



The Commonwealth Human Resource Management System:

An Overview for Executives & Senior Level Managers

CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Overview of the HR System.....	3
Labor Relations.....	4
Collective Bargaining	5
Impact of Labor Agreements	4
Contracting for Services	5
Grievances	5
Confidential Employees	6
Organization Management	6
Complement	6
Reorganizations	6
Classification.....	7
Staffing	7
Filling a position	7
Promotions	9
Transfers.....	10
Demotions	10
Separations	10
Compensation	11
Pay	11
Benefits	12
Paid and Unpaid Leave	12
Workplace Support.....	12
Employee Assistance Program.....	12
Disability Accommodations	13
Safety.....	13
HR Service Center	13
Personnel Rules and Policies.....	14
Ethics	14
Criminal Conduct.....	14
Financial Disclosure	15
Supplementary Employment	15
Political Activity	16
Post Employment Restrictions	16
Work Schedules and Attendance.....	16
Office Closings	16

Equal Employment Opportunity	17
Enforcement	17
Employee Development.....	17
Performance Evaluations	17
Training	18

This handbook is not an employment contract. It does not confer any rights or privileges upon employees. Employment with the commonwealth is at will. This means that the commonwealth reserves the right, subject only to the express terms of an applicable labor agreement or statute, to terminate an individual's employment at any time for any reason or no reason. Except where the express terms of a collective bargaining agreement apply, the commonwealth's policies, rules, orders, directives, and circulars shall be controlling with respect to the eligibility for employee benefits. The commonwealth's rules, policies, orders, directives, and circulars may be changed from time to time at the sole discretion of the commonwealth.

In the case of any discrepancy between this handbook and any current commonwealth policy, rule, order, directive, circular, or collective bargaining agreement, the latter will prevail.

Introduction

This resource is designed for new senior-level managers in agencies under the Governor's jurisdiction. It provides a broad overview of the unique features of the commonwealth human resource management system. Though not exhaustive in its treatment of human resource policies and procedures, this guide provides answers to common questions new senior-level managers may have about human resources in the commonwealth.

You should contact your agency human resource office for assistance with this information. They can provide further details, advise you on procedures, and in many cases help carry out actions you may desire to take.

Further details and many human resource documents can also be found at www.oa.state.pa.us.

Overview of the HR System

To support agency and employee needs, develop policies, coordinate with labor unions, and adhere to federal and state employment laws, the commonwealth HR system includes a variety of professionals responsible for different functions. Collaboration among these functional areas is essential to ensure that HR actions are carried out effectively and timely.

The Governor is responsible for the overall management of the workforce. The Governor appoints agency heads and deputies of agencies under the Governor's jurisdiction. Additionally, the Governor serves as chairperson of **the Executive Board**, which approves the commonwealth's personnel rules, compensation and classification plans, organization structures of state agencies, collective bargaining agreements, and other administrative policies.

The Office of Administration (OA) is responsible for oversight of enterprise wide human resource policies and programs. OA's authority to set pay and compensation and to approve classifications and organization changes are conveyed as an agent of the Executive Board. For example, OA is responsible for:

- Developing and implementing statewide HR policies and procedures including the commonwealth personnel rules
- Administering classification and compensation plans
- Administering employee benefits programs
- Conducting collective bargaining
- Recruiting, referring, and processing applicants for non-civil service positions
- Providing various training and professional development programs

Numerous personnel or human resource actions require that the agency consult with

or receive approval from OA. Your agency HR staff will coordinate directly with OA as necessary.

The HR Service Center provides centralized human resources, benefits and payroll services and information to employees and agencies under the Governor's jurisdiction. Employees contact the center directly for help with pay and benefits. The center also transacts many personnel actions on behalf of agencies.

The State Civil Service Commission is an independent administrative commission that administers the merit system for the commonwealth. The merit system covers approximately 68 percent of positions. The commission recruits for civil service covered positions and provides eligible candidates to agencies when they want to fill a civil service position. Numerous personnel or human resource actions require that the agency consult with or receive approval from the commission. Your agency HR staff will coordinate directly with the commission as necessary.

Commonwealth agencies often develop unique human resource practices in order to fulfill their missions. Each agency has a staff of HR professionals who administer human resource programs at the agency level, communicate with and counsel employees, and act as a link between agency human resource activities and OA and the State Civil Service Commission. The agency HR office advises senior level managers in each agency about the details of policies and labor agreements as well as best practices for managing employees in the commonwealth environment.

Labor Relations

The commonwealth has a complex labor relations environment which has resulted from law, regulations, court decisions, collective bargaining, arbitration awards, and past practices. Dozens of unions represent various groups, or bargaining units, of both rank and file and first level supervisory employees. Labor agreements touch on all aspects of employment for those employees represented by a union. Agency executives and managers must take into account the provisions of these agreements to successfully manage their programs and employees. Your agency HR office can assist you in steering a course which achieves agency objectives, but also is consistent with labor agreements and encourages labor/management cooperation.

Impact of Labor Agreements

Labor agreements have an impact on almost every action you take which involves employee wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment. The union serves as the exclusive representative of all employees in the bargaining unit, and all matters involving wages, hours, and terms and conditions of employment must be addressed through it. The union must represent all employees in the bargaining unit regardless of union membership, and all of the provisions of the labor agreement apply equally to employees covered by the agreement even if they decline

membership in the union. Employees who decline membership are assessed a “fair share” fee, which is a percentage of full union dues that is applied towards the cost of the services performed by the union on their behalf.

A primary factor affecting your success in developing and maintaining a cooperative labor/management relationship is the quality and timeliness of communication with the unions. Inform and seek their input into appropriate agency decisions and plans while decisions are still in the formative stage and before they have been announced. You should rely on your agency HR office to assist you in establishing and maintaining a productive and cooperative labor/management relationship that will enable you to fulfill your agency’s mission.

Collective Bargaining

All agencies under the Governor's jurisdiction constitute a single employer and are represented by OA’s Bureau of Labor Relations for the purposes of collective bargaining, grievance arbitration, Pennsylvania Labor Relations Board appeals, and court actions that involve labor cases. Representatives of agencies are included on commonwealth negotiating teams when individual agency interests are involved. Pennsylvania labor law permits union covered employees to strike when the collective bargaining process reaches impasse; first level supervisory employees do not have the right to strike. Some bargaining units, by virtue of the role employees within them have in ensuring public safety (e.g., prison guards, State Police and other law enforcement officers), have access to binding arbitration to settle disputes, in lieu of the right to strike.

Contracting for Services

In addition to those aspects of the procurement process that control acquisition of the services of a vendor to perform work, there are important labor relations considerations that come into play. Under the law, any outsourcing of work performed by a bargaining unit must be negotiated with the unions. However, most collective bargaining agreements contain provisions that replace this bargaining obligation with a more streamlined process. A common requirement is the demonstration to the affected union that the contract for services will yield reasonable cost savings or improved service delivery. The circumstances under which this requirement exists vary across collective bargaining agreements, but failure either to meet this test or engage the union in dialogue when applicable can trigger an appeal that causes the cancellation of the contract for services. Your agency HR office can guide your efforts in fulfilling the relevant obligations.

Grievances

Labor agreements afford unions and/or employees covered by them with the right to file a grievance if they believe a provision of their labor agreement has been violated

or misapplied, their position is not correctly classified, or if a disciplinary action is improper. OA and agency HR staff work closely together to manage the grievance process and work toward prompt, compliant, and cost effective resolution. If you are asked for assistance related to a grievance, please provide information and attend any necessary meetings or hearings.

Confidential Employees

A confidential employee is one who works in the HR office and has access to information the commonwealth may use in collective bargaining, or who works in a close continuing relationship with public officers or representatives associated with collective bargaining on behalf of the commonwealth. Labor agreements do not apply to these employees even if their classification would normally be union covered. By agreement with the union, there is a cap on the number of employees in this category.

Organization Management

Complement

Each agency, and often each funding stream of the agency, has a maximum complement. This complement is the maximum number of salaried positions¹ an agency may have at any given point in time. The Office of the Budget establishes the complement number. An agency may also have an authorized number of wage positions², which are not counted toward the maximum salaried complement. Your agency HR office will help you to manage your complement.

Reorganizations

The Executive Board must approve the establishment of bureaus, divisions, and other organization structures at the division level and above. OA reviews requests for reorganization to ensure changes will result in streamlined operations, reduced costs, and improved services, while following proper organization structuring concepts and staying within budget. Also, proposed organization changes that may impact the terms and conditions of employment for union represented employees are discussed with appropriate employee representatives. The agency head is required to forward a reorganization plan, which includes existing and proposed organization charts, functional statements and staffing charts, as well as overall justification, to OA for initial review and consultation. Your HR office will assist you in completing all of the necessary documentation for the reorganization plan. The complete reorganization plan is then forwarded to the Executive Board for approval.

¹ A salaried position's work schedule is regular and predictable for a period exceeding six months.

² A wage positions' work schedule is regular, generally not exceeding six months, or is intermittent or irregular without regard to the duration of the term of employment.

Classification

Each position in the commonwealth has an associated position description, which lists the duties, responsibilities, and essential functions of the work to be performed. HR staff in the agency and OA use the position descriptions and additional data to allocate each position to a job classification based on the duties assigned and performed. The classification of a position determines whether it is subject to Civil Service rules or labor agreements, its pay scale group, and other important factors.

An evaluation of a new or existing position's classification can be initiated by the employee in the position, managers in the agency, the agency HR office, OA, or the union, if applicable.

In most cases, agencies have the authority to classify positions. Some agencies and classifications require OA approval. Your agency HR office will coordinate with OA as required to classify positions.

If no existing classification appropriately describes the work under review, your agency HR office may prepare a proposal including the new classification description. OA reviews the request and determines if a new classification is required, coordinates the creation of the proposed job with the Civil Service Commission and appropriate union, where applicable, and then forwards the request to the Executive Board for approval.

Staffing

Filling a position

How a vacancy is filled varies based on the type of position. Positions can be civil service or non-civil service depending on whether or not certain criteria prescribed in the Civil Service Act apply. In addition, a position may be union covered, in which case additional procedures for hiring or promoting into these positions are covered by labor agreements.

In many cases, a position must be advertised internally to allow any qualified and interested applicant to apply. How an applicant is selected to fill a position may depend on seniority, performance, qualifications, and/or examination result.

Because procedures to fill each position are unique, your agency HR office will advise you about how to proceed in each case.

Union Covered Positions

Promotions to many positions covered by labor agreements are governed by seniority. In these cases, the most senior employees in the next lower job classification in the bargaining unit who apply for the position have rights to these

jobs. Such rights may be superceded in some cases through the use of civil service lists, but each labor agreement is unique and your agency HR office will advise you on specific protocol for the position you are filling.

Civil Service Positions

Persons hired or promoted into civil service positions must be selected using merit procedures, including using eligible candidate lists established as a result of examinations and in accordance with the terms of any applicable labor agreement, civil service rules and the Veterans' Preference Act.

Many civil service positions can be filled in a number of ways, including appointment of applicants not working for the commonwealth, promotion from within, transfer from another agency, etc. You should discuss the benefits and limitations of each option with your HR office.

You may also be able to promote individuals who have not taken an examination into these positions based on meritorious service and seniority. Generally, employees selected for promotion in this manner must have regular civil service status in the next lower classification, meet the minimum requirements for the higher job, and receive an unqualified recommendation for promotion.

Non-Civil Service Positions

A position may be non-civil service because it is located in an agency or occupation that is not identified in the Civil Service Act, it has not been deemed to be covered by civil service by the Executive Board, or it is exempt on the basis of specific criteria detailed in the Civil Service Act. The majority of positions not covered by civil service are high level policy making managers;attorneys; positions in the policy, press, or legislative offices; or positions responsible for unskilled work such as custodial workers, food service workers, and laborers.

Candidates for non-civil service positions are to be evaluated and referred in accordance with procedures prescribed by OA. These include filing an online application available at www.employment.pa.gov. Your agency HR office will coordinate with OA in this process. Persons hired or promoted into non-civil service positions must meet minimum requirements for the position. If the position is union-covered, seniority provisions may apply.

Senior Level Positions

All non-civil service senior level positions require the approval of the Governor's Office prior to hiring, promotion, and transfer. Non-civil service senior level positions include deputy secretaries, senior management service staff³, executive

³ Employees in the senior management service (SMS) have broad policy formulation and management responsibility. They serve at the pleasure of the agency head in the capacity of bureau directors, superintendents, regional or district office managers, and comparable policy making and program management positions. Pay and benefits of SMS staff is in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Executive Board. The SMS does not include positions exempted from civil service which are normally filled by the Governor's Office and agency heads, such as deputy secretaries, press officers, legislative liaisons, and other positions which serve in direct staff or policy making capacity.

assistants, legislative liaisons, press secretaries, and other non-civil service positions in Pay Scale Group 9 and above.

In addition, the Secretary of Administration must be consulted on particular civil service senior level hires and transfers. These civil service senior level positions include Chief Information Technology Managers; Administrative and Management Service Directors; agency Human Resource Directors; Equal Opportunity Managers/Specialists; agency Budget and Fiscal Affairs; and Department of Transportation County Maintenance Managers.

Probationary periods

Most employees, upon appointment or promotion, serve a probationary period that typically lasts six months. There are two types of probationary periods: civil service and contractual. A civil service employee who is covered by a labor agreement serves both types of probation concurrently. An employee who is civil service but not covered by a labor agreement serves only the civil service probationary period and a non-civil service employee who is covered by a labor agreement serves only the contractual probationary period.

During the employee's probationary period, the fitness for continuation in the position is determined. A performance evaluation must be completed within the two-month period before the end of the probationary period. During this period, an employee who was promoted but is unable to function successfully in the higher classification may be returned to his/her previous position. Newly hired employees who are unable to successfully complete their probationary period are subject to dismissal. An employee's probationary period can be extended if the extension of time can be expected to bring performance to an acceptable level. In these cases, your agency HR office should be notified as soon as possible prior to the expiration of the probationary period so that the required approvals and notifications can be obtained within the required timeframes. Extensions of contractual probationary periods require written agreement from the union. Extensions of civil service probationary periods require written notice to the employee with a copy to the State Civil Service Commission.

Promotions

There are two basic methods to accomplish a promotion: fill a vacancy with an employee who is at a lower classification level or reclassify a filled position and promote the incumbent. Reclassification requires your HR office to conduct a review of the position and determine whether the work assigned is above the position's current classification. Your agency HR office will coordinate this review.

Transfers

An employee can be transferred laterally either:

- to a position in the same classification within your agency or another agency, or
- to a position in a different classification with the same minimum pay rate within your agency or another agency.

Labor agreements often impose constraints on the ability to transfer staff in union-covered positions, both geographically, and across classifications and organizations within your agency.

Transfers between agencies generally occur when employees apply and are selected for vacancies in another agency. These actions require the written approval of the losing and gaining agencies and the establishment of a mutually acceptable transfer date. Employees transferring between agencies under the Governor's jurisdiction carry with them any accrued leave or benefits attained.

Demotions

A demotion is the reassignment of an employee to a position in a lower pay scale group or in some cases to a job with a lower minimum pay rate.

Demotion may result from poor performance on the part of the employee, when he/she is no longer performing at the level required by his/her classification.

Also, if the nature of the work is such that the current classification no longer applies, an employee may be demoted. Generally, a classification audit of an employee's duties and responsibilities indicates that the employee is performing at a lower level and the position is reclassified downward.

Employees may be demoted involuntarily, through an action initiated by you, your agency HR office, or the Office of Administration. An employee can also request a voluntary demotion. Anticipated demotions should be discussed with your human resource director prior to implementation and must be in accordance with applicable civil service rules and labor agreements.

Separations

Employees end their employment in a number of ways. They may resign their position or retire. These are voluntary separations. However, involuntary separations occur as well.

Furlough

A furlough is similar to a private sector layoff and is the removal of an employee from his/her position due to lack of work, lack of funds, or other

operational reasons. A furlough occurs most often when a facility is closed, a program discontinued, or funding reduced.

Furloughs should not be proposed under any circumstance without prior consultation with the Governor's Office and OA. Furloughs are extremely intricate to implement because of seniority rights, civil service rights, and public relations. Your human resource and fiscal staff should be consulted through all steps of the furlough procedure.

Termination

Employees may be terminated as the last step in a progressive discipline procedure or for egregious policy violations or actions resulting in harm to others. Consult your agency HR office any time you believe termination of an employee may be necessary.

Compensation

Pay

OA manages pay centrally for the commonwealth. Agency heads, deputy secretaries, and managers do not choose the amount to be paid to commonwealth employees.

Each classification whose salary is not set by statute is assigned to one of several commonwealth pay schedules depending on the type of position. For example, distinct pay schedules exist for corrections officers and State Police, but most positions are assigned either to the standard (ST) schedule (for union-covered employees) or the management (MA) schedule. Classifications are assigned a pay scale group within the schedule that denotes the minimum and maximum salaries for a position in the classification. The pay scale group is determined based on level of responsibility, breadth of assignment, accountability, and other factors to ensure pay equity in the commonwealth.

New employees are hired at the minimum pay scale level in the pay scale group assigned to the position. Agency heads have limited authority to grant salary commitments above the minimum pay scale level under certain circumstances. Consideration should be given to the impact on internal relationships of such an action. Your human resource director can advise you regarding applicable procedures.

Pay Increases

Pay increases are negotiated for employees covered by a labor agreement. The Executive Board grants increases to non-union employees.

Benefits

Many benefits are available to employees. An employee's eligible dependants may have some of these benefits available to them as well. They include health, life, dental, vision, and prescription drug insurance as well as membership in the State Employees' Retirement System and a deferred compensation program. Optional insurances are available for employees as well. New employees will receive detailed information about the benefits available to them when they are hired.

Questions about benefits and how to enroll may be directed to the HR Service Center at 866.377.2672 or www.myWorkplace.state.pa.us.

Paid and Unpaid Leave

Most employees who need or want to take time off are able to do so using paid and unpaid leave programs. For example, most employees receive:

- Annual leave,
- Personal leave, and
- Sick leave (for the employee or care of family members).

Supervisors must approve employee leave and in some cases, employees must meet certain criteria for length of service and reason for the absence in order to take specific types of leave.

The agency head or any manager delegated that authority by the agency head may choose to grant compensatory time for overtime work, but there are certain restrictions that apply to some management employees; and, for union-covered staff, some labor agreements require the agreement of the employee and/or union to provide compensatory time in lieu of monetary payment.

Your agency HR office can explain which types of leave you and your staff are eligible for and how each type of leave can be used.

Workplace Support

State Employee Assistance Program

The State Employee Assistance Program (SEAP) provides employees and their family members with access to behavioral health services in order to minimize the impact personal problems may have on job performance. SEAP provides evaluation, referral, and follow-up services for employees experiencing drug, alcohol, emotional, family, marital, or other personal problems.

Employees can contact SEAP at 800.692.7459 or www.liveandworkwell.com; access code: Pennsylvania.

SEAP also provides on-site assistance to agencies which have experienced a traumatic event such as death, suicide, or violence in the workplace. These services can be coordinated by your agency HR office.

Disability Accommodations

Agencies must provide all qualified applicants and employees with disabilities with reasonable accommodations in accordance with commonwealth policy and state and federal law. Individuals with disabilities shall be treated with respect and dignity and shall be provided access to commonwealth services, programs, activities, and employment opportunities. No commonwealth agency under the Governor's jurisdiction shall discriminate against any individual because of his or her disability.

Safety

Executive and senior managers play a critical role in establishing and maintaining a safe work environment for employees. In addition to protecting our work force, this is important to control costs for workers' compensation, including paid absences, health care treatment and overtime paid to temporarily replace injured employees. The safety program also is a requirement for the commonwealth to maintain approval for its workers' compensation self-insured status. Each agency HR office has a safety coordinator who can answer questions regarding your responsibilities and the proper management of safety risks.

HR Service Center

The HR Service Center helps employees with common HR, benefits, and pay matters like updating personal data, changing payroll options, and managing benefits. Your agency's office of human resources and employee self service (ESS) at www.myWorkplace.state.pa.us will continue to be important parts of your workplace support. Check [this chart](#) to see what the center will help you with.

If you have questions about where to go for what, you are always welcome to call the HR Service Center at 866.377.2672, Monday through Friday from 7:00 am to 5:00 pm.

Employee Self Service (ESS)

www.myWorkplace.state.pa.us gives most employees 24/7 access to a wide array of HR information. In addition to managing administrative matters like leave and reimbursements, ESS lets you handle many of your own HR tasks at your convenience, including changes to your personal information, payroll options, health and other benefits. If you do not use ESS, lots of HR information is also available via www.myHRonline.state.pa.us.

Your agency's HR office is an important part of your workplace support. Contact them if you or your employees have questions about leave or time issues; performance evaluations; training and development; workplace accommodations; safety; SEAP; promotions and new opportunities; work rules; union matters; workers' compensation; or unemployment issues.

Personnel Rules and Policies

OA, the State Civil Service Commission, agency heads, agency human resource directors, and agency equal employment opportunity officers all play a role in the formation and execution of personnel rules. An official document, the [Commonwealth Personnel Rules](#), is issued by OA and speaks to compensation, classification and overall personnel management policies as well as issues of employee conduct such as:

- Workplace violence
- Substance abuse
- Accepting gifts

Ethics

Ethical behavior of employees is a high priority of the commonwealth. Actions taken by an employee on the job or outside of work can be detrimental to their employment. The commonwealth generally prohibits employees from engaging in any activity that creates a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest.

For example, employees are subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination if they:

- Are formally charged with criminal conduct related to their commonwealth employment
- Are charged with or convicted of other criminal conduct such as felony charges or convictions
- Have an adverse interest in any contract between a vendor and the agency by which they are employed
- Represent any person or group in any matter pending before the agency in which they are employed

You should consult your agency HR office promptly if you become aware of a potential ethical issue involving yourself or a member of your staff.

Criminal Conduct

All employee arrests must be reported to OA by the agency when it becomes aware of an incident.

Criminal charges filed against an employee may require that administrative action be taken. Felony charges, resulting from either workplace or off-duty conduct, require that the employee be suspended without pay pending investigation/resolution of the matter. Such a suspension also is required in the event of misdemeanor or summary charges that arise from an employee's performance of his commonwealth duties. Non-felony charges that do not stem from the performance of commonwealth duties must be scrutinized to determine if suspension pending investigation, reassignment or other/no action is required to safeguard operations or ensure that safety is not compromised. In addition to investigation by law enforcement authorities, an administrative investigation of the matter underlying the charges is generally undertaken.

Employees who are incarcerated, under house arrest, subject to electronic monitoring or subject to similar "intermediate punishment" imposed by the judicial system may not work unless approved for work release by OA.

Financial Disclosure

Certain public officials and public employees must annually disclose specific personal financial information. Statements of financial interests are filed online by May 1st of each year. New employees are to complete the forms within 30 days of hire or promotion into an applicable position.

The agency HR office and chief counsel review the submitted statements. Any statements that appear to disclose a conflict of interest are reviewed by the agency head and then forwarded to OA for resolution.

Access to the statements is limited to select commonwealth officials. They are to be made available only upon request and approval by the Governor's Press Office to accredited reporters employed by general news organizations.

Supplementary Employment

Employees may have a second job or what is often referred to as supplementary employment. Duties of the second position must not conflict with the employee's primary commonwealth position. Supplementary employment includes self-employment and may include certain unpaid volunteer work. Employees must have specific approval for supplementary employment and should submit a [supplementary employment request form](#) to request this authorization.

If the second position is with a commonwealth agency, an employee must complete a [dual employment request form](#). Depending on the nature of the employee's positions, work in the second position may need to be compensated at the rate of time and one-half.

Political Activity

Certain political activities of all employees are restricted. Parameters vary based on the type of position. Generally, no employee may participate in political activity (such as campaigning, fundraising, canvassing or poll watching) during work hours or coerce any other employee to contribute time, money, or services to a political candidate or campaign. Senior level, civil service, and other employees must observe [additional distinct restrictions](#) in performing any political activities.

Post Employment Restrictions

Certain officials in top level executive positions are prohibited from engaging in specified restricted activities for a period of one or two years following their employment. Much like other ethics requirements, these are related to preventing conflicts of interest. When leaving employment, officials subject to these restrictions will be informed about specific restricted activities.

Work Schedules and Attendance

The administrative offices of the commonwealth open and close as approved by the Executive Board. Employees are required to be at work, be punctual, obtain prior approval of leave use, report unscheduled absences in a timely manner, and comply with requests for medical statements, leave requests, or any other necessary documentation.

The standard workweek is 37.5 hours. However, employees assigned to shifts in 24-hour operations may in some cases have a 40-hour workweek if approved by OA.

In accordance with applicable labor agreements, agencies may establish work schedules that vary from the standard schedules. These must be approved by OA. An alternate work schedule must result in an improvement in operational efficiency and/or client service, except when the schedule is required for an individual as a reasonable accommodation pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Office Closings

At times, offices may close for emergencies or other reasons. Only the Secretary of Administration has the authority to approve office closings for the Harrisburg area, and the Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Scranton and Reading state office buildings. Agency heads may authorize heads of field offices outside of those areas and buildings to close due to hazardous road conditions, emergency circumstances, and other conditions. All office closings must be reported to OA. For questions or to coordinate any office closing, OA is available to provide assistance at 717.787.9872.

Equal Employment Opportunity

The commonwealth is proud to be an equal opportunity employer, supporting work force diversity. Agencies must ensure that each work site is free from discrimination and sexual harassment. The policy prohibits all agencies under the Governor's jurisdiction from discriminating against any commonwealth employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religious creed, ancestry, union membership, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, disability, and AIDS or HIV status. Each agency implements policies and practices that ensure all employees and applicants receive equal opportunities in recruitment, hiring, promotion, training and all benefits and privileges of employment. Each agency designates an equal opportunity officer to receive and process EEO complaints and a disability services coordinator to receive and process disability accommodation requests.

Enforcement

Enforcement of policies and work rules is a critical part of supervising all or part of an agency workforce. Civil service rules and labor agreements impact how discipline must be carried out.

Employee discipline should be determined on an individual basis, taking into account the seriousness of the offense, the relationship of the offense to the employee's work, the effect of the offense on the public's trust in state government, and the employee's work record with the commonwealth. Discipline should be corrective and, where appropriate, progressive in nature and designed to encourage the employee to conform to established standards of performance or conduct.

Consult your agency HR office before disciplining employees. The HR staff is knowledgeable of relevant labor agreements, court cases and arbitration, and laws and regulations which can have an impact on successful implementation of discipline.

Employee Development

Performance Evaluations

A standardized employee performance review (EPR) is used for most employees. Employees must be evaluated annually and receive a progress review midway through the year. Agency heads can establish a single rating cycle for the entire agency or different rating cycles for organizational units within the agency.

EPRs should be completed within 30 calendar days of the end of the rating cycle by supervisors familiar with employee work performance. Each evaluation is reviewed and signed by the immediate supervisor (reviewing officer) of the supervisor (rater) who completed the EPR. This review is to ensure that performance standards are consistently applied to positions of a similar nature and are consistent with overall

agency standards and work expectations.

Interim performance reviews

An interim performance review is an evaluation conducted outside of the normal rating cycle. Interim performance reviews should be completed if:

- the employee's work performance or work assignments change significantly;
- there is a change in an employee's supervisor (the preceding supervisor should prepare the rating prior to departure);
- an overall rating of unsatisfactory was given in the last evaluation and the employee was retained; or
- at any other time during the rating period when performance is not satisfactory.

Interim ratings also are provided to non-civil service non-union represented employees within six months of being hired or promoted.

Unsatisfactory performance

Many options exist for managing an employee who does not perform their duties satisfactorily. You should consult your agency HR office to determine the best approach that complies with labor agreements, requirements, and procedures.

Training

Agencies and OA provide a series of mandatory trainings for all employees as well as training on specific commonwealth policies and skills likely to be necessary for employees to perform their jobs effectively. You can learn about training opportunities for you and your staff through your agency HR office and online at lms.state.pa.us.

The commonwealth's fiscal circumstances demand a prudent approach to consideration and approval of out-service training. Whenever possible, agencies should seek to use internal resources and alternative approaches.

Additional Opportunities to Learn about HR

Your agency and OA offer trainings on HR and related topics for managers and supervisors. Intended to help you better understand critical personnel management processes, many of these are required for all new supervisors. To find a schedule of OA course offerings visit www.oa.state.pa.us/training or ask your agency HR office.

Further details and many human resource documents can also be found at www.oa.state.pa.us.