



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240



OCT 11 2007

Memorandum

To: Bureau/Equivalent Office Human Resources Officers

From: *Sharilyn A. Grigsby*
Sharilyn A. Grigsby
Director, Office of Human Resources

Subject: Departmental Policy on Performance Awards Processing Deadline and Monetary Limits

The attached Personnel Bulletin No. 07-08 corrects and replaces Policy Bulletin No. 07-07 dated September 19, 2007. This Personnel Bulletin provides guidance on processing performance-based cash awards and QSI processing deadlines.

This guidance should be used in conjunction with the currently established Departmental Manual on awards, as well as awards guidance found in the 370 DM 430. If you have any questions, please contact Joy Buhler at (202) 219-0811 or Joy_Buhler@ios.doi.gov.

Attachment

PERSONNEL BULLETIN No. 07-08

SUBJECT: Performance Awards Processing Deadlines and Monetary Limit Updates

1. This bulletin clarifies the Department of the Interior's policy on processing performance awards. This bulletin supersedes and cancels previous guidance issued under Personnel Bulletin No. 06-12; Departmental Policy on Performance Awards, dated October 11, 2006, in relation to processing performance-based cash awards and QSI processing deadlines, and corrects and cancels Personnel Bulletin No. 07-07 dated September 19, 2007.

2. **Authorities.** Title 5 of the United States Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 430, and 5 U.S.C. 4505a.

3. **Policy.**

a. Performance Based Cash Awards. Performance-based cash awards are given to employees who are rated at Level 4 (Superior) or Level 5 (Exceptional). A cash award may be a specific dollar amount or a percentage of the employee's pay up to 5% for level 5 and up to 3% for level 4 ratings. When performance-based cash awards that are based on a percentage of the employee's pay are in excess of \$5,000, approval of the Assistant Secretary or equivalent is not required. Based on 5 CFR 451.104(g), when awards are computed as a percentage of an employee's pay the rate of base pay must include locality payments under 5 U.S.C. 5304, special rate supplements under 5 U.S.C. 5305 and/or other similar payments. Such awards are recommended by the immediate supervisor or rating official, and are approved under appropriate bureau delegations.

b. Quality Step Increase. A Quality Step Increase (QSI) is a pay increase that provides faster than normal progression within grade steps for permanent General Schedule employees. To be eligible, the employee must achieve an overall rating of Exceptional (level 5) on their Employee Performance Appraisal Plan and display exceptional performance that is expected to continue. Supervisors should attempt to process all QSIs no later than December 31, or 90 days from the end of the performance cycle for those on other than a fiscal year cycle. However, when situations preclude timely processing, the QSI can be delayed past the 90 days, but cannot be delayed past the end of the next performance year. Whenever processing of the QSI is delayed for more than 90 days, a request for exception should be submitted through the respective Bureau or Office Head, the servicing Human Resources Office, and the bureau headquarters Human Resources Office for approval. Since a QSI must be supported by a performance rating of Level 5 (Exceptional), which requires the approval of a rater and reviewer, both signatures are required for a QSI exception request. Requests should be in the form of a memorandum and include an explanation as to why it was not possible to process the rating and the QSI within 90 days from the end of the performance cycle.

c. Processing Timelines. For employees whose performance appraisal cycle ends on September 30, all awards should be input into FPPS no later than November 30. Ratings must be input PRIOR TO input of the award into the system.

4. **Point of Contact.** The Departmental point of contact on this policy is Joy Buhler, 202-219-0811, or by e-mail at Joy_Buhler@ios.doi.gov


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