

## Department of the Interior Departmental Manual

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**Effective Date:** 7/16/08

**Series:** Personnel Management

**Part 370:** Departmental Personnel Program

**Chapter 451:** Awards and Recognition Program

**Subchapter 2:** Performance Awards

**Originating Office:** Office of Human Resources

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### 370 DM 451.2

**2.1 General.** The Department's 5-level performance management system for general workforce employees became effective on October 4, 2004. Under this performance system the year-end performance rating is used as a basis for appropriate personnel actions, including rewarding noteworthy performance.

**2.2 Policy.** An employee must be rated at Superior (Level 4) or Exceptional (Level 5) to be eligible for a performance-based award. Any employee rated Exceptional (Level 5) must be considered for an award as required by 370 DM 430. There may be circumstances when awards cannot be given. However, in accordance with 5 CFR Section 451.104(g), performance-based cash awards must make a meaningful distinction based on levels of performance. In other words, an employee who receives an award based on a performance rating of Level 5 must receive a larger cash award, in terms of percentage of base pay, than an employee at the same grade/pay level who received a rating of Level 4.

**2.3 Rating Levels for Recognition.** Managers/Supervisors have the flexibility to recognize employees using any of the award recognitions outlined below, or a combination thereof:

A. Exceptional (Level 5) - Eligible for one or more of the following: a Cash Award of up to 5 percent of base pay, a QSI, Time-Off Award, or other appropriate equivalent recognition.

B. Superior (Level 4) - Eligible for a Cash Award of up to 3 percent of base pay, Time-Off Award, and/or other appropriate equivalent recognition.

C. Fully Successful (Level 3) - Not eligible for any performance-based award. However, an employee is eligible to receive an award for reasons other than sustained performance tied to the rating of record. For example, the employee is eligible to be recognized for a noteworthy contribution within the rating period (e.g., recognition for work on a special project that contributed to its success).

**2.4 Performance-based Cash Awards.** Monetary or non-monetary awards given to employees who rated at Level 4 (Superior) or Level 5 (Exceptional) under the Department's 5-level performance management system. A cash award may be a specific dollar amount or a

percentage of the employee's pay. Cash awards based on a specific dollar amount that are in excess of \$5,000 require approval of the Assistant Secretary or equivalent. When performance-based cash awards 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 rate of base 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.

**2.5 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.

**2.6 Time-Off Awards.** An excused absence awarded to an employee without charge to leave. Bureaus must establish approval authorities, scheduling guidance, and an appropriate number of hours commensurate with employee contributions, and supervisory responsibilities. The minimum time-off recognition is one hour; the time-off award shall not exceed 40 hours per event or 80 hours total per year. This limit includes performance-based time-off awards. Employees normally have the discretion to determine when they will use a time-off award, subject to supervisory approval. A time-off award must be used while the recipient is employed at the Department; the time-off award cannot be transferred to another agency upon separation of the employee. Further, upon separation from the Department, employees are not entitled to receive payment for any unused time-off award hours. These limits apply to all employees.

**2.7 Nomination Process and Approval Authority for Performance Awards.** Performance awards may be documented using either the front page of the performance appraisal form or the revised awards form, DI-451. An example of the form is provided in the Appendix to this chapter. An overview of the process is provided below:

A. Processing Timelines. For employees whose performance appraisal cycle ends on September 30, all awards should be input into FPPS no later than November 30. For those on other than a Fiscal Year Cycle, awards should be input within 60 days after the end of the performance cycle.

B. Processing Codes. All performance-based cash awards must be input using Nature of Action Code 840-A1, which is "performance award (Cash)". Performance-based time off awards must be input using Nature of Action Code 846-A2, performance (time-off).

C. Delayed Processing of QSIs. 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 to the respective Bureau or Office head, through 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.

D. Responsibility. Bureaus and offices are responsible for establishing nomination processes and approval authorities for implementing this policy.

## UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR RECOMMENDATION AND APPROVAL OF AWARDS

Agency/Bureau	Name of Employee (last, first, middle initial) or Group (attach list of participants)	
Social Security No. XXX-XX-____	Position Title	Pay Plan-Series/Grade/Step
Duty Station	Period Covered For Award (MM/DD/YY) From _____ To _____	Cost Account Number

### COMPLETE THE APPROPRIATE AWARD SECTION BELOW

#### **MONETARY AWARD:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Performance-Based Cash Award

\_\_\_\_\_ Exceptional (Level 5) Performance Rating \$ \_\_\_\_\_ or % \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Superior (Level 4) Performance Rating \$ \_\_\_\_\_ or % \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Quality Step Increase

(Exceptional (Level 5) Performance Rating Required)

\_\_\_\_\_ Star (Special Thanks for Achievement) Award \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Productivity Improvement Award \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Invention/Patent Award \$ \_\_\_\_\_

#### **NON-MONETARY AWARD:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Time-Off Recognition      Performance-Based \_\_\_\_\_      Non-Performance Based \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Hours: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Non-Monetary Recognition

Cash Value of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

#### **HONOR AWARD:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Distinguished Service Award

\_\_\_\_\_ Cooperative Conservation Award

\_\_\_\_\_ Meritorious Service Award

\_\_\_\_\_ Outstanding Service Award

\_\_\_\_\_ Unit Award for Excellence of Service

\_\_\_\_\_ Superior Service Award

\_\_\_\_\_ Citizen's Award for Exceptional Service Award

\_\_\_\_\_ Valor Award

\_\_\_\_\_ Citizen's Award for Bravery

\_\_\_\_\_ Exemplary Act Award

#### **BUREAU-SPECIFIC AWARD:**

Name of Award: \_\_\_\_\_

It is the policy of the Department to ensure that consideration for awards is made without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status, disability or other non-merit factors. Information on this form is protected by the Privacy Act. Disclosure may be made only to authorized persons according to Title 5 U.S.C., Section 552a(b).

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Rev. 5/08

7/16/08 #3805

Replaces 2/96 Sec. 1-4, HRM Handbook; 2/21/89 FPM-378; and 6/28/84 FPM-334

**RECOMMENDATION AND APPROVAL**

Recommending Individual (Signature)	Date	Reviewing Official (Signature)	Date
Title:		Title:	
Approving Official (Signature & Title)			Date

**HONOR AWARD REVIEW APPROVAL**

HR Review of Official Personnel Folder	Date	Finding
Bureau Office of Civil Rights (Signature)	Date	Finding
Department Office of Civil Rights (Signature)	Date	Finding
Office of Inspector General (Signature)	Date	Finding
Departmental Ethics Office (Signature)	Date	Finding
Office of the Solicitor (Signature) (For Non-Departmental Employees)	Date	Finding

**JUSTIFICATION****Summary of Accomplishments/Contributions Being Recognized by Award**

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**FINANCIAL ACTION RECORD** This record is to initiate payment, accounting and tax transactions for **only** non-monetary recognition of significant value.

Recipient Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security Number: xxx-xx-\_\_\_\_\_

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Bureau	Sub-Bureau	Block	Org. Code	Cost Account

**NONMONETARY RECOGNITION OF SIGNIFICANT VALUE** (Date Presented: \_\_\_\_\_)

Cash Value of Award (Hours Code 66A)	\$ _____ (Net Amount)
Value Including Taxes (Cash Value divided by .55) (Hours Code 30A)	\$ _____ (Gross Amount)

**Disposition of this form:** Original to servicing personnel office, copy to recipient. FAX this form to the Payroll Operations Division. This fax is in lieu of original. **DO NOT SEND ORIGINAL OF THIS DOCUMENT TO PAYROLL.**

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