



**Defense Civilian Intelligence
Personnel System
Prohibition of Forced Distribution of Ratings
Fact Sheet
August 2009**

This Fact Sheet provides information on the prohibition of forced distribution of ratings under DCIPS. For more information on performance management, pay pools, and other DCIPS subjects, please visit the DCIPS web page at <http://dcips.dtic.mil>. You are encouraged to consult with your servicing human resources office for supplemental Component or local guidance.

What is forced distribution?

Forced distribution occurs when managers or supervisors assign performance ratings based on a pre-determined ratings distribution by percent of the population or number of employees. In forced distribution rating systems, employees' rankings are forced into a predetermined (or expected) distribution, rather than through the evaluation of individual employee job performance assessed against rating criteria. An example of forced distribution is grouping employees into multiple segments, e.g., the top 20 percent, the middle 70 percent, and the bottom 10 percent, and assigning ratings based on those relative groupings.

Why is forced distribution prohibited?

The DCIPS Performance Management Instruction (DoDI 1400.25-V2011) expressly prohibits forced, or predetermined, distribution of ratings. The DCIPS performance management system is designed to achieve organizational results and mission objectives through the effective management of individual and organizational performance. As such, individual performance is rated against performance objectives and performance elements established for each employee. Each employee's performance is rated by comparing the performance objectives and performance elements with what was accomplished. As part of the evaluation process, employee performance is not compared with other employees' performance; rather it is measured against a common set of standards to determine the appropriate rating for each performance objective and element. Forced distribution of ratings is expressly prohibited because it violates this performance management philosophy and is inconsistent with the underlying merit systems principles on which DCIPS is based.

Under DCIPS, ratings seem lower than those received under previous performance evaluation systems. Is this a result of forced distribution?

No. While many DCIPS organizations may experience a change in their ratings distribution from the previous rating systems, it is not a result of forced distribution.

DCIPS is a system designed to hold employees accountable for their performance.

DCIPS recognizes five levels of performance. The table below, which can be found in the DCIPS Performance Management Instruction (DoDI 1400.25-V2011), provides a descriptor for each of those levels. DCIPS employees who achieve their performance objectives and demonstrate the desired behaviors associated with the performance elements can expect to achieve an Evaluation of Record of “Successful.”

Performance Objectives and Element Rating Descriptors

GENERAL STANDARDS		
PERFORMANCE RATING	OBJECTIVES DESCRIPTORS	ELEMENT DESCRIPTORS
OUTSTANDING (5)	<p>The employee far exceeded expected results on the objective such that organizational goals were achieved that otherwise would not have been.</p> <p>At the summary level, the employee far exceeded expected results on all performance objectives such that organizational goals were achieved that otherwise would not have been.</p> <p>Such exemplary achievements serve as a role model for others.</p>	<p>The employee consistently performed all key behaviors at an exemplary level on the element.</p> <p>At the summary level, the employee consistently performed at an exemplary level on all performance elements.</p> <p>The employee served as a role model for others.</p>
EXCELLENT (4)	<p>The employee surpassed expected results in a substantial manner on the objective.</p> <p>At the summary level, the employee surpassed expected results overall and in a substantial manner on most of the objectives with an average rating within the “Excellent” range.</p>	<p>The employee demonstrated mastery-level performance of the key behaviors on the element.</p> <p>At the summary level, the employee demonstrated mastery-level performance on most key elements with an average rating within the “Excellent” range.</p>
SUCCESSFUL (3)	<p>The employee achieved expected results on the assigned objective.</p> <p>At the summary level, the employee achieved expected or higher results overall and on most assigned objectives with an average rating within the “Successful” range.</p>	<p>The employee fully demonstrated effective, capable performance of key behaviors for the performance element.</p> <p>At the summary level, the employee demonstrated effective, capable performance or higher on key behaviors on most performance elements with an average rating within the “Successful” range.</p>

PERFORMANCE RATING	OBJECTIVES DESCRIPTORS	ELEMENT DESCRIPTORS
MINIMALLY SUCCESSFUL(2)	<p>The employee only partially achieved expected results on the performance objective.</p> <p>At the summary level, the employee only partially achieved expected results for assigned objectives with an average rating within the “Minimally Successful” range.</p>	<p>The employee’s performance requires improvement on one or more of the key behaviors for the objective.</p> <p>At the summary level, the employee’s behavior requires improvement with an average rating that falls within the “Minimally Successful” range.</p>
UNACCEPTABLE (1)	<p>The employee failed to achieve expected results in one or more assigned performance objectives.</p>	<p>The employee failed to adequately demonstrate key behaviors for the performance element.</p> <p>At the summary level, the employee received a rating of “Unacceptable” on average for the performance elements.</p>
NOT RATED (NR)	<p>The employee did not have the opportunity to complete the objective because it became obsolete due to changing mission requirements or because of extenuating circumstances beyond the control of the employee and supervisor (e.g., resources diverted to higher priority programs, employee in long-term training, deployed, on leave without pay).</p>	<p>Not used for performance elements.</p>

Is it possible for everyone in an organization to earn a Level 5 rating?

It is possible, although highly unlikely, that every employee in an organization could earn an Evaluation of Record of Outstanding. Assignment of an Outstanding rating requires that employees meet the criteria of level 5 performance as described in the above table. Although possible for all employees to perform well beyond identified expectations, it is unlikely that there would be no variation in individual accomplishments and results in the organization.

How can organizations best apply this information and reinforce the process for rating performance?

Rating officials, higher level reviewers, and Performance Management Review Performance Review Authorities (PM PRAs) each play a critical role in the communication aspects of the performance management process. Employees should understand when the annual performance plan is established that their performance will be evaluated in the context of the performance objective and performance element descriptors. The Mid-point Performance conversation presents an opportunity for rating officials to provide feedback as to what is going well, how performance may be improved, and whether performance objectives require adjustment. The formal performance captures for the record the employee’s accomplishments against the

performance objectives and elements. Employees should be reminded that ratings are finalized prior to pay pool deliberations and will be used to inform the pay-setting process in the annual performance-based pay-decision process.

What recourse does an employee have if he or she thinks that the assigned Evaluation of Record doesn't reflect actual work performance?

If an employee disagrees with the performance ratings, he/she should first contact the rating and reviewing officials within 5 days of receipt of the rating to try to resolve the disagreement informally. The rater and/or reviewing official are expected to respond to the employee within 5 days from the day the employee raises the disagreement. If the employee, rater and reviewer are unable to resolve the employee's issue within this 10-day period, the employee may pursue the formal administrative process outlined in the DCIPS Performance Management Instruction (DoDI 1400.25-V2011).