

About the Standard Employee Performance Appraisal Plans (EPAPs)

GOALS FOR THE EPAPs

Goals for developing standard EPAPs were to:

- **Bridge the gap** between agency vision, management requirements, and individual performance.
- **Align** up and down the chain of command and across levels of responsibility, divisions, and parks.
- **Set a bar for excellence** that is consistent, high, and realistically achievable.
- **Standardize expectations** for performance.
- **Reward employees** who demonstrate the behaviors and skills the NPS identified as needing for the 21st century.
- **Improve the quality** of EPAPs, to make them meaningful performance management tools and a starting place for discussions with employees at all levels.

In addition, the descriptions...

- **Show the full range** of responsibilities of modern interpretation and education and reflect how the work is shifting.
- **Align** with *Achieving Relevance in Our Second Century*, and *Interpretive Skills Vision Paper* (NPS WASO Interpretation and Education, 2014).

RATIONALE

Alignment:

- **Aligned:** EPAPs are aligned from superintendent to front line so that everyone has common goals and can be rewarded for achieving those goals.
- **Enable Cross-Division and Cross-Park Cooperation:** Common EPAPs enable alignment across division boundaries. Except for the first element focused on interpretation in the chief and supervisor EPAPs, the other two, "Teamwork, Collaboration, and Communication" and "Fosters a Safety Culture" may be applied to chiefs in other divisions and across a management team. Standard expectations for performance increase opportunities for cooperation between parks.
- **Streamlines the Work:** The EPAPs integrate park/superintendent requirements, so employees have incentive to complete required tasks rather than spend time on things that aren't needed just so an employee can earn a higher rating for him/herself, but in so doing, spends time on work that doesn't address the needs of the park or the Service.

Levels of Performance:

- **Intuitive:** Descriptions of the levels for Exceptional and Superior ratings correspond to what is normally recognized as Exceptional or Superior work. These levels are achievable and an employee who chooses to put in extra effort knows exactly what's expected and how he/she can accomplish it.
- **Consistent:** Levels for Exceptional and Superior ratings are consistent across the EPAPs. They mirror OPM levels for mastery of a skill (expert, can instruct, can do, can do with assistance, etc.). In some cases, additional measures for Exceptional and Superior were added based on management measures set for that area. The sources of these measures are usually noted.
- **Sets a Bar:** At all levels, a bar is set for excellence that is consistent, high, and realistically achievable.
- **Solves a Problem:** Standard ratings for Exceptional and Superior eliminated critical results structured around "extra credit projects" to earn higher ratings. These projects tend to be employee's choice and often don't relate or contribute to accomplishing park priorities.

- **Minimally Successful:** The minimally successful rating describes minimal work, not bad or unsatisfactory work. Some older ways of doing things are listed as Minimally Successful and current practices are described as Fully Successful.

HOW TO USE THE EPAPs

- **Voluntary:** Use of the EPAPs is voluntary. They are tools to make managers' and supervisors' jobs easier if they elect to use them.
- **Tailored:** EPAPs may be tailored for individual employees and park circumstances within a standard model. Major duties of interpretation staff were written in ways that could be widely applicable in a variety of circumstances
- **Park Ranger and Park Guide EPAPs:** The park ranger and park guide EPAPs are components of a system.
 - Ranger and Guide EPAPs have three critical elements in common: 1) "Interpretation, Education and Visitor Experience", 2) "Visitor Services Operations", and 3) "Teamwork, Collaboration, Communication, and Customer Service."
 - 30 other Fully Successful descriptions are included to enable supervisors to tailor EPAPs to the park and employee duties, if desired.
 - Collateral Duty critical results may be used for the employee(s) who coordinate that function. Currently these are: Cooperating Association Coordination, Education Program Coordination, Fee Program Coordination, Volunteer Program Coordination, Technology, Web, and Social Media Coordination, and Contributes to a Safety Culture (for safety committee members or chairs, or collateral duty safety officers).
- **Updated Chief and Supervisor EPAPs:** EPAPs for chief and supervisor were updated based on (NER) superintendent EPAPs and NPS management controls and standards.

STANDARD EPAPs AND CRITICAL RESULTS AVAILABLE

- **Chief** – Includes one interpretation-focused critical element; the other critical results may be used or adapted for a chief in any division. Critical Elements: 1) Program Management and Visitor Experience, 2) Teamwork, Collaboration, and Communication, 3) Fosters a Safety Culture.
- **Supervisor** – Includes one interpretation-focused critical element; the other critical results may be used or adapted for a supervisor in any division. Critical Elements: 1) Program Management and Visitor Experience, 2) Teamwork, Collaboration, and Communication, 3) Fosters a Safety Culture.
- **Park Ranger** (GS-0025-09) – Critical Elements: 1) Interpretation, Education, and Visitor Experience, 2) Visitor Services Operations, 3) Teamwork, Collaboration, Communication, and Customer Service.
- **Park Guide** (GS-0090-4/5) – Critical Elements: 1) Interpretation, Education, and Visitor Experience, 2) Visitor Services Operations, 3) Teamwork, Collaboration, Communication, and Customer Service.
- **Fully Successful Descriptions** – Descriptions of Fully Successful for 30 common duties and responsibilities of park staff enables supervisors to tailor EPAPs to individual employees and park circumstances.
- **Collateral Duty Critical Results** – Critical results for major collateral duties: 1) Cooperation Association Coordination, 2) Education Program Coordination, 3) Fee Program Coordination, 4) Volunteer Program Coordination, 5) Technology, Web, and Social Media Coordination, 6) Safety Program Coordination

FOR MORE INFORMATION

U.S. Department of the Interior Performance Appraisal Handbook (370 DM 430); A Guide for Managers/Supervisors and Employees: http://www.nps.gov/training/tel/Guides/Performance_Appraisal_Handbook.pdf