

CITY OF PORTSMOUTH
ADMINISTRATIVE PROGRAM

P1

October 1999

SUBJECT: Employee Assistance Program

GENERAL:

The City of Portsmouth is committed to good employee relations and high performance. The City recognizes that an employee's well-being directly affects job satisfaction and productivity. It is not the desire of the City to become directly involved with employees' personal matters; however, it is understood that when such issues are left unattended, poor performance and unacceptable work behavior often occurs.

Personal matters may include financial, family, marital, substance abuse, psychological, legal, or health problems. The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) has been developed to assist supervisors and employees in resolving unacceptable work performance which may be caused by personal and/or health matters.

The Employee Assistance Program consists of confidential assessment and referral to appropriate helping facilities by professional staff. The program is designed to provide effective methods of intervention to help employees and their families with personal matters which may affect or have affected their work performance.

The EAP's focus is to aid employees, first in recognizing issues which affect job performance, and second in obtaining assistance for these issues before further deterioration of their situation makes them unemployable.

ELIGIBILITY:

All active City employees and their families, and the Constitutional officers, their employees and families are eligible to participate in the Employee Assistance Program.

STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY:

SUCCESSFUL HANDLING OF PERSONAL MATTERS REQUIRES STRICT CONFIDENTIAL MANAGEMENT OF EACH CASE. ALL RECORDS, CONTACTS AND REFERRALS WILL BE TREATED IN A STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL MANNER TO ENSURE THAT THE EMPLOYEE'S ACCEPTANCE OF HELP WILL NOT AFFECT FUTURE EMPLOYMENT. DEPARTMENT HEADS WILL ENSURE THAT NO EMPLOYEE WILL HAVE EITHER JOB SECURITY OR PROMOTIONAL OPPORTUNITY JEOPARDIZED SOLELY DUE TO REFERRAL FOR ASSESSMENT AND TREATMENT THROUGH THE EAP.

Violation of confidentiality is a Second Group Offense and corrective action should be taken in accordance with the City's Employee Standards of Conduct.

PROCEDURES FOR REFERRALS TO THE EAP:

Employees may be referred to the program in any of the following ways:

VOLUNTARY SELF REFERRAL

Definition: An employee refers himself/herself to the EAP.

Procedure: The employee contacts the EAP Coordinator and makes an appointment.

Records: All communication between the employee and the EAP Coordinator will be held in confidence. Information will be released only with written permission of the employee and only to individuals designated by the employee.

INFORMAL SUPERVISORY REFERRAL

Definition: Employees are referred by supervision when work performance declines or when the employee is involved in a job-related incident which may indicate the presence of a personal matter. Employees are encouraged by supervision to contact the EAP Coordinator.

Procedure: The supervisor will conduct an interview with the employee to discuss work performance or the incident. The supervisor should not attempt to determine the nature of or handle any personal matter. During this interview, the supervisor will advise the employee to seek help on a confidential basis through the EAP. The employee may accept or reject the offer of services. In either case, the supervisor should continue job performance evaluation and/or disciplinary action as needed.

THE EMPLOYEE'S PERSONAL MATTERS SHOULD NOT BE DISCUSSED WITH OTHERS. The employee contacts the EAP Coordinator and makes an appointment.

Records: All communication between the employee and the EAP Coordinator will be held in confidence. Information will be released only with written permission of the employee and only to individuals designated by the employee.

FORMAL SUPERVISORY REFERRAL

Definition: A formal supervisory referral to the Employee Assistance Program may be utilized in conjunction with normal disciplinary action and/or for any of the following circumstances:

1. Continued decline in job performance after normal disciplinary action.
2. Continued job-related incidents after normal disciplinary action.
3. Single serious job-related incident.
4. Poor job performance was not corrected after an informal supervisory referral was made.

The EAP is to be used as a tool to assist the supervisor and the employee in taking steps to improve the employee's work performance.

A FORMAL REFERRAL TO THE EAP SHOULD BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH AND NOT IN PLACE OF DISCIPLINARY ACTION.

Procedure: The supervisor will interview the employee with written documentation of poor work performance, an incident report and/or the Notice of Disciplinary Action. The supervisor should not attempt to determine the specific nature of or handle the personal matter. During this interview, the supervisor will direct the employee to seek assistance through the EAP and will complete the appropriate EAP referral form and will make the appointment with the EAP Coordinator for the employee. Forms are available from the EAP Coordinator or the Human Resource Management Department. The employee may accept or reject the referral. Should the employee accept the referral, the employee may be assisted in avoiding future problematic situations. However, if the employee refuses to accept the referral, this refusal may be grounds for further disciplinary action due to the employee's failure to follow supervisor's instructions. The supervisor should continue job performance evaluation and/or disciplinary action as indicated. **THE EMPLOYEE'S PERSONAL MATTERS SHOULD NOT BE DISCUSSED WITH OTHERS.**

Records: A formal referral is a direct result of an employee's poor job performance and may involve disciplinary action. Documentation must be kept to show an offer of assistance was made. The supervisor will document the offer of services to the EAP by completing the EAP referral form. **A COPY OF THIS DOCUMENTATION,**

INDICATING FORMAL REFERRAL TO THE EAP FOR AN EVALUATION, WILL BE KEPT IN THE EMPLOYEE'S PERSONNEL RECORD. NO OTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE EAP, INCLUDING THE RESULTS OF THE EVALUATION AND/OR RECOMMENDED TREATMENT, WILL BE KEPT IN THE EMPLOYEE'S PERSONNEL RECORD. Records pertaining to disciplinary action relating to job performance and the Employee Standard of Conduct will continue to be stored in the employee's personnel file. The supervisor will send the original of the referral form to the EAP Coordinator. The following information will be made available to the supervisor making a formal referral:

1. The employee kept or did not keep the appointment with the EAP Coordinator.
2. The referral was or was not necessary at that time;
3. A referral for treatment/assistance was made by the EAP Coordinator and was accepted or rejected by the employee; or
4. The employee did or did not complete the EAP including recommended treatment/assistance.

NO OTHER INFORMATION WILL BE RELEASED UNLESS WRITTEN PERMISSION IS GIVEN BY THE EMPLOYEE.

APPLICATION OF STANDARDS OF CONDUCT: Participation in the EAP or treatment/assistance will not serve as a substitute for the existing Standards of Conduct. Supervisors need to continue to document poor performance and take corrective disciplinary action regardless of whether or not the EAP is utilized. Normal disciplinary action or termination shall be adhered to should job performance continue to be unacceptable.

USE OF LEAVE:

Voluntary Referrals: Approved sick leave, annual leave, or leave without pay may be used for appointments with the EAP Coordinator and treatment/assistance services when such appointments cannot be scheduled for non-working hours.

Informal Supervisory and Formal Supervisory Referrals:

These referrals to the EAP Coordinator will be considered as a job assignment. The employee is to be given time off during work hours to attend a scheduled assessment appointment with the EAP Coordinator. For further appointments with the EAP Coordinator and treatment/assistance services, approved sick leave, annual leave, leave without pay, or appointments on the employee's own time may be used.

Frequency and duration of appointments are matters of consideration when authorizing leave.

COST OF SERVICES: Cost for the assessment interview and follow-up interviews with the EAP will be borne by the City of Portsmouth. In the event an employee is referred to treatment services, the cost may be paid through the employee's health benefit program or by the employee. The EAP Coordinator will advise the employee of the anticipated cost and possible avenues of payment for such treatment before the referral is made.

Note---Positive Drug Test:

Departments are required to provide any CDL employee testing positive under the Alcohol, Illegal Drugs, and other Controlled Substance policy with our EAP information. There is also an available a list of resources which can provide assistance to individuals with substance abuse problems. This list is available in the Human Resource Management Department and should be posted in your department. This is a requirement of the U.S. Department of Transportation/Federal Highway Administration.