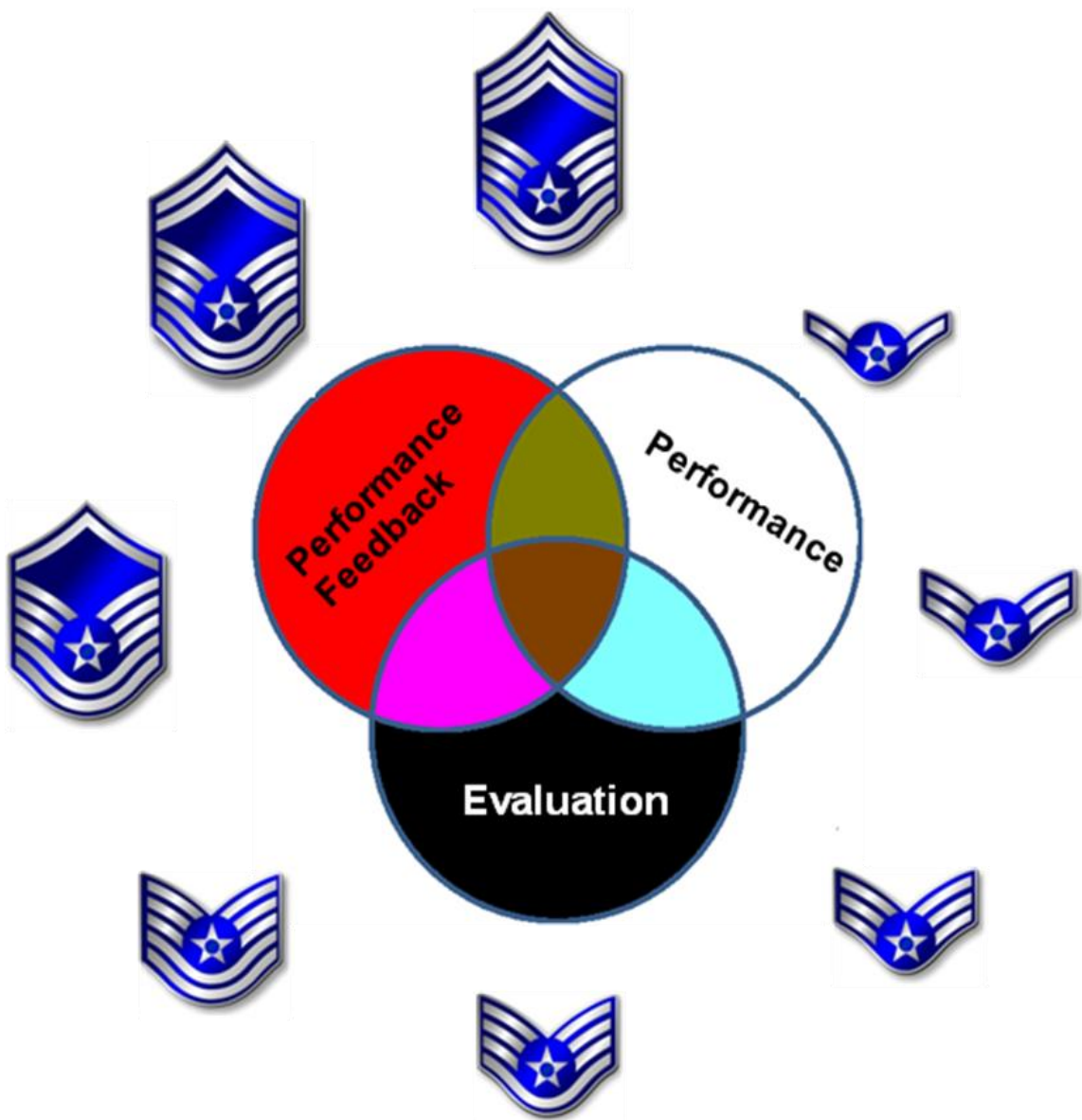


ENLISTED EVALUATION SYSTEM

Training Guide



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
ACKNOWLEDGMENT	4
EES OBJECTIVES	5
PERFORMANCE FEEDBACK	
What is Performance Feedback?	6
Why is it Required and Who Should Receive it?	6
Conducting Effective Performance Feedback.....	8
Key Players and Their Responsibilities.....	10
ENLISTED PERFORMANCE REPORTS	
Responsibilities	12
Facts About Preparing the EPR	14
Referral EPRs	18
“Effective Writing” (What Does it Mean?)	20
The Readability Test	20
EPR Writing Tips	21

<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Inflated EPRs	24
Timeliness/Late EPRs	26
Impact of EPRs	26
CONCLUSION.....	29

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

With the assistance of a host of agencies throughout the Air Force, the Air Force Personnel Center, Randolph Air Force Base, Texas, successfully gathered information to be included in this Enlisted Evaluation System (EES) Training Guide. Information was extracted from other EES guides provided by various MAJCOMs and Air Force bases. This was an Air Force team effort and the entire staff within the Evaluation Section at the Air Force Personnel Center extends their appreciation for a job well done.

EES OBJECTIVES

“To truly develop our Airmen we must accurately and honestly assess their strengths and weaknesses and chart their course to success. While giving our Airmen proper feedback is a crucial first step, it is vitally important to follow through and provide an accurate evaluation of performance, abilities, and potential on enlisted performance reports.”

-- CMSAF Rodney J. McKinley, 18 Aug 2008, The Enlisted Perspective

PROVIDE CANDID FEEDBACK

The Enlisted Evaluation System has three objectives. The first objective is to provide rateses with candid meaningful performance feedback so they will know what the Air Force and their supervisors expect of them, and to let them know how they are doing once they have been given the opportunity to meet those expectations and established standards of performance.

OFFICIAL RECORD OF PERFORMANCE

The second objective of the Enlisted Evaluation System is to provide a reliable, long-term, cumulative record of performance and potential as viewed by officials in the rating chain who are closest to the actual work environment. The enlisted performance report (EPR) is this official record of performance.

The third objective is to provide sound information to SNCO evaluation boards, the Weighted Airman Promotion System, and other managers to assist in identifying the best qualified enlisted airmen for advancement and increased responsibility.

PERFORMANCE FEEDBACK

WHAT IS PERFORMANCE FEEDBACK?

Performance feedback is the single most important means for changing behavior and developing your subordinates. The primary purpose of feedback is to improve performance. Feedback lets subordinates know where they stand in relation to duty expectations and standards. It is most effective when given frequently, honestly, and in a constructive atmosphere.

WHY IS IT REQUIRED AND WHO SHOULD RECEIVE IT?

Feedback is required to communicate with, provide information to, and to motivate the ratee.

COMMUNICATION

Feedback is formal and informal communication occurring between a rater and ratee. The more formal type is regularly scheduled, whereas informal feedback can take place anytime, anywhere, verbal or documented.

Feedback should explain duty performance and expectations, how the ratee compares to those expectations, and ways to improve for the future. To be truly effective, the rater must clearly state those expectations, and both the rater and ratee must clearly understand them.

Airmen desire and deserve to know what is expected of them and how they're progressing in comparison to those expectations. Airmen will perform better when they receive face-to-face, open, honest feedback about performance progress and improvement areas. All too often ratees do not receive any feedback at all or they receive it too late in the reporting period to allow for improvement.

INFORMATION

Feedback gives information to the ratee and allows them to judge where they are in relation to the given expectations. Without this information, the ratee has no way of knowing if their performance is adequate or how best to improve. The more information

the ratee is given, the better they will be able to adjust toward the expected outcome, and the more motivated they will be.

MOTIVATION

Feedback can motivate...Airmen who know how they are doing, compared to a standard, try harder and persist longer at tasks than those who don't. Motivation is directly related to needs, behavior, and is goal directed. Communicating the proper information will motivate ratees toward accomplishing mission goals as well as their professional goals.

FEEDBACK IS MANDATORY FOR ALL ENLISTED AIRMEN.

Formal performance feedback is documented on a **Performance Feedback Worksheet (PFW): AF Form 931**, (AB - TSgt) and **AF Form 932**, (MSgt - CMSgt)

WHEN IS FEEDBACK DUE?

- **Initial sessions** are held within **60 days** of date assigned as a rater.
- (SMSgts and below) A **midterm session** is held **midway** between the date supervision began and the projected EPR close-out date and should focus on how well the ratee is meeting expectations and clarify any suggested improvement areas.
- If a rater change is expected or the projected EPR close-out date limits the amount of supervision to less than 150 days, a feedback session should take place at least 45 days prior to the EPR close-out date.
- For **Airmen who do not receive EPRs**, a follow-up session is due **180 days** after the initial session.
- For **Airmen who do receive EPRs**, a feedback session is completed in conjunction with the finalization of an EPR (End of Reporting Period Feedback). The rater should **discuss performance** recorded on the **EPR** plus provide direction and **guidance for the new rating period**.
- Sessions are held if the **rater determines a need**, or within **30 days** of receiving a **request from the ratee**, provided **at least 60 days has elapsed since the last feedback session**.

CONDUCTING EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE FEEDBACK

Conducting the performance feedback session is not always easy. As the one conducting the session, remember that you must be fully prepared, and that the success of the session relies on your ability to deal positively with the Airmen you supervise. Your attitude about performance feedback can set a positive or negative course. Remember, flexibility is important. You may start out with the intent of only doing a performance feedback session, but may end up conducting a full counseling session. Regardless, take the time to fully prepare and decide what you want to accomplish. **The following are some key rules to use in preparing to conduct a performance feedback session:**

PLAN FOR THE SESSION: Review job requirements/description. To be able to discuss duties and responsibilities with the ratee, you must be familiar with the current job requirements. Check to see if the job description is still current and valid. Does the ratee still perform these duties? Are there any other new ones the ratee is performing that are not stated in the job description? Are there any jobs they're not performing that they should be performing? Identify and record those areas that apply to the ratee. It is a good idea to review any governing directives that pertain to the job: AF JQS, CFETPs, AFIs, OIs, TOs, In-House Training requirements, etc.

REVIEW GOALS AND STANDARDS: Evaluate how well the ratee met the set goals and standards. Consider asking yourself: Who set the goals and standards? Were the standards too high? Were the goals reached ahead of time? Were they not met due to something beyond the ratee's control? If they were not met, did the ratee know exactly what the goals and standards were? Remember, when ratees help in setting performance goals and standards, there should be no misunderstanding about how their performance will be evaluated, and they will be more motivated to perform their best.

REVIEW PAST HISTORY: You should review the ratee job skills, training, any special experience they have, education, etc. This will allow a better picture of the whole person concept for you to help develop the ratee in the future. It will also help identify any problem areas that negatively impact their job performance.

EVALUATE JOB PERFORMANCE VS STANDARDS: Match the actual job performance to the standards and expectations. Consider the timeliness, quality, quantity, and difficulty of the jobs performed. Remember to evaluate this Airman only. The standards and expectations previously set were for **that ratee**.

CONSIDER CAREER OPPORTUNITIES OR LIMITATIONS: Consider opportunities that the ratee had taken or not to enhance their career. Did they have opportunities and decided not to take them, or were they not able to due to mission requirements, emergencies, etc. Consider what, if any, opportunities you provided. Desired, but missed opportunities can have a major impact on job performance, positive or negative.

PREPARE THE FORM: Take your time and do a very comprehensive job. Consider possible questions the ratee might have concerning the marks you give. **Anything less than top score should include a recommended method to improve.** Even some top scores still leave room to improve. Also, it is important you give the ratee time to prepare as well. Let them know well in advance the areas that you will discuss and have them evaluate their performance. This technique should help in mutual understanding of any deficient areas and help set goals for the future.

SELECT PROPER TIME AND PLACE: Pick a **neutral place**...don't put the ratee in a position that makes them **feel uneasy** or one that reinforces your **position of power**. Make sure the room is private and quiet. Avoid any interruptions by having someone hold calls and take messages. Put a **"Do Not Disturb"** sign on the door. Ensure you schedule enough time for the session and leave a little extra time in case the session goes longer.

NOW IT'S TIME TO CONDUCT THE SESSION! You must consider the style of approach you will use for the session: directive, nondirective, or a combination of the two. A combination of both tends to be the best style. You may have to adapt as the session progresses. This is where your interviewing skills come into play.

CREATE A POSITIVE ATMOSPHERE: Establish rapport. Ensure the ratee is at ease to encourage open discussion. Although personal talk is pleasant, stay focused and get to the heart of the matter quickly; most ratees will appreciate it.

USE A 7 - STEP PROCESS: Generally speaking, you should have specific guidelines to follow to increase the probability of success in a feedback session. It should be simple to remember so you don't have to refer to notes, nor do you want it to be a checklist approach. The following is only one of many approaches. Find one that works best for you.

STEP 1: State the purpose of the session: Explain why you're having the session. Tell them the session is a **two-way communication** between both of you.

STEP 2: Encourage the ratee to appraise own performance: Listen! Avoid dominating the conversation. Use open-ended questions, not "yes/no" type.

STEP 3: Present the results of your evaluation: Honesty is the best policy here. Start by focusing on the strong point first.

STEP 4: Ask ratee for comments: While ratee is expressing his/her comments, remain in control and **listen**.

STEP 5: Negotiate a performance agreement: Ask ratee where they would like to see improvement.

STEP 6: Set future goals: Set **specific goals** that **are clear** and not misunderstood; they should be **measurable** against standards so the ratee can match **performance behavior**.

STEP 7: Close the session by reflecting on what **was discussed** and try to close on a lasting positive note.

FOLLOW-UP: The feedback loop breaks down without proper follow-up. A strong follow-up shows your commitment to the ratee's development and offers a chance for the ratee to ask questions that may have come up since the session. This is also the right time to advise the ratee how they are performing in comparison to the established expectations.

PRACTICE "LBWA": Leadership By Walking Around gets you out of the office and in the field so you can see how your Airmen are performing. It is also a way of giving immediate feedback to the ratee on the session you just held. They're probably just as curious as to how you feel the session went. This would be a good time to offer praise or answer questions. This will also reinforce that you truly care about your people and display a sense of urgency in ensuring a positive working relationship is established.

KEY PLAYERS AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES

COMMANDER:

The commander has the overall responsibility in ensuring his/her squadron has an effective feedback program. He/she can establish **quality performance measures** to ensure feedback is being conducted. To enable this responsibility commanders may review the PFWs if desired (do not allow unauthorized personnel to have access to PFWs).

RATERS AND RATER'S RATERS:

Raters are not the only ones that can see a PFW--the rater's rater can too. Therefore, it is not only the responsibility of the rater to ensure performance feedback is conducted, but also those who have access to PFWs as well. The rater's rater should initiate this action (review PFWs) when they actually have a need to know or have evidence that would warrant such a review. The rater should periodically spot check to ensure his/her subordinates are providing feedback to their Airmen.

RATEE:

It is important that ratees know that it is not only their rater, rater's rater and commander's responsibility to ensure they received feedback, but also it's their ultimate responsibility. Ratees need to know they can ask for unscheduled feedback as long as there has not been a formal feedback session conducted in the last 60 days. The rater has 30 days upon request to provide it. If not provided within this window, the ratee has justification to elevate the rater's failure to provide feedback to the rater's rater, and to the commander if necessary.

ENLISTED PERFORMANCE REPORTS

RESPONSIBILITIES

KEY PEOPLE PLAY KEY ROLES

An effective Enlisted Evaluation System requires a joint effort from not only the rater, but many others within a unit. Goals and standards of quality must be set and enforced if the EES program is expected to be successful. All key players must know their responsibilities and how to execute them in the most effective and cohesive manner. Key players are the Commander, First Sergeant, ratee, rater, additional rater, and subsequent reviewers. Some of their key responsibilities are outlined as follows:

COMMANDER:

- Ensure evaluations accurately describe actual performance.
- Ensure evaluations make realistic recommendation for promotion (or increased responsibility).
- Ensure supervisors conduct performance feedback sessions as required.
- Ensure the first sergeant or designated SNCO conducts a quality review on all EPRs before the commander's review.
- Ensure no family member is in the rating chain.
- Conducts the commander review.

FIRST SERGEANT (or Designated SNCO):

- Review all EPRs before the commander's review and advise the commander of important quality force indicators.

RATEE:

- Ensure the rater's standards and expectations are understood.
- Know when each of the mandatory scheduled performance feedback sessions (initial and midterm) is required.
- Know that performance feedback is mandatory and must be accomplished within 30 days of the ratee's request and what course of action to take if it's not (elevate to rater's rater for assistance).
- Check performance status periodically by asking the right questions; how am I doing, where do I need to improve, etc.
- Self evaluate; realistically compare performance with peers (same AFSC) and standards.

RATER:

- Observe ratee's behavior, performance, achievements, efficiency, compliance with military standards and potential to assume greater responsibility.
- Examine the results of the ratee's work and get meaningful information from the ratee, and from other sources (including those who previously supervised the ratee during the reporting period). This information does not have to be documented on an AF Form 77 (LOE).
- Evaluate the ratee's performance against specific factors.
- Consider the significance and frequency of incidents (including isolated instances of poor or outstanding performance when assessing total performance).
- Provide scheduled, requested, or as needed feedback to help ratee improve performance and ensure the feedback provided is candid, objective and uninflated.
- Record the ratee's performance and make a recommendation for promotion (recommend increased responsibility for reports on CMSgts).
- Check each performance factor and overall assessment rating to ensure assigned ratings accurately describe the ratee.
- Guard against the "error of halo" effect by not generalizing performance in all areas as (negative or positive) due to an isolated event.

ALL EVALUATORS (RATER, ADDITIONAL RATER, REVIEWERS):

- Have knowledge of information contained in the ratee's Unfavorable Information File (UIF) as applicable.
- Consider the following items when evaluating performance, Equal Opportunity Treatment (EOT), Fitness Program (AFI 10-248), internal control, acquiring and managing inventory items, productivity, occupational safety and health, etc.

FACTS ABOUT PREPARING THE EPR

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW...

There are basic factors the entire rating chain must be aware of when writing or endorsing EPRs.

ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

- Use AFI 36-2406, *Officer and Enlisted Evaluation Systems*, and AF Form 910 (enlisted performance report) ALC through TSgt, and AF Form 911 for MSgt through CMSgt.
- Write in bullet format.
- Limit bullets to a minimum of one line and a maximum two lines per bullet (white space is authorized).
- "Wet Signature Reports Only" - minor corrections are acceptable, however, they should be avoided.
- "Wet Signature Reports Only" - use correction fluid (not correction tape) to change minor errors.
- Pen and ink changes are not allowed.
- Avoid nicknames, code names, or acronyms; if used, explain them.
- Do not sign or date the EPR before the close-out date.

FEATURES OF THE ENLISTED EPR (AF Forms 910 AND 911)

Section I - Ratee Identification data. Use the identification data found on the EPR notice.

- **Name** - Enter ratee's last name, first name, and middle initial (if applicable). Use all uppercase or a combination of upper (First letter in the name) and lower case letters.
- **SSN** - Enter SSN.
- **Grade** - Use all uppercase or a combination of upper and lower case letters for the grade as of the close-out date (or use dropdown available on form).
- **DAFSC** - Enter the DAFSC (including the prefix and suffix, if applicable) held on the close-out date of the EPR.
- **Organization, Command, Location and Component** - Enter the information as of the close-out date of the EPR. **NOTE:** The organization names do not have to be exactly as the EPR notice (computer language).
- **Period Of Report** - Use the dates reflected on the shell.

Section II - Job Description:

- **Duty Title** - The duty title on the EPR notice is the one in the Personnel Data System. You may use the computer abbreviations contained on the shell, or if the duty title on the EPR notice is not correct, enter the correct duty title on the EPR and submit appropriate documentation to correct the Personnel Data System. The duty title should be the duty title on file as of the close-out date of the EPR. AFI 36-2618, The Enlisted Force Structure, Chapter 7, details authorized and appropriate enlisted duty titles.
- **Significant Additional Duty(s)** - Enter any significant additional duties the ratee may hold. Limit text to two lines. If no significant additional duties, enter "N/A".
- **Key Duties, Tasks and Responsibilities** - Bullet format is mandatory. Limit to four lines. Enter a clear description of the ratee's duties. Avoid using jargon or acronyms. Clearly reveal the tasks the ratee performs, how selective the ratee's assignment is, and the scope and level of responsibility to include the dollar value of projects the ratee manages and the number of people the ratee supervises. Acronyms should always be spelled out the first time used. Assume the reader knows nothing about the duties and responsibilities within the area performed.

Section III - Performance Assessment:

- Raters use this section by placing an “X” in the rating block that accurately describes the ratee’s performance. Subsequent evaluators should carefully review the report to ensure the ratings accurately describe the ratee’s performance and the comments are compatible with, and support the ratings. To guard against inflation, the X’s must accurately reflect the ratee’s performance!

Section IV - Rater Information.

Section V - Overall Performance Assessment:

- When completing or reviewing this section, raters consider the ratee’s duty performance and how the ratee compares with others in the same grade.
- Enter the date feedback was conducted or specify why it was not.

Section VI - Additional Rater’s Comments:

- Use this section to comment on the ratee’s overall performance and performance-based potential as compared to others in the same grade. Use bullet format and ensure comments add meaning and are compatible with ratings. Do not repeat comments provided in previous section. The additional rater must be rater’s rater unless additional rater does not meet grade requirements. If additional rater does not meet grade requirements, the first official in rating chain who meets requirements endorses the report. When agreeing with the report, mark the “concur” block. If the rater is the only evaluator, type “This section not used”. The last rater to make comments will sign the block. This area is limited to 3 lines.

NOTE: If the evaluation is completed via wet signature evaluator’s disagreeing with a previous evaluator may initial in the rating block they believe more accurately describe the performance.

Section VII (AF Form 910) and Section X (AF Form 911) - Functional Examiner/Air Force Advisor

- When applicable, place an “X” in the appropriate box.
- Enter Advisor/Examiner’s information as of the close-out date.

Section VIII (AF Form 910) and Section XI (AF Form 911) - Unit Commander/Civilian Director/Other Authorized Reviewer

- The commander's review is for the commander to control the quality of evaluations and to ensure comments in reports are not exaggerated nor have ratings reflecting inflationary tendencies.
- Do not provide comments unless the commander: disagrees with a previous evaluator; caused the report to be referred; or is named as the evaluator in the referral memorandum. If the commander is commenting, an AF Form 77 will be used.

Section VII (AF Form 911) - Reviewer's Comments

- Do not use this section if Section VI has not been completed. This section is reserved for the senior rater or a lower level endorsement and shouldn't be taken lightly when deciding who will indorse this section--the ratee's future promotion may depend upon it.

NOTE: Airmen must be TIG eligible and have completed CCAF and PME requirements to receive Senior Rater Indorsement. Although an Airman may be otherwise eligible, simply meeting these requirements does not guarantee receipt of Senior Rater Indorsement.

Section VIII (AF Form 911) - Final Evaluator's Position

- The final evaluator completes this section by placing an "X" in the appropriate block for the level of indorsement. This block is used for evaluators such as the senior rater, senior rater deputy, intermediate level, and lower level indorsers.

Section IX (AF Form 911) - Time-In-Grade Eligible

- The rater completes this section before forwarding for additional indorsement using information extracted from the EPR notice.

Section IX (AF Form 910) and Section XII (AF Form 911) - Ratee's Acknowledgement

- The Ratee must acknowledge receipt prior to the report becoming a matter of record by signing in this block. Signing the report does not imply concurrence.

REFERRAL EPRS

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN STANDARDS ARE NOT MET?

All Airmen must be accountable for their actions and understand that the Air Force expects all Airmen to live by the **highest standards implicit in our core values**: integrity, service before self, and excellence in all we do. Anything less is unacceptable. When standards are not met...then it is our responsibility, and our duty, to hold people involved accountable for their actions and respond appropriately.

Throughout the Air Force, supervisors must make the tough and unpopular calls when appropriate, and document substandard performance accordingly. This leads into our next topic for discussion: referral actions taken when a subordinate is not meeting required standards of conduct and performance on or off duty.

REFERRAL REPORTS--WHAT SHOULD A SUPERVISOR KNOW ABOUT THEM

- Most importantly, supervisors cannot just focus on how to write well written, outstanding reports, but must also know how to write well written referral performance reports. In doing this they must first know what makes a report referral.

Occasionally, an Airman will not meet established standards and, therefore, the EPR should be written to reflect this substandard performance. An EPR of this type is known as a **"Referral EPR."** A **referral EPR means the EPR is referred, or shown, to the ratee** to allow him or her opportunity to comment on the ratings or comments made in the EPR prior to it becoming a matter of record. For an EPR to be a referral it must meet *one* of the following criteria:

- A **rating in the far left block** of any performance factor. Including a marking of "Does Not Meet" in the fitness block for failure to meet minimum fitness standards or not maintaining annual fitness currency.
- A overall performance assessment rating of **"1" or "2"**
- Comments referring to **behavior** not meeting minimal acceptable **standards of performance, personal conduct, character, or integrity.**

- **If the EPR is referral:** The referral evaluator must **prepare a referral memorandum and hand deliver it** (or “return receipt requested” if mailed) to the ratee with a copy of the EPR. A copy of the memorandum and attached EPR must be sent to the next evaluator. For example: If the rater’s comments or ratings make the report a referral then the rater prepares the referral letter to the ratee. The ratee will in turn provide comments to the rater’s rater. If the reviewer’s comments make the report a referral, then the reviewer must prepare the referral letter and the ratee returns comments to the reviewer’s rater.
- Referral reports will be accomplished with wet (hand written) signatures only.
- The referral memorandum **must contain the specifics of why the EPR is a referral report**, the actions required by the ratee, including the name and complete address of the evaluator to whom any comments should be sent, a statement regarding the ratee’s right to apply for a review under the Evaluation Report Appeals Board (ERAB), and the time limit (10 calendar days) to provide comments to the referral reviewer (extensions may be granted). The ratee **must acknowledge receipt of the referral memorandum**, and then date and sign it. This verifies receipt; it does not indicate whether the ratee will provide comments.
- The **ratee may provide comments** to the evaluator named in the memorandum (referral reviewer) within the stated time limits. If the ratee does not provide comments, the referral reviewer completes the EPR stating “Comments from the ratee were requested but were not received within the required period,” signs the EPR after ratee’s allotted time to provide comments, attaches the referral memorandum to the EPR, and continues with the EPR processing. If **comments are provided**, the referral reviewer states on the EPR, “I have carefully considered (ratee’s name) comments to the referral memo of (Date)”; considers the comments before commenting and signing report, and attaches the referral memorandum with the ratee’s comments. Use the appropriate evaluations section to include comments. If **additional space** is needed, use **AF Form 77** (Supplemental Evaluation Sheet).

“EFFECTIVE WRITING”

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

Writing effective EPRs comes down to one thing: **using hard-hitting, fact-filled words with impact** which paint an accurate picture of the ratee in the mind of the reader. The CMSgt and SMSgt promotion selection program is extremely competitive. The EPRs you write become an integral part of the Senior NCO selection folder used by the evaluation board. Therefore they must “come alive” to the reader and contain meaningful information about the ratee as a senior NCO and leader. Critical facts, specific achievements, and performance-based potential must be easily recognized by the reader.

This training guide emphasizes the key aspects of an EPR in today’s highly competitive environment. It offers suggestions for preparing effective written reports, section-by-section, and provides written examples to highlight both good and bad writing techniques. **Observation, objectivity, judgment, and the integrity** needed for the task of communicating an individual’s performance and potential **must come from you--the rater.**

Remember, meaningful EPRs must meet **clarity, credibility, composition, and content.** To put it simple: be **direct, clear-cut, to the point,** and **state the facts,** and the **impact of those facts.**

THE READABILITY TEST

BOTTOM LINE!

Often raters fail to take **quality measures** to ensure an EPR is **discrepancy free** and has the proper strength which they want to portray to the reader. Usually when this happens, the rater spends more time correcting and strengthening the report than he/she would have if they had taken some quality review measures from the very beginning. To improve EPRs you write in the future, use the following quality review process:

Review the Product. When you think you’ve finished the EPR, let it sit for a day or two, then go back and read it. Does it say what you want it to say? Does it meet the test of simplicity, directness, and impact? Edit the text to economize on words. Remember,

choose your words very carefully--some are valuable and others are very dangerous. Look up words if you are not absolutely certain of their meaning. Remember, if you have to look up words, those who read it may have to as well. Don't compromise the meaning of your thoughts because of misunderstood or misinterpreted words. Be very careful in the diction you use. Remove words or sentences that don't add to the message. Does sincerity come through? If not, look at your choice of words and sentence construction. Read the draft aloud and listen to the sound of the words, phrases, and sentences. Do your ideas flow smoothly in the text or do the points you've made keep jumping around? If they don't sound right--dump'em and start again. Remember, you're trying to convince the reader. Once you have arranged and organized your information on the ratee and chopped it to its barest essentials, work on polishing the words, phrases, and sentences to exhibit sincerity, conviction, and mission impact.

Bottom Line. Only the best qualified Airmen may be promoted. The EPRs you write will be used by board members to assess your SNCO's potential for advancement under the whole person concept. They deserve an accurate evaluation of their performance, abilities, and potential.

EPR WRITING TIPS

Writing Basics

- Avoid pride of authorship -- accept suggestions and recommended changes when applicable
- Be careful of acronym use -- ensure intended meaning clearly communicated
- Be aware that writing styles change with time -- stay in line with current trends
- Bullets are not sentences
- One line bullets are "the norm" -- with the limited space keep ideas to one line
- Begin with a strong verb and always end with the impact/result
- Use dictionary, thesaurus, spell check, and the Tongue & Quill
- PRACTICE...PRACTICE...PRACTICE

Bullet Structure

- WHAT -- HOW -- IMPACT (Suggested Style)
 - WHAT: Led, Created, Developed, Initiated, Championed, Orchestrated...
Example: "Created master training plan"
 - HOW: Example: "identified core tasks/tng rqmts/job quals"
 - IMPACT: \$'s, #'s, %'s... Example: "OJT records 100% compliant"

Examples:

Before:

- AF rep on DoD committee--implemented Def Pers Rcds Info Sys; VA can now retrieve docs on line--broke long-standing paradigm...convinced VA to accept E-DDFM 214; mbrs' benefits simplified/expedited

After:

- DoD med rcds cmte mbr--championed discharge/sep cert e-process--VA adopted; action expedited 3K claims

Before:

- Analyzed delays in converting records to electronic format--diverted disaster and eliminated process pitfalls

After:

- Directed new UPRG sched--worked w/MPF ldrshp; cleared backlog/averted work stop--rcvd 1.1K recs in 48 hrs

Sample Action Verbs

Acquired	Created	Formed	Monitored	Regulated
Activated	Cultivated	Framed	Negotiated	Related
Administered	Counseled	Hired	Obtained	Renegotiated
Advised	Decreased	Improved	Operated	Reorganized
Analyzed	Decentralized	Increased	Orchestrated	Reported
Anticipated	Defined	Initiated	Original	Researched
Appointed	Demonstrated	Instigated	Performed	Resolved
Appraised	Designed	Inspected	Pioneered	Reviewed
Approved	Determined	Instructed	Planned	Revised
Arranged	Developed	Interpreted	Prevented	Revitalized
Assessed	Devised	Interviewed	Processed	Saved
Audited	Documented	Introduced	Procured	Scheduled
Augmented	Doubled	Invented	Produced	Selected
Averted	Edited	Investigated	Programmed	Settled
Avoided	Employed	Launched	Proved	Simplified
Bought	Enforced	Led	Promoted	Solved
Built	Ensured	Liquidated	Provided	Standardized
Captured	Established	Localized	Published	Stimulated
Centralized	Estimated	Located	Purchased	Supervised
Conceived	Executed	Maintained	Recommended	Supported
Commanded	Expanded	Managed	Recruited	Terminated
Converted	Expedited	Marketed	Redesigned	Tested
Corrected	Extracted	Minimized	Reduced	Tightened
Controlled	Forecasted	Modernized	Rejected	Trained

INFLATED EPRS

INFLATED EPR RATINGS DEFLATE EES'S PURPOSE

"We have incredible Airmen serving in our Air Force, but not every Airman is a "firewall" 5. Simply put, average Airmen should not receive the same evaluation ratings as those Airmen who are "truly among the best." When the majority of our Airmen receive the top rating, there is no way to distinguish between our truly exceptional performers and those who are just meeting standards." -- CMSAF Rodney J. McKinley, 18 Aug 2008, The Enlisted Perspective

Airman Meedy Oaker truly deserves an overall "4" or less rating on her performance report, but giving her less than a "5" rating could really hurt her chances for promotion and dampen her morale. What the heck; everyone is getting a "5", I don't want to rock the boat, so I'll just "give" her a "5".

This scenario is a crystal-clear example of how the enlisted evaluation system has become inflated. There is one question we must ask ourselves as Airmen and supervisors...is inflation fair to Top Notch Airmen, or the unit, or to the Air Force as a whole? Inflated ratings inevitably reduce the effectiveness of the evaluation system, and the promotion and special recognition opportunities of the Air Force's top performers. Some supervisors are afraid of hurting their people and the section's morale by not being realistic and honest and giving less than perfect ratings. Nothing could be further from the truth. Raters who provide accurate, honest ratings don't "hurt" their Airmen. Raters who inflate EPRs do, however, hurt the truly exceptional.

Many supervisors who are afraid of hurting their Airmen's feelings by writing truthful comments and giving truthful ratings are actually doing more harm than good. Supervisors aren't helping their people by hiding the truth from them. For example: Sooner or later a person will receive a task they can't perform and will have a rater who won't hesitate to inform them of their weaknesses and measures to take to improve them. Quite often ratees think their records speak for themselves--not realizing their previous supervisors had given them false or inaccurate evaluations. The Air Force cannot afford to have supervisors providing subordinates inaccurate performance assessments--it negatively impacts the mission as well as the ratee.

Too many raters begin a new reporting period with a mindset that says, "Well I'm starting you off with a "5" all you have to do is keep your nose clean and fill the squares to keep it." This is a poor approach. Instead, begin the rating period with a mindset that the Airman is average and it is up to them to prove they are above average or truly among the best.

Supervisors must use the management tools they have been given to ensure they write accurate, uninflated EPRs. They must draw on their leadership, experience, professionalism, and most important, "INTEGRITY," to carry out the four steps of the evaluation process. These steps are observing, evaluating, providing feedback, and recording.

One key element in curbing rating inflation is effective performance feedback. Performance feedback has been required since 1989, and is the integral part of the EES. It provides supervisors with a performance measuring process to determine if subordinates are truly meeting the established standards of performance and expectations. If this measurement is used effectively by raters, they will get an accurate and un-inflated assessment of their ratee's performance.

There are no easy solutions to winning the battle against inflated EPRs, but there are some rules of engagement. **Air Force raters control the destiny of inflation.** It is essential that those supervisors, who haven't yet, take control of this yard stick they've been given and use it as it should be used by providing honest and fair evaluation of their subordinates. Since the Air Force is much smaller today, it is even more critical that supervisors take a stand and do what's right--our mission and national security depends on it. It will be difficult to sustain a strong force and high morale if we provide inaccurate performance feedback and promote people undeservingly and place them in positions that will have an adverse effect on those they represent or directly supervise.

Finally, many have stated the only way to control inflation is by establishing quotas. The Air Force experimented with quotas with limited success. Establishing evaluation quotas is not the desire of our senior leadership. They want evaluators to step forward to make these tough decisions (fair and accurate performance assessments). Established quotas will never replace the desired state of supervisor rating integrity. Supervisors...the senior leaders of our great Air Force have spoken...you must take charge now!

Bottom line: Rater's who inflate EPRs, discredit the validity of EES. Those who provide honest performance evaluations, walk the walk and personify the core value of integrity.

TIMILINESS/LATE EPRS

LATE EPRS

“THE FOLLOWING NOTIONAL SCENARIO IS ONE WITH FAR REACHING NEGATIVE CAREER CONSEQUENCES”

“SORRY! Your EPR didn’t meet the Air Personnel Center E-8 Evaluation Board...” This is definitely not the way to start your day, either for you or for subordinates whom you rate. The EPR is a very important evaluation tool used for promotion, assignment selection, and decorations. Not only must EPRs be of the highest quality, they must also be completed **on time**. **There is simply no excuse for late or inaccurate reports.** Our Airmen deserve timely submission of EPRs. This is a responsibility of evaluators at all levels. Waiting until the last minute to accomplish a report is not fair to our Airmen and often results in a poorly written report. A late report also reflects unfavorably on you as a supervisor. Anticipate when a report is due and be sure you get it done **on time**.

Supervisors should become familiar with their unit’s EPR suspense system and timelines. They will quickly discover the impact of EPRs on day-to-day personnel management transcends several arenas--everything from force management to electronic forms usage! The goal is to come up with the best process for ensuring we promote the best people to keep our force strong and robust--which is aided by writing timely, accurate, and error free reports; whether it’s an outstanding or referral report.

IMPACT OF EPRS

YOUR CAREER WILL DEPEND ON IT

As stated several times throughout this guide, EPRs can have an outstanding or devastating impact on an Airman’s career. Take for example, the Weighted Airmen Promotion System (WAPS); it is an objective system and uses scores from several weighted factors (to include the EPR). Let’s take a look at how EPRs fit into the promotion system.

PROMOTION TO SSGT - MSGT

- The **Specialty Knowledge test (SKT)** is designed to measure the knowledge of the AFSC and is worth up to **100 points**.
- The **Promotion Fitness Examination (PFE)** is also worth up to **100 points** (200 points for SKT exempt Airmen) and is used to assess an individual's overall knowledge of military subjects and managerial concepts for a particular grade level.
- **Enlisted Performance Reports (EPRs)** are also scored and count towards **maximum of 135 points (overall "5" rating)**.
- **Decorations** are worth a **max of 25 points**.
- **Time-in-Grade** counts up to **60 points** (1/2 point per month).
- **Time-in-Service** can earn up to **40 points** (1/6 point per month).

PROMOTION TO SMSGT - CMSGT

- **USAF Supervisory Exam 100 points.**
- **EPRs 135 points.**
- **TIG up to 60 points** (1/2 per month).
- **TIS up to 25 points** (1/12 per month).
- **Decorations** are worth a **max of 25 points**.

NOTE: It is obvious from looking at the above point spread how **critical** the **EPR** is for both NCO and SNCOs promotions.

EPR COMPUTATION FORMULA

As stated earlier, 135 points are the maximum points for EPRs. To determine how points are calculated for EPRs, multiply each EPR rating that closed out within 5 years immediately preceding the ratee's promotion eligibility cutoff date (PECD), not to exceed 10 reports. Use a time weighing factor beginning with 50 for the most recent report and use decrease increments of five (50-45--40-35-25--20-15-10-5) for each remaining report. The multiplying factor for EPRs is 27. After calculating each report, add the total value of

each report for a sum, and then divide that sum by sum of the time weighted factors added together for the promotion performance factor. **Example:** EPR string (most recent to oldest): 5B-4B-5B-5B-5B-5B

$$5 \times 50 = 250 \times 27 = 6750$$

$$4 \times 45 = 180 \times 27 = 4860$$

$$5 \times 40 = 200 \times 27 = 5400$$

$$5 \times 35 = 175 \times 27 = 4725$$

$$5 \times 30 = 150 \times 27 = 4050$$

$$\underline{5 \times 25 = 125 \times 27 = 3375}$$

$$225 \qquad 29160 = 129.60$$

NOTE: The **total** weighted EPR promotion performance factor is **129.60**

USE OF EPRs FOR DECORATIONS

Evaluations have been approved as an option to use for justification in approving the Meritorious Service Medal (MSM) and Air Force Commendation Medal (AFCM). Obviously, EPRs are important in other areas of personnel.

As stated earlier, an individual testing for promotion to the next higher grade can have a maximum of 25 decoration points. This may seem like a small percentage to some-- but wait until one of your ratees misses promotion by five or less points. Their initial instinct is to examine reasons for not making the promotion cut off, and when they discover their EPRs were not strong enough to justify receiving an MSM or AFCM they usually point the finger at the rater who wrote the EPR. This is fine, if this was the rater's intention (not to write a strong EPR). But what if it was his/her intention to ensure the ratee's EPR was strong enough to withstand the test for an award, and the EPR proved to be weak. The ratee may have missed an opportunity for an award they truly deserved-- clearly you can see the important role you play in the evaluation process.

USE OF EPRs FOR SPECIAL DUTY ASSIGNMENTS

EPRs are also used in the special duty assignment process. When an individual is competing for a special duty assignment, their more recent EPRs are reviewed very carefully in determining performance levels. EPRs are also used to determine what experience an individual may have when competing for a job. The individual whose EPRs layout a superb track record is usually the one selected for the special duty.

USE OF EPR FOR SUBSTANDARD OR POOR PERFORMANCE

A referral EPR renders a ratee ineligible for promotion, and cannot become eligible again until he/she receives an EPR with an overall rating of “3” or higher that is not referral. EPRs could also have an impact on a ratee being involuntary discharged from the Air Force.

CONCLUSION

Make feedback count. Feedback success depends on you the supervisor and how well you conduct performance feedback may have the single greatest impact the performance and attitude of our most valuable resource – our Airmen. It’s up to you to help them develop into the very best Airmen they can be. Take the time to do it right for them and for the needs of the Air Force. Finally, honesty and fairness in the feedback and evaluation process is the key to success. Provide your subordinates the keys and watch the mission soar above all!