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TITLE  A GUIDE TO CIVILIAN PERSONNEL FOR BASE COMMANDERS

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This is a practical guide for base commanders, covering important aspects of civilian personnel management, including personnel staffing, performance, management, discipline and labor-management relations (unions). Includes a chapter on the key players in the civilian personnel arena, and appendices which provide a convenient place to list civilian personnel populations, an evaluation checklist, and a list of key civilian personnel terms.
PREFACE

The Air Force of today depends on Air Force people - people wearing blue suits and civilian clothes. This will continue in the future. As a base commander you will have important responsibilities for leading and managing some Air Force people you may not know much about - Air Force civilian employees. This guide outlines some important responsibilities you have, or will have, and gives you some tips for better leadership and management of those employees. The civilian population will vary from base to base - but every base commander must have a basic understanding of civilian personnel principles. The guide focuses on areas of direct base commander involvement and is intended as a supplement to instruction at the Base Commander's Course.

Some basic assumptions have been made for this guide. First, as a senior Air Force leader, you have dealt with, and supervised, civilians. The guide, therefore, focuses on base commander responsibilities, and is not a supervisory guide. The second assumption is that your biggest concern will be with US appropriated fund employees. Therefore, the guide does not address non-appropriated fund (NAF) civilians, or host-country national employees, although the ideas may apply to them. There are many organizational structures in the Air Force, so the guide refers to "base commander" in a generic sense, although the responsibilities for managing civilians may reside with another official on some bases. You must also recognize that hundreds of directives govern civilian personnel management. This guide is not a substitute.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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All errors, of course, are mine.
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface .................................................................................................................. iii  
Acknowledgements ................................................................................................ iv  
About the Author .................................................................................................... v  

CHAPTER ONE - WHY THIS GUIDE  
The Challenge ....................................................................................................... 1  
The Solver ........................................................................................................... 1  
The Plan for the Guide ......................................................................................... 2  
Summary ............................................................................................................. 2  

CHAPTER TWO - KEY PLAYERS  
The Civilian Personnel Officer and Office ......................................................... 3  
The Chief, Personnel Division ........................................................................... 4  
The Civilian Employment and Cost Management Committee ......................... 4  
The Base Staff Judge Advocate ........................................................................ 4  
The Base Deputy Commander .......................................................................... 4  
The Base Commander's Secretary .................................................................. 5  
Summary ............................................................................................................. 5  

CHAPTER THREE - STAFFING  
You Want To Hire Who? ...................................................................................... 7  
The Base Commander's Responsibilities ........................................................... 7  
Filling Positions ................................................................................................ 7  
Referral and Selection Priorities ........................................................................ 8  
The Merit Promotion Program .......................................................................... 9  
Special Programs ............................................................................................... 11  
Tips for Base Commanders ............................................................................... 12  
Summary ............................................................................................................. 12  

CHAPTER FOUR - PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT  
Taking Care of Your People ............................................................................... 15  
The Basics ........................................................................................................ 15  
Performance Appraisal ...................................................................................... 16  
Recognizing the Employee ............................................................................... 16  
Monetary Awards .............................................................................................. 17  
Honorary Awards .............................................................................................. 17  
Tips for Base Commanders ............................................................................... 18  
Summary ............................................................................................................. 18
CONTINUED

CHAPTER FIVE - DISCIPLINE
You Can't Fire a Civilian ........................................ 21
The Basics .................................................... 21
The Theory .................................................... 22
Types of Disciplinary Actions .................................. 22
Selecting the Penalty .......................................... 24
Grievances and Appeals ...................................... 24
Tips for Base Commanders .................................. 24
Summary ....................................................... 25

CHAPTER SIX - UNIONS
Unions, Unions - Who Wants a Union? ...................... 27
Base Commander's Responsibilities ......................... 28
Principles of Labor-Management Relations ................ 28
Unfair Labor Practices ....................................... 29
Third Parties .................................................. 30
Tips for Base Commanders .................................. 31
Summary ....................................................... 31

APPENDICES
APPENDIX A - POPULATIONS ................................ 36

APPENDIX B - EVALUATION .................................. 37
Some Thoughts About 40-5 .................................. 37
A Simple Checklist for Base Commanders ................. 37

APPENDIX C - TERMS - LEARNING CIVILIAN PERSONNELEEZE--- 41

INDEX.......................................................... 43
CHAPTER ONE
WHY THIS GUIDE

THE CHALLENGE - Why this guide is needed

There are many reasons for this guide. The Air Force employs over 240,000 civilians. These employees work at every base, nearly every place the Air Force has people, and in nearly every specialty. Over 85 percent of the eligible employees are represented by a union or association. Union activities impact on nearly every aspect of Air Force life. Air Force surveys have shown that senior managers don't understand civilian personnel management. One particularly important group of senior managers - base commanders - often don't understand their role in civilian personnel management. Air Force people often use derogatory terms like "feather merchant" to describe civilians. Finally, any discussion of pay and allowances, or conditions of work, will result in sharp differences of opinion in any Air Force forum.

The challenge of effectively managing civilians is real. As a base commander - the challenge is yours.

THE SOLVER - Why you must meet the challenge

The commander of each organization with a central civilian personnel office has the authority to appoint, promote, reassign, discipline, demote, detail, compensate, and separate employees. This authority, called "appointing authority", must be applied according to laws, civil service system policies and guidance, DOD requirements, Air Force regulations, and good personnel management principles and practices. With some exceptions, this authority is the base commanders. Base commanders must make sure:

(1) management officials and supervisors know about and adhere strictly to the directives

(2) an effective civilian personnel program is in operation

(3) all personnel actions are authorized and comply with legal, policy, and procedural requirements.

Air Force regulations in the 40 series assign authority and responsibility to specific positions, organizations, or levels. In the remainder of the guide, the specific responsibilities of the base commander will be outlined.
THE PLAN FOR THE GUIDE - The Solution

This guide gives you information to help you manage the base's civilian employees. There is a chapter on key players - the folks who help you. The guide then focuses on four areas where your involvement is the most significant: hiring, performance management, discipline, and labor-management relations (unions). Included as appendices are some things to help you manage - a handy format for writing in your civilian population, a checklist to help you know how you are doing, and a list of acronyms to help you talk "personneleeze."

SUMMARY - Where we've been and where we're going

This chapter asserts that we have a big challenge in the Air Force. The responsibility is on the back of one person - the base commander. By regulation, you've got the responsibility. Hopefully this guide will tell you some things you need to know and let you know where to find the rest.
CHAPTER TWO
THE KEY PLAYERS

INTRODUCTION

You will not, of course, operate the civilian personnel system by yourself. There are a number of people, and agencies, set up to help you. This chapter tells you who, or what, they are, and gives you some ideas about their responsibilities.

THE CIVILIAN PERSONNEL OFFICER AND OFFICE

In the interest of efficiency, uniform application of policies, and good public relations, all Air Force activities at an installation must receive civilian personnel services through one Central Civilian Personnel Office (CCPO). The Civilian Personnel Officer (CPO) acts for the commander and manages the CCPO and administers the civilian personnel program. The CPO directs the CCPO staff and must make sure all personnel decisions comply with merit system principles, and other legal and regulatory requirements. The CPO and CCPO are your primary resources for professional advice, assistance, and information on civilian personnel management. They also do this for all supervisors and management officials, but they do not assume the responsibilities for you or them.

The CCPO organizational structure is not important for this guide, but you should schedule an early orientation so you will know who you are dealing with. The basic functions of the CCPO are to manage position and pay programs, administer employee-management relations and employee services, provide employee training, administer pay and leave policies, assure affirmative action and equal employment opportunity, and effect personnel actions and reports.

Your Civilian Personnel Officer will normally be a veteran personnel manager, very experienced in managing programs. The CPO's primary concern will be to help you meet mission objectives within the law, policy, and regulations. You should get to know your CPO, and the key members of the CCPO staff, and ask for their advice.
MONETARY AWARDS – Putting your money where your mouth is

Chapter 7 of AFR 40-452 covers the monetary recognitions for performance. These awards can vary from as little as $50.00 to as much as $25,000. The specific amounts and the specific details of selection for the awards are beyond the scope of this guide, but a brief outline of the awards available will help you to determine the proper level of recognition for your civilian employees. All of the awards are tied to the appraisal system described above. The basic requirement for all cash awards is a performance appraisal higher than fully successful.

GS, FWS and ST employees are eligible for Sustained Superior Performance Awards (SSPA). The SSPA, along with its counterpart for GS employees, the Merit Pay Cash Award, is granted annually at the time of the performance appraisal and can be given only once each year. Both are one-time cash awards. The procedures for determining the Merit Pay Cash Award are complicated. You should ask your GCO to brief you on the procedures.

More expensive, and thus higher in value to the employee, is the Quality Step Increase (QSI). This award can be given only to GS employees. A QSI will raise the employee's future salary, and therefore must be used judiciously and granted only when the highest quality performance is continued and the employee clearly merits faster than usual salary advancement.

One-time special acts or services while performing within or outside normal duty assignments can be recognized with a Special Act or Service Award. In addition, a Notable Achievement Award can be given for noteworthy contributions such as improving procedures or methods, increasing productivity, saving time, or other similar noteworthy contributions. Other special awards can be given for significant productivity enhancements.

As stated previously, the details for awarding cash recognition to civilians are beyond the scope of this guide. The brief summary was presented here to encourage you to use these awards as prescribed by the directive, and to ensure cash awards are properly managed on your base. These awards, along with the non-monetary awards described below, can go a long way in properly recognizing the outstanding work done by civilian employees.

No buck$ tail$ but no kick in the pants either.

We will cover the various honorary awards which follow. These awards usually don't carry any monetary recognition for exemplary performance. The most popular are the NCO/GS Awards. Two are awarded for distinctive exceptional service, one for outstanding care of the color, and one for valor. If you are aware of a civilian who deserves recognition you should contact the civilian personnel in preparing the justification.

A variety of recognition are available for civilians, similar...
developmental details, and reduction-in-force standing. Further discussion of the award process is included later in this chapter.

The primary intent of the performance management process is to pay for performance. Essentially the decisions of the fourth phase result in a variety of cash, honorary, and non-monetary awards for employees. The remainder of the chapter covers the appraisal system and awards available for deserving employees.

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL - How to report how your folks are doing

As a base commander you will be the rater, reviewer, or endorsing official on many civilian performance ratings. The performance appraisal system operates quite like the military performance report system. For the civilian system, there are two annual cycles, ending on 30 June for GM, GS and Scientific and Technical (ST) employees and on 31 January for FWS employees. All ratings are done on an AF Form 860. The supervisor will use the developed employee performance plan, which includes the performance elements on which the employee is rated. This is different from the position description which establishes the duties and responsibilities upon which the basic pay is set. The performance plan specifies the employee's major duties and responsibilities, including important tasks and projects which contribute to the organization's goals and for which the employee is held responsible.

Each performance plan contains at least four performance elements of which three must be critical elements. At least one noncritical element must be included. As a general guideline, five to nine performance elements will be included. The critical elements must total more than one-half of the total elements. For each of the performance elements, standards must be developed. The standards are expressed in terms of quality, timeliness, or quantity of work.

Once these standards are developed, the most significant responsibility in the performance management process is performed - the rating of employee performance. There are five possible ratings: superior (exceeded all requirements in performance plan), excellent (exceeded more than one-half of critical elements), fully successful (meets all requirements), minimally acceptable (meets one or more noncritical element, but met all critical) and unacceptable (did not meet one or more critical element).

RECOGNIZING THE EMPLOYEE - Giving the good one's their due

Chapter 6 of AFR 40-452 covers the Air Force Recognition Program for civilian employees. As mentioned previously, recognition can take two forms, monetary and honorary (non-monetary). You will have the responsibility to appoint a Performance Awards Committee to review recommendations for awards, to recommend or select nominees for honorary competitive awards, and provide advice on program improvements for civilians at your base. A variety of boards are established at major command and headquarters Air Force level for some higher awards and to select Air Force-wide honorary winners. You will also most likely be responsible for cash awards to GM employees as a Merit Pay Unit Official.
CHAPTER FOUR
PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

TAKING CARE OF YOUR PEOPLE - The case for an effective appraisal and recognition program

This chapter addresses the Air Force program that integrates performance, pay, and recognition programs. This integrated process, known as performance management, is covered in Air Force Regulation 40-452. It is important for you to understand this program for many reasons. You have some specific responsibilities as a base commander, and others as a senior management official in the supervisory chain for civilians. This chapter gives you some idea of the process, without specific details. For details contact your CPO.

THE BASICS - How the system works

Performance management is a continuous, systematic process by which commanders, managers, and supervisors integrate the planning, directing, and executing of organizational work with civilian personnel appraisal, pay, awards, promotion, and other systems. There are four phases in the process.

The first phase, planning and assigning work, requires the higher management chain of command to identify missions and goals, assign objectives and projects and develop plans, initiatives, and strategies. Lower management organizes work, makes specific assignments, assigns duties and tasks, and establishes work standards. Individual employee work requirements are documented and communicated in writing to the employee in a performance work plan.

A discussion of the second phase, executing work and motivating employees, is beyond the scope of this guide. Essentially this phase, primarily applicable to first line supervisors, results in tracking employee performance to the results in the subsequent phases.

The third phase, appraising individual performance and assessing organizational achievements, is the phase in which supervisors and managers exercise their performance rating and reviewing responsibilities by comparing performance results with the previously established written standards. The second section of this chapter provides more information on this phase of the process.

The fourth phase, using the individual appraisal rating for personnel management decisions, is the end result of the four-phase process and results in using the rating to make decisions on pay and cash awards, promotion consideration and ranking, performance enhancement, training, assignment changes,
THE WAYS OF "HANDLING" CIVILIANS AND MILITARY PERSONNEL ARE DIFFERENT

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In addition to these overall responsibilities you will appoint an EEO and AAP committee to review the programs. The committee will include supervisors, work force representatives, and community groups if the agenda concerns community affairs. The committee will include the CPO and members of his staff, and managers of the base Hispanic Employment and Federal Women's Programs (who you will appoint).

The emphasis you put on these programs will determine their success. You are encouraged to fully support the programs and all of the activities organized by your special emphasis program managers.

TIPS FOR COMMANDERS - Some things to help you get the right people on the job

Tip One - be sure the affirmative employment plan for your base is well publicized. This publicity may eliminate some of the heartburn associated with a supervisor not being able to hire the person he/she wants

Tip Two - closely review the plans developed by your CCPO staff. You are responsible for plan implementation. If you can't live with something, question it, and, if possible, have it changed

Tip Three - participate willingly and actively in such programs as Federal Women's Program activities. Your interest can pay you untold dividends in improved morale and is a key to program success

Tip Four - be very sensitive to EEO objectives - it is the law AND the right thing to do

Tip Five - work with your CPO and key staff in developing an atmosphere of trust and understanding with the supervisors on your base and employees and their representatives

SUMMARY - Where we've been and where we're going

This chapter has outlined the responsibilities of the base commander in the hiring, or staffing, process and explained some of the policies, principles, and procedures of that process. The referral and selection priorities were explained and some special emphasis programs were outlined. The tips for commanders were intended to help make your job easier.

The next chapter explains your responsibilities for managing the performance of employees, with an emphasis on appraisal and recognition.
priorities discussed above may have to be followed.

This very simple explanation of the objectives, principles, and procedures used to implement the Air Force Merit Promotion program is not intended to make you an expert on the program. It should, however, provide you enough information to fulfill your responsibilities under the program.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS - A brief intro to programs which affect hiring practices

Three special programs affect your management of civilian hiring programs. It is Air Force policy to fully comply with the provisions of these programs. The three programs are the Equal Employment Opportunity Program (EEO), the Affirmative Action Programs (AAP), and the Selective Placement Program (SPP) for handicapped persons. The first two are described in AFR 40-713; the SPP is described in AFR 40-306. This discussion is limited to a brief definition of the programs and your role in them. Your CFO has full details of the current status of the programs and you are encouraged to learn the details as soon as possible.

The EEO program is designed to ensure compliance with the law to ensure EEO and eliminate discrimination in Air Force recruitment, selection, placement, awards recognition, and training based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, or age.

The AAP is a program of positive action in all personnel administration and management matters, including hiring and promotion, designed to remedy the historically disparate treatment and underrepresentation of women and minorities through removal of barriers and institution of corrective measures.

The SPP is a program with the general policy of providing equal employment opportunity for all "handicapped" job candidates consistent with their qualifications and ability to safely and successfully fulfill the essential requirements of a position.

Your responsibilities are essentially the same for all the programs and include:

a. Providing leadership in establishment and enforcement of policy supporting Air Force AAP efforts.

b. Ensuring that maximum efforts are made to attain documented affirmative action goals.

c. Ensuring participation of appropriate management officials in the development and implementation of AAP plans.

d. Ensuring resources are available to support EEO and AAP.

e. Requiring briefings and reports on the status of your organization's progress in meeting AAP and EEO goals.
b. Providing career opportunities for employees and making sure that all employees are fully informed of these opportunities.

c. Making sure management is aware of high quality employees who have the capacity to perform in more responsible assignments.

d. Encouraging employees to be mobile in the interest of broadening their experiences and increasing their qualifications.

e. Making sure employees are placed in positions for which they are best qualified.

f. Making sure the skills, qualifications, achievements, and promotion potential of employees are recognized and fairly considered in the staffing process.

g. Encouraging employees to improve their performance and to develop their knowledges, skills, and abilities (KSAs).

Certain key principles form the basis of the Air Force Merit Promotion Program. These key principles include such factors as creating a designated area of consideration, and adjusting those areas to insure management of an adequate number of high quality employees from which to choose and applying job-related criteria to differentiate among the qualifications of employees within the designated area. Other key principles include such things as non-discrimination or favoritism, and giving input to employees, employee groups and labor organizations in developing and establishing promotion procedures. It is desirable to insure competition is available for every promotion, with some exceptions, and that employees are kept informed about the promotion program.

Each base must develop and publish a promotion plan, or plans, for all positions except for some which are covered by Air Force or DOD plans or programs. Certain occupations and grade levels are covered by "career management programs" developed by HQ USAF. These programs operate under separate rules - rules which are beyond the scope of this guide. For details, contact your CPO.

The method of identifying candidates is called the Promotions and Place- ments Referral Subsystem (PPRS, pronounced "peepers"). A detailed explanation of PPRS is unnecessary, suffice it to say that this is the data bank where the records of the KSAs of all eligible employees are kept.

The Promotion Evaluation Pattern (PEP) is an objective statement of position requirements against which employees are evaluated. The purpose of the PEP is to state the requirements for basic eligibility, and ranking factors to be considered. A simple explanation of the promotion process would be to say that the PEP is used to match the KSAs stored in the PPRS to develop a register and ranking of eligible employees. Selection authorities (usually supervisors) are provided the allowable number of qualified candidates and then use the register to select the most highly qualified employee from the eligibles. The
Priority H - base employees receiving retained pay and entitled to priority repromotion consideration must be considered for the position and in some cases must be mandatorily hired.

Priority I - other base employees who are to be given priority repromotion consideration may be considered at the option of the CCPO.

Priority J - Reemployment Priority List (RPL) - registrant for positions at or below grade from which separated must be selected unless certain steps are taken.

Priority K, L, and M - DOD Priority Placement Program (priority 1, 2, 3) must be selected unless certain steps are taken.

Priority N - certain employees leaving an Air Reserve Technician (ART) position must be selected at certain grades.

Priority O - all Air Force employees eligible for noncompetitive inservice placement.

Priority P - candidates for promotion.

Priority Q - Reemployment Priority List registrants for higher grade positions.

Priority R, S - other DOD Stopper List registrants must be selected if registered for that grade.

Priority T - all other sources including new appointments, transfers, and non-priority reinstatements.

As you can see, it may be difficult for you to hire the person you want, especially if you want to promote someone, because of the likelihood of a higher priority applicant being available. In some of the cases you MUST select a higher priority qualified person, although you may feel someone else is better qualified.

We now turn to another important program - the merit promotion program.

THE MERIT PROMOTION PROGRAM - Selecting the right person for the job

The basic policy and key principles of the federal merit promotion policy, as implemented by the Air Force, are contained in AFR 40-335. The policy is based on strict conformance with merit principles. Identifying, qualifying, evaluating, or selecting must be based strictly on job-related criteria according to legitimate position requirements. A sound promotion program, properly administered and fully supported by managers at all levels, is essential to the staffing of an effective and highly motivated civilian workforce. The program is directed toward:

a. Accomplishing mission goals by staffing positions with high quality employees.
factor, and only where candidates appear equally qualified. Installations must comply with the Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program when filling positions.

Positions may be filled from inservice placement of current Air Force employees, transfer or appointment of employees from other agencies, reinstatement of former employees, and other appointments, including appointments from Office of Personnel Management (OPM) registers.

The actual mechanics of filling positions are beyond the scope of this guide, however one area - referral and selection priorities - causes a great deal of heartburn for some supervisors, so a more detailed explanation of these priorities is necessary.

REFERRAL AND SELECTION PRIORITIES - Who may or must be selected

The referral and selection priorities for filling positions are also contained in AFR 40-300. These priorities are controversial, because they often result in a requirement to hire a particular person, instead of the person the supervisor may desire. For this reason it is important for base commanders to understand the priorities. The exact details of how an individual enters one of these categories is not important to this guide. If you have questions, see your CPO. The priorities are as follows:

Priority A - employees with enforceable assignment rights, or to be mandatorily placed as a corrective or remedial action must be selected, if qualified

Priority B - employees who have found to be the victim of discrimination have the next priority, and if not selected, the reasons for non-selection must be recorded

Priority C - employees from your base who have been involved in a Reduction In Force (RIF) action must be hired if it is necessary to satisfy a RIF assignment right

Priority D - employees affected by a functional transfer must be selected if at current or lower grade

Priority E - base employees whose positions are being downgraded to correct a classification error or because of application of new or revised standards must be hired at current or intermediate grade

Priority F - base employees serving at a lower grade with grade retention entitlement must be hired at the retained grade or intermediate grade. If you desire you may approve an exception to the mandatory selection

Priority G - employees with permanent physical disabilities who are no longer able to perform the full range of duties of their current position must be hired, but you have the authority at your base of approving an exception to mandatory selection
CHAPTER THREE

STAFFING

YOU WANT TO HIRE WHO? - The requirements for putting the right people to work

Obtaining the right employees to perform the mission is the most important task for the civilian personnel manager. Because you are the "appointing authority", as defined by Air Force regulation, you have important responsibilities.

This chapter expands on those policies, beginning with an explanation of your role in the staffing process, followed by an explanation of the methods of filling positions, the referral and selection priorities, the promotion process, and some of the special programs you are expected to participate in. The chapter will conclude with some tips for base commanders.

BASE COMMANDER'S RESPONSIBILITIES - Your approach to the problem

Your responsibilities for the hiring process (known in personneleeze as "staffing") are outlined in AFR 40-300. In addition to your responsibility to insure Air Force policy is carried out, you must make sure a systematic approach is taken to:

(a) Estimate civilian personnel requirements of each organization regularly and before needed.

(b) Plan methods to be used by the CCPO in providing for a new required work force.

You must also make sure managers at all subordinate levels support the development and implementation of annual Affirmative Employment Plans, make sure that base-level committees take part in developing and supporting the plans, and finally, you must approve these plans.

FILLING POSITIONS - Getting the mission done takes people

The Air Force policy on filling positions is contained in AFR 40-300. Air Force positions at all grade levels are filled based on merit and qualifications, without discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, handicapping conditions, political affiliation, or any other nonmerit factors. As part of the Air Force Affirmative Action Program (AAP), race, sex, and ethnicity may be considered, but not as the sole
THE BASE COMMANDER'S SECRETARY

Your secretary offers another resource for informal advice on civilian personnel matters. Because he/she is considered a confidential employee, and is prohibited from being a member of the bargaining unit represented by the union, you can consult with him/her on any civilian personnel matter. As a veteran of the civilian personnel system, he/she usually knows the proper administrative procedures, and can assist you with record keeping, and filling out personnel forms.

SUMMARY - Where we've been and where we're going

As will be discussed in later chapters, the base commander has specific responsibilities for managing the civilian force. You don't carry out these responsibilities on your own. The key "key player" is the Civilian Personnel Officer and his or her staff, but other players are important also. Your management effectiveness depends on using all available resources.
THE CHIEF, PERSONNEL DIVISION

In between you and the CPO in the chain of command will be a Director of Personnel, or Chief, Personnel Division (DP). The DP will normally be an experienced field grade personnel officer, but he or she may not be experienced in civilian personnel operations. Most civilian personnel regulations call for the CPO to carry out responsibilities for you "under the direction of the installation's Director of Personnel." You should insist the DP become actively involved in the operation of the CCPO, because there is no way you can do it all yourself. One way to be sure the DP is involved is to deal with the DP when you have a personnel question, and not take the easy route and break the chain of command.

CIVILIAN EMPLOYMENT AND COST MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

In order to help you determine proper budget management of the civilian workforce, you are required to establish and appoint members to a Civilian Employment and Cost Management Committee. Your CPO will chair the committee, which has the responsibility to effectively manage the civilian man-year utilization/employment plan which projects for monthly civilian strength requirements within resource availability. The committee also has the responsibility to review position vacancies and recommend staffing actions, to advise you on the impact of proposed funding adjustment and/or programming decisions, and to study and recommend changes in local personnel management practices to eliminate unnecessary personnel costs. One of the key responsibilities is to review overtime, uncommon tours of duty, environmental differential, and premium pay to ensure operational requirements are met at the least cost.

THE BASE STAFF JUDGE ADVOCATE

Your base staff judge advocate (JA) has an important role to play in the administration of civilian personnel programs. The JA, or an assistant, will review disciplinary actions and provide you advice, just as he/she would do for a military case. In addition, the JA may act as your representative any time a civilian grievance or other complaint enters the formal grievance stage. The contract, or negotiated agreement, will be reviewed by the JA before you sign it, to insure it meets all legal requirements. You are advised to bring the JA in on the ground floor of any sticky civilian personnel issue.

THE BASE DEPUTY COMMANDER

Your deputy commander has no formal responsibilities in the civilian personnel structure, but he/she does give you another knowledgeable person to consult. In addition, you can use him/her to conduct informal reviews of grievances and other sticky situations.
to those available for military members. These include a variety of special awards for distinguished service in specific career fields such as outstanding employee in a career field and for management of special programs such as equal employment opportunity programs. In addition there are numerous non-federal awards available for Air Force participation on a national basis. Letters of appreciation and commendation can also be given for such things as adopted suggestions (when no monetary award is given), and other noteworthy performance. Again, if you are aware of an employee who merits such recognition, contact the CCPO for assistance in preparing the justification or other paperwork.

TIPS FOR BASE COMMANDERS

Tip One - be sure your CPO is properly publicizing the procedures for writing performance work standards and elements

Tip Two - be sure all of your employees understand your emphasis on proper recognition for all employees - not only military personnel

Tip Three - be sure proper ceremonies are set up to recognize civilian employees. Too often, fancy, dignified ceremonies are set up for military personnel and civilians are "handed" their certificate in a staff meeting

Tip Four - keep your immediate staff (deputy, exec, and secretary) on the lookout for opportunities to recognize your best civilians (don't forget to recognize your secretary, if he/she deserves it)

Tip Five - don't forget the other civilians who work directly for you - don't be concerned with asking the DP or CPO to do the leg work and write up the award paperwork for you

SUMMARY - Where we've been and where we are going

You have important responsibilities for ensuring the civilians on your base perform at the level expected to help meet organizational goals. The Air Force has a sophisticated appraisal system to help you find out how your employees are doing, and a recognition system to help you recognize those who do excellent work. This chapter has described those programs, in rough overview, and offered the suggestion that you contact your CPO to help you manage the programs. In addition, some tips were given to help you run a good program.

The next chapter tells you some of the procedures for disciplining employees who don't meet the standards.
"That's not the way we handle surplus personnel, Crawford!"

THIS CHAPTER HAS BETTER WAYS!
NO PRINT
CHAPTER FIVE
DISCIPLINE

YOU CAN'T FIRE A CIVILIAN - Dispelling the myth

There is a myth in the Air Force - you can't fire a civilian. Previous chapters in the guide have focused on hiring and managing the performance of civilians. This chapter will show you firing a civilian is possible, but certain steps are necessary and the requirement of law and Air Force policy.

The chapter focuses on a general description of the requirements of the disciplinary environment in the Air Force, covering some basic things you will need to know to manage your base civilian force, and offers some tips for better management.

THE BASICS - Air Force policy and your responsibilities

Air Force policy on discipline is outlined in Air Force Regulation 40-750. This regulation implements public law and Department of Defense guidance. The overall Air Force policy is outlined as follows:

a. Commanders must maintain a constructive, disciplined work environment in which both management and employees recognize and carry out their responsibilities.

b. Necessary disciplinary action or adverse action is taken without regard to marital status, political affiliation except as required by law, race, color, religion, sex, national origin, or age. Adverse action based on an employee's physical or mental handicap is not taken when the employee can effectively perform assigned duties.

c. Disciplinary action or adverse action is taken only when necessary and then promptly and equitably. The purpose of disciplinary action is to correct and rehabilitate the offender, if possible. Penalties must not be disproportionate to offenses and are applied as consistently as possible considering the particular circumstances of the cause(s) for disciplinary action.

d. Disciplinary and adverse actions are personal matters and are carried out in private.

Commanders' responsibilities are more simply stated, as follows:
a. Ensure that rules, regulations, and other standards of conduct are made known to all employees under their jurisdiction.

b. Administer fair, impartial, consistent, and regulatorily correct disciplinary and adverse action programs within their activity.

THE THEORY - Progressive and constructive discipline

Now that you know the rules of engagement, you should learn the theory which covers disciplinary actions in the Air Force. As explained in the previous chapter, the system is tied to the performance appraisal system. In addition, under the theory of constructive discipline, you must understand that the work environment must be one in which reasonable rules and standards of conduct and performance are clearly communicated and consistently enforced; where supervisors set a good example; where aspects of conduct and performance needing improvement are identified in a way that respects the employee's dignity; where employees are treated fairly and encouraged to improve; and where good performers are recognized.

Constructive discipline is intended to be preventive in nature. Its objectives are to develop, correct, and rehabilitate employees; to encourage their acceptance of responsibility; and to prevent, if possible, situations where there is no alternative but to penalize.

TYPES OF DISCIPLINARY ACTION - Methods to correct behavior

The types of disciplinary action which can be taken are best shown in the pyramid on the next page. The four types are supported by a foundation which outlines the principles which govern the disciplinary environment.

The oral admonishment is used to correct misconduct or delinquency or to motivate employees to improve their work habits, methods, or behavior. An oral admonishment is a disciplinary action that is often adequate to effect the required correction or improvement, particularly when the employee has no previous history of violations. The only record of an oral admonishment is a temporary recording on the Supervisors' Record Of Employee (AF Form 971).

A reprimand is used to correct significant misconduct or delinquency and repeated lesser offenses. It should be adequate for many disciplinary situations which require an action more severe than an oral admonishment. The reprimand is included in an employee's Official Personnel File for two years from the date of the reprimand.

A suspension is a severe disciplinary action. Ordinarily, it is the final step in the process before removal and is accompanied by a warning to the employee that a further violation of rules could (not will) result in removal. A suspension prevents an employee from performing work and denies salary for the suspension period. There are a number of special procedures to follow to effect a suspension; therefore, suspension action should not be taken without advice from your CPO.
REMOVAL
SUSPENSION
REPRIMAND
ORAL ADMONISHMENT
FAIR
TIMELY
FOR GOOD CAUSE
CONSISTENCY

THE DISCIPLINE PYRAMID
Removal is obviously the most severe disciplinary action. Before it is initiated, the facts and circumstances in the case must be carefully reviewed to ensure they support the conclusion that the employee has demonstrated unwillingness or refusal to conform to the rules of conduct or has so breached the employee-employer relationship that no other rehabilitation is appropriate and removal is warranted for the offense. As with a suspension, no action should be taken without the advise of your CPO.

SELECTING THE PENALTY - A guide to help management

AFR 40-750 contains a guide to help management to select the appropriate penalties by providing a framework for interrelating all the relevant facts to possible courses of action and to available penalties. It should be noted that penalties should never be predetermined and that, with some exceptions, there are no minimum penalties. Because the Air Force, and the appeal agencies, require you to follow the constructive disciplinary process explained above, a progression of penalties means you should apply increasingly more severe penalties as the employee continues to breach the employee-employer relationship.

In determining the proper punishment you must consider the character, seriousness and consequences of the offense, the rehabilitative potential of the penalty, and the character of the employee's position. You must also consider the favorable elements such as mitigating circumstances, the previous record of the employee, and the unfavorable elements such as the employee's previous disciplinary offenses.

GRIEVANCES AND APPEALS - A brief word on employee rights

All disciplinary actions described above have grievance and appeal provisions which vary depending on the nature of the punishment. Employees covered under a collective bargaining agreement (see Chapter 6) may have access to the negotiated grievance procedure. Other employees follow the grievance procedures established in AFR 40-771. In addition, disciplinary actions may be reviewed by procedures of the Merit Services Protection Board, a non-DOD government agency set up to protect the merit principles of the civil service. As a general rule, employees may choose the appeal procedure they wish, but may not follow more than one avenue. The details of the grievance procedures are beyond the scope of this guide. Again, you should contact your CPO for guidance on the ramifications of disciplinary actions.

TIPS FOR BASE COMMANDERS - Ways to make sure your actions stand up

Tip One - disciplinary action should be taken to encourage improvement, not make problems worse.

Tip Two - disciplinary actions must be fair, just and timely. Consistency is important in the eyes of appeal agencies.
Tip Three - rules must be communicated and enforced. In this case, ignorance of the rules IS an excuse. Review your policies to ensure all employees get the word about your rules.

Tip Four - the penalty is not determined by the quality of the proof. In civilian disciplinary cases the test of proof is the "preponderance of evidence" test used in military administrative cases. If you are a little more sure than not sure an offense was committed, you may take the action.

Tip Five - don't be afraid to take action, but have your ducks in a row. The Air Force has a good record of support in appeal procedures, but the action must follow the law and regulation. Consult your CPO if you have ANY doubt.

SUMMARY - Where we've been and where we're going

The Air Force policy on disciplinary actions is relatively straightforward. The bottom line is that a work environment must be established where employees understand the standards, and where discipline is carried out in a firm, but fair manner. As a commander, you have specific responsibilities to ensure policy is followed. Four disciplinary actions are available, from the simple admonishment to the severe action of removal. Penalties must be determined in light of the circumstances of the offense and the employee's standing with the organization. Appeal procedures of a variety of types are available.

The next, and concluding chapter, addresses your responsibilities for dealing with unions.
UNIONS, UNIONS - WHO WANTS A UNION? - The case for getting along

Unions represent over 85 percent of the eligible appropriated fund employees in the Air Force. The basic policies and objectives of the Air Force labor-management relations program are the same as in the public law which established the current rules for federal labor-management relations (The Civil Service Reform Act of 1978). This law says, in part:

The congress finds that experience in both private and public employment indicates that the statutory protection of the right of employees to organize, bargain collectively, and participate through labor organizations of their own choosing in decisions which affect them, safeguards the public interest, contributes to the effective conduct of public business, and facilitates and encourages the amicable settlements of disputes between employees and their employers involving conditions of employment; and ... Therefore, labor organizations and collective bargaining in the civil service are in the public interest.

Regardless of your personal feelings about unions, you will have to deal with them — they are recognized by public law as being in the best interests of the Air Force.

Some recent Air Force cases decided by the Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA), the Federal Service Impasses Panel (FSIP), and the federal courts show the pervasiveness of union activity in the Air Force. The issues addressed by these agencies included performance appraisal, removal of an employee for AWOL, use of part-time employees, overtime practices, unsafe driving, consumption of tea, coffee and soft drinks on duty, the wear of coveralls, classification downgrades, and shaving.

These cases are presented here so you can learn the kind of decisions which enter into the grievance procedure in the Air Force and show that a wide spectrum of issues are decided by the procedures set up by the public law and Air Force labor-management policies. The purpose of the remainder of the chapter is to discuss your role in labor management and the basic rules which govern labor-management policies. The chapter will conclude with some tips to make your job easier.
BASE COMMANDER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Your responsibilities as commander of a base with a union or unions are outlined in AFR 40-711. You must provide overall direction in the execution of the labor relations program at the installation. You must attend labor relations training as required by the DOD. You will designate Civilian Personnel Officers to act in your behalf in formulating labor-management relations policy. You must ensure, as appropriate, that notices are posted and orders are implemented as required by the FLRA. You must ensure that sufficient resources are made available to allow effective management of the labor-management relations program.

In addition to these basic responsibilities, you have the authority to authorize bargaining with union representatives and are the Air Force's representative in making lawful commitments on behalf of the base by "signing-off" on agreements. You also have the authority to file unfair labor practices and to deal with those filed by individuals or collective bargaining agents.

In order for you to fulfill these responsibilities you must have a basic understanding of the principles of labor-management relations as established in law and policy. The next part of the chapter focuses on these basic principles.

PRINCIPLES OF LABOR-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS

The basic principles of labor-management relations are outlined in a series of "rights" - rights which are either guaranteed or prohibited to employees and employers by the law and policy. This section focuses on those rights.

As outlined above, employees (the term "employees" in this case does not include supervisors, management officials, or confidential employees) clearly have a right under the law to organize and join unions. In addition, employees have the right not to join a union and are protected from any penalty or reprisal for that decision. There are elaborate procedures set up to determine the desires of employees on representation. The Air Force is required to help prepare for and participate in FLRA and labor organization(s) efforts to hold elections. It is against the law for the Air Force to "encourage or discourage membership in any labor organization."

Unions, once recognized as the exclusive representative of employees, are entitled to act for and negotiate contracts covering all employees in the bargaining unit. The union is responsible for representing all employees in the bargaining unit without regard to membership in the union. (A discussion of the term "bargaining unit" is beyond the scope of this guide. They vary from base-to-base and command-to-command. Consult your CPO for information on the unions granted exclusive representation on your base.)

Unions must be given the opportunity to be represented at any formal discussion between representatives of the Air Force and employees concerning any grievance or personnel policies or practices or general working conditions. Unions shall be given the opportunity to be represented at any examination of
an employee by management in connection with an investigation if the employee
believes disciplinary action may result, and the employee requests representa-
tion. In this case the term "management" has been broadly interpreted to mean
any supervisor, or any investigating agency, such as the security police or the
Office of Special Investigation.

Management has the obligation to bargain on personnel policies, practices,
and matters affecting working conditions, except political activities, classifi-
cation of a position, and some other things specifically outlined in the law.
Management has no obligation to bargain on the numbers, types or grades of
employees or on the positions assigned to the organization, the work project,
or a tour of duty. In addition, you are not required to bargain on the technol-
ogy required to do the work, or the methods or means of doing the work.
You MUST, however, notify the union of any proposed changes and you must bar-
gain on the IMPACT and IMPLEMENTATION of any changes which might affect person-
nel practices, policies, or general working conditions. This provision has
been interpreted to bring a wide variety of issues into the bargaining arena,
such as some of those discussed in the introduction to this chapter.

There are certain rights reserved for management on which you are prohib-
ited from bargaining. These include the mission, budget, and organization
structure of your organization(s), the number of employees and internal secur-
ity practices. You have the exclusive rights to hire, assign, direct, layoff,
retain, suspend, remove, reduce in grade or pay, and discipline. You also have
the authority to assign work, contract out and determine which employee(s) will
perform required work. The concept of negotiation on impact and implementa-
tion also applies here. You may also take any necessary actions in an emergency.

One other right the law gives is the use of official time by union repre-
sentatives. Union reps are given unlimited official time when negotiating a
contract, but only for the number of reps management has. In addition, you may
give reps all other time which is "reasonable, necessary, and in the public
interest." The amount of official time is subject to negotiation.

UNFAIR LABOR PRACTICES - What happens if you don't get along

Violations of any of the above "rights" can result in an unfair labor
practice. Management is guilty of an unfair labor practices if they:

(a) interfere, restrain, coerce employees with respect to any employee
rights

(b) sponsor, control or assist a labor organization

(c) encourage or discourage union membership

(d) discriminate because of employee's filing a grievance or complaint

(e) refuse to bargain in good faith

(f) refuse to cooperate in impasse procedures
(g) enforce conflicting rule dated after agreement
(h) fail to comply with the public law

Unions are guilty of unfair labor practices if they:

(a) interfere, restrain, coerce employees with respect to union membership
(b) induce management to coerce employees
(c) take action interfering with employee's work
(d) discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, age, etc.
(e) refuse to bargain in good faith
(f) refuse to cooperate in impasse procedures
(g) engage in or fail to take action to prevent a strike, work stoppage, work slow down or picketing that interferes with an agency's operation
(h) fail to comply with the law

This brief summary of the basics of Air Force labor-management principles is not intended to make you an expert on unions. It should help you be more knowledgeable in your dealing with union issues. The section concluded with a discussion of unfair labor practices because these form the bottom line for proper relations between union and management. The third parties identified in the next section offer some assistance, and perhaps some aggravation, for you and the union in addressing the disputes which arise from these practices.

THIRD PARTIES - Some help for you and the union

The role of the third parties has been touched on in the first section of this chapter. As you can tell, they have a broad impact on relations between management and the union(s). A brief discussion of each of the parties will conclude this discussion of labor-management relations, except for some brief tips on how to best deal with the union.

Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA) - decides questions of appropriateness of bargaining units; conducts unit determination elections; handles questions relating to consultation rights; rules on unfair labor practice complaints; rules on exceptions to arbitrators' awards.

Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS) - attempts to resolve impasses reached during negotiations. The FMCS assists the parties in attempting to reach agreement voluntarily before an issue is taken to the FSIP.

Federal Service Impasses Panel (FSIP) - has authority to take any action it considers necessary to resolve negotiation impasses. The process is used in
lieu of strikes.

Arbitrators - persons to whom the union and management must submit unresolved grievances for final resolution. Occasionally, arbitrators may also be involved, in place of the FSIP, in the final resolution of bargaining impasses.

United States Court of Appeals - "the last resort", hears appeals from final decisions of the FLRA; hears petitions from the FLRA for enforcement of its decisions and for appropriate temporary relief or restraining orders.

TIPS FOR COMMANDERS - helping you keep out of trouble and the courts

Tip One - learn the rules of the game. Know the unions represented on your base and the proper ways to deal with them.

Tip Two - develop a partnership relationship with your union(s). Remember - public law and policy say unions are in the "public interest." You can't do away with them, so you should develop as good a relationship as possible.

Tip Three - use common sense - the rules outlined above are not much different than the rules for leadership of any group of people. Trust your instincts and do what is right.

Tip Four - be consistent - nothing will frustrate the union more than changing management attitudes about labor relationships.

Tip Five - use your CPO and Labor Relations Officer. Remember - you have the final authority and responsibility, but these people are experts and can keep you out of trouble if you follow their advice.

SUMMARY - Where we've been and where we're going

This chapter has served as an introduction to an important aspect of civilian personnel management - relations with the unions. Whether you like it or not, unions play an important role in your dealings with your employees. You have responsibilities under the law, and authority to manage your civilian force. Understanding the labor-management arena requires you to know the rights of management and the union, and the issues which you must, or must not, bargain on. There are also a series of unfair labor practices which govern the actions of both unions and management and a number of third parties which affect your relationships with the union(s). The guide has also offered some tips for dealing with the union.

The remainder of the guide offers you further help in understanding the civilian personnel area with a series of appendices containing information on populations, terms and a checklist for reviewing your program's effectiveness.

One final word of advice - once you are a key player in the civilian personnel management arena you will find that things are not as complicated as they may initially seem. If you make an effort to learn the basics, and follow
CONTINUED


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INDEX

About the Author, v
Acknowledgements, iv
Affirmative Action Programs, 7, 11, 41
Affirmative Employment Plans, 7, 41
Appointing Authority, 1, 7
Appeals, 24
Appendices, 36-42
Appraisals, 16
Arbitrators, 31
Assumptions, iii
Base Commanders, 1-40
Base Deputy Commander, 4
Budgets, 4
Career Management Programs, 10
Chief, Personnel Division, 4, 41
Civilian Employment and
   Cost Management Committee, 4, 41
Civilian Personnel Office, 3, 41
Civilian Personnel Officer, 3, 4
Civil Service Reform Act, 27, 41
Committees, 4
Contract, 27-28
Court of Appeals, 31
Director of Personnel, 4
Deputy Commander, 4
Discipline, 21-25
Discipline Pyramid, 23
Discrimination, 7, 30
Environmental Differential, 4
Equal Employment Opportunity, 7-12, 41
Evaluation, 37-39
Federal Equal Opportunity
   Recruiting Program, 8, 41
Federal Labor Relations
   Authority, 27, 30, 41
Federal Mediation and
   Conciliation Service, 27, 30, 41
Federal Services Impasses
   Panel, 27, 30-31, 41
Federal Women's Program, 12, 41
Filling Positions, 7-12
Grievances, 24
Hiring, 7-12
Hispanic Employment Program, 12
Honorary Awards, 17-18
Judge Advocate, 4
Key players, 3-5
Knowledges, skills, abilities, 10-11
Key players, 3-5
Labor Management Relations, 27-32
Merit Pay Unit Official, 16
Merit Promotion Program, 9-12
Merit Services Protection
   Board, 24, 42
Merit Systems, 9-12
Monetary Awards, 17
Negotiated Agreement, 28
Non-appropriated fund employees, iii
Office of Personnel Management, 8, 42
Notable Achievement Award, 17
Oral Admonishment, 22
Overtime, 4
Penalties, 24
Performance Appraisal, 16
Performance Awards Committee, 16
Performance Management, 15-18
Populations, 36
Preface, iii
Premium Pay, 4
Promotion Evaluation Pattern, 10
Promotion and Performance Referral
   Subsystem, 10, 42
Promotion Plans, 10
Quality Step Increase, 17
Recognition Programs, 16-18
Referral and Selection Priorities, 8-9
Removal, 24
Reprimands, 22
Rights, 28-29
Secretary, 5
Special Act or Service Award, 17
Special Placement Program, 11
Special Programs, 10-12
Staffing, 7-12
Suspension, 22
Sustained Superior Performance
   Award, 17, 42
Terms, 41
Third Parties, 30-31
Tips, 12, 18, 24, 31
Tours of Duty, 4
Unfair Labor Practices, 29-30
Unions, 2, 27-32
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>MPK</td>
<td>Office symbol for Headquarters Air Force Director of Civilian Personnel</td>
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<tr>
<td>MPP</td>
<td>Merit Promotion Plan</td>
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<td>MPUO</td>
<td>Merit Pay Unit Official</td>
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<td>MSPB</td>
<td>Merit Services Protection Board</td>
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<td>NAF</td>
<td>Nonappropriated Fund</td>
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<td>NAFI</td>
<td>Nonappropriated Fund Instrumentality</td>
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<td>OCPO</td>
<td>Office of Civilian Personnel Operations</td>
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<td>Overseas Employment Program</td>
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<td>Personnel Data System - Civilian</td>
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<td>Promotions and Placements Referral Subsystem</td>
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<td>Senior Executive Service</td>
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<td>Special Placement Program</td>
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<td>Sustained Superior Performance Award</td>
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<td>Scientific and Technical</td>
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<td>TRAEX</td>
<td>Training and Experience</td>
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<td>Unfair Labor Practice</td>
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<td>Vietnam Readjustment Act</td>
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<td>Wage Supervisor</td>
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<td>WUP</td>
<td>Workyear Utilization Plan</td>
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APPENDIX C

TERMS - LEARNING PERSONNELEEZE

The following are some of the acronyms you will find used in this guide and in the civilian personnel world:

AAA American Arbitration Association
AAP Affirmative Action Program
AEP Affirmative Employment Plan
ALJ Administrative Law Judge
ART Air Reserve Technician
BWSP Base Work Stoppage Plan
CCPO Central Civilian Personnel Office
CDAAPCP Civilian Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention and Control Program
CECMC Civilian Employment and Cost Management Committee
CFR Code of Federal Regulations
CPM Civilian Personnel Manual
CPO Civilian Personnel Officer
CSRA Civil Service Reform Act
CT Crafts and Trades
DCS/P Deputy Chief of Staff/Personnel (DCS/MP in some commands)
DESIRE Direct English Statement Information Retrieval System
DOD - PPP Department of Defense Priority Placement Program
DP Office symbol for Director of Personnel (or Chief, Personnel Division)
DPC Office symbol for Civilian Personnel Officer at base level
EDP Environmental Differential Pay
EEOC Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
EMR Employee - Management Relations
FEORP Federal Equal Opportunity Recruiting Program
FLRA Federal Labor Relations Authority
FMCS Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service
FOIA Freedom of Information Act
FPM Federal Personnel Manual
FSIP Federal Service Impasses Panel
FWP Federal Women's Program
FWS Federal Wage Systems
GM General Manager
GS General Schedule
IDP Individual Development Plan
KSA Knowledges, skills, and abilities
LMR Labor Management Relations
LRO Labor Relations Officer
MPCA Merit Pay Cash Award
(3) Are labor contracts understood and administered effectively by supervisors?

(4) Are problems or desired changes identified during the life of the contract referred to the labor relations officer for consideration in future contract negotiations?

j. Do supervisors effectively carry out delegated personnel management authority?

This checklist does not cover every area of civilian personnel management, but a careful review of the questions listed should give you a good idea of the status of the civilian personnel program on your base. If you find problems, get the key players actively involved in identifying causes and applying solutions.
(2) Is there a free exchange between supervisors and managers on production, personnel, and financial management?

(3) Are civilians actively involved in your staff meetings and commanders calls?

(4) Do supervisors explain conditions of employment and personnel requirements to subordinates?

c. Are drug and alcohol programs effectively handled? Do subordinates know how to use the program effectively?

d. Are subordinate managers, supervisors and employees trained sufficiently to perform their jobs? If not, have programs been developed to correct deficiencies?

e. Are EEO affirmative actions communicated by all levels of supervision and demonstrated in practice?

f. Do position management practices reflect consideration of cost factors and the obligation to provide employee growth opportunity?

g. Are sound staffing and selection practices followed?

(1) Are the relevant job-related qualifications of candidates reviewed carefully to determine the "best qualified?"

(2) Do supervisors take part in developing promotion evaluation patterns (PEPs)?

(3) Is care taken to avoid the practice or appearance of preselection?

(4) Are details used sparingly, properly documented, and monitored to assure timely termination?

h. Have civilian personnel management and administration requirements been integrated into planning work and reorganizations?

(1) Are CCPO staff members involved at the start of any planning process that involves the civilian work force?

(2) Are personnel considerations balanced with mission needs whenever possible?

i. Have proper union relations been maintained?

(1) Have appropriate actions been taken to eliminate unfair labor practices?

(2) Do subordinate managers have knowledge of their union relation responsibilities?
APPENDIX B

EVALUATION

INTRODUCTION - Some thoughts about AFR 40-5

Air Force Regulation 40-5, "Evaluation of Personnel Management and Administration," establishes the system for evaluating the effectiveness of managers and supervisors in dealing with their civilian subordinates. CCPOs are tasked to complete comprehensive evaluations of internal operations and the manner in which the CCPO administers civilian personnel programs. Commanders delegated appointing authority per AFR 40-102 (this means you) establish through their director of personnel, CCPO, and key managers, an evaluation system that fulfills the requirements of AFR 40-5 and MAJCOM supplementation. Installations are required to submit annual status reports, with improvement plans when needed, to their MAJCOM.

You are encouraged to take steps to ensure your base is in full compliance with the evaluation program, and to review the latest 40-5 evaluations done on your base. In addition, the following checklist outlines some key areas for you to evaluate as you take over management of the base civilian force.

A SIMPLE CHECKLIST FOR BASE COMMANDERS

The following questions should serve as a basis for your initial review of civilian personnel management. The evaluation should be structured to make sure all legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements are applied properly, and to enhance the management capabilities of managers, supervisors, and personnel specialists. Your evaluation should identify ineffective administration, and measure progress in correcting problems or achieving management goals. Your evaluation program should be geared to finding problems, and once indicated, give findings as to cause and remedy.

a. Are sound work force relations promoted, directed, practiced, and monitored?

   (1) Do supervisors use performance awards properly?

   (2) Is discipline fair and used to promote the good of the service. Are disciplinary actions designed to correct behavior rather to punish?

b. Are open, continuous communications maintained?

   (1) Are employees encouraged to suggest better ways of doing business?
APPENDIX A

POPULATIONS

This appendix allows you to record your base's civilian population. This chart allows for a breakdown of GS/GM and FWS employees and totals for the others. It should be given to your CCP0 for them to complete. There are two methods they can use – record the information on the form or use a cover sheet to write the information and keep updated as it changes. They will have a convenient computer printout with this information.

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GENERAL SCHEDULE/MERIT PAY

WAGE SYSTEM

NAF EMPLOYEES

LOCAL NATIONAL EMPLOYEES

SES EMPLOYEES

TOTAL CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES

UNIONS REPRESENTED ON BASE
NO WAY! THIS GUIDE HAS APPENDICES.
the advice of your key players and the tips offered in this guide, you will find managing the civilian force rewarding and no more complicated than managing the military force.


Unpublished Materials


CONTINUED


Other Sources

44. This is based on personal experiences of the author in over ten years of dealing with base commanders directly in the management of civilian personnel.

45. Wagoner, Steven J., Captain, USAF. Directorate of Support Officer Assignments, Air Force Manpower and Personnel Center. Telecon, 10 January 1985.

B. RELATED SOURCES

Books


Articles and Periodicals

CONTINUED

Official Sources


END

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