Question 8

If implemented, what items should be evaluated in the performance appraisal?