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As you know, documentation of performance is one of our most valuable tools, but a pain in the neck for supervisors. As a result, performance evaluations carry little weight and often times disciplinary action is mitigated because of a supervisors failure to document performance and conduct issues. Although we have a formalized documentation process in place, we still have difficulty getting supervisors to adhere to our guidelines. Nevertheless, over time (approximately 8 years), we have changed the paradigm and are finding that a majority of our supervisors are at least trying to comply with our documentation process and are even reaping the benefits of this sort of documentation. So, it seems our persistence is paying off to some degree.

The Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department (Metro) is an independent law enforcement agency that is headed by an elected Sheriff. Funding for the organization is provided by the City of Las Vegas, Clark County and some tax revenues that are specific to Metro. Currently we employ approximately 6,000 employees. We three separate collective bargaining agreements: police and corrections, civilian, and police managers and supervisors. In addition we have appointed employees that serve at the pleasure of the Sheriff and temporary employees that are not represented. The labor relations function in the Human Resources Division is responsible for collective bargaining, disciplinary process and the performance appraisal program.

The performance appraisal program is what I referenced as a "best practice." Please keep in mind, the reference to "best practice" is not a statement regarding the absolute success of our program. The statement is more associated with the concept. Actual practice and compliance with our guidelines is another story. In any event, the following is an explanation of how our program works.

Labor Relations, in conjunction with the employee associations, developed performance measurement parameters and forms to create consistency in the program.

There are three forms used in the LVMPD Performance Appraisal System. They include the Statement of Performance Cover Page, the Statement of Performance, and the Contact Report.

- The Contact Report is the foundation of the evaluation system and is used to document communications between a supervisor and employees that report to him/her. The Contact Report is intended to be used as a performance tool only and provides the documentation for completing the Statement of Performance. The Contact Report helps us to avoid rater errors, refresh memory when it is time to write the employee's appraisal.

The Contact Report is also a vehicle for including performance-related information (such as letters from citizens, training certificates, or internal department accolades) in the employee's performance file. The Contact Report may also be a precursor for a disciplinary investigation and action...it serves as written documentation that an employee was notified of a deficiency.

- Statement of Performance Cover Page - This document provides the supervisor and employee a forum to discuss, set and strive towards a set of individualized goals, as well as discuss the expectations of the supervisor for the employee. It is designed to be completed when the supervisor and employee first meet, and can be revised as needed to be consistent with the unit goals, tasks and expectations.
- The Statement of Performance - The Statement of Performance provides a tool for the supervisor to reference an employee's measurable performance, document the employee's performance over the performance appraisal period and provides a tool for communication between the supervisor and the employee. A Statement of Performance is completed only when an appraisal is due: annually, quarterly for probationary employees, or bimonthly for those not meeting standards. The narrative calls for an objective assessment and is based on the Contact Reports generated during the period. The only rating that is provided for on the evaluation is a "Does Not Meet Standards." This is required because we have a system in place for evaluating on a bi-monthly basis if an employee is not meeting standards. We found having categories of "Exceeds Standards" and "Exceptional Performance" created more grief than a rating of not meeting standards. Our requirement now is to provide narrative to describe the good performance the supervisor wants to highlight, without giving it a rating.

The primary objective of our system is to correct performance and conduct issues immediately. The documentation helps hold employees and supervisors accountable. It's not rocket science, but a continuing battle to get supervisors to actively engage the system.