

**BONNEVILLE POWER ADMINISTRATION  
HUMAN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT  
Portland, Oregon**

**PERSONNEL LETTER (PL): 312-1 (Revised)      DATE:** September 17, 2008

**SUBJECT:** Establishing Team Leader Positions and Assigning Team Leader Duties

**PURPOSE**

This Personnel Letter –

- Describes BPA policy and guidance regarding establishing GS team leader positions.
- It also describes policy and guidance for assigning “team leader” duties (either temporarily or permanently and regardless of whether it results in formal designation as a team leader) to annual employees who provide such leadership to other annual employees.
- Supersedes PL 312-1 dated May 9, 2003.

**POLICY SUMMARY**

It is BPA policy that team leader positions or assigning team leader duties be used (or done) to assist a performance manager in providing day-to-day direction and assistance to a work unit’s employees. It is not appropriate for such positions or duties to be used as a means to relieve a supervisor or manager of his/her responsibility and accountability for carrying out their performance manager duties.

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## I. RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. **Performance Managers** are responsible for establishing team leader positions and assigning team leader duties to employees in a manner that is consistent with the provisions of this Personnel Letter. They are also responsible for informing affected employees of the role of an employee who is assigned team leader duties and providing such team leaders with skills-building opportunities to carry out their responsibilities effectively.
- B. **Team leaders and employees who are assigned team leader duties** are responsible for carrying out such duties in a manner that is consistent with the provisions of this Personnel Letter and as delegated to them by their managers/supervisors.

## II. PRINCIPLES FOR ESTABLISHING TEAM LEADER POSITIONS AND ASSIGNING TEAM LEADER DUTIES

- A. An employee with team leader duties is not a performance manager. The purpose of assigning team leader duties is for the employee assigned such duties to *assist* the performance manager in providing direction to a work unit's employees, including serving as a "technical" leader. The purpose is not to relieve a performance manager of the responsibility and accountability for providing full-scope supervision to the work unit's employees.
- B. In general for most leadership tasks, a performance manager is responsible for making and documenting *decisions* on significant workplace issues and providing necessary resources to the work unit or team. An employee with team leader duties is responsible to his or her performance manager for performing a range of coordinating and supportive duties to assure that the unit's or team's work is accomplished.
- C. A decision to assign team leader duties should be based upon sound position management considerations, which include:
  - 1. The span of control for the performance manager--the larger the span of control, the more need there may be for additional assistance in providing leadership to the employees or a team of employees in the work unit.
  - 2. The type of work led--the greater the complexity of the work and the greater the need for coordination (either among employees in the work unit or with another entity), the more need there may be to assign team leader duties.

3. The costs versus the benefits--consideration of the benefits should be weighed against potentially higher costs if a team leader position would be placed at a higher grade as a result of the team leader's duties.
- D. A decision to assign team leader duties should not be made for the purpose of enabling a performance manager to allocate increased time to personal performance of technical work.
  - E. A team leader position should normally not be established if the incumbent would need to spend all or nearly all (e.g., 75 percent or more) of his/her time performing team leader duties. If the percentage of time approaches these levels, consideration should be given to whether an additional performance manager position should be created or a change in organization structure is necessary.

### **III. PERMISSIBLE AND INAPPROPRIATE TEAM LEADER DUTIES**

The range of duties associated with team leadership can vary widely and some may overlap typical supervisory functions. Leadership and supervision can be viewed as points along a continuum from non-supervisory to managerial work. Supervisory work includes both the people-management duties that BPA refers to as performance manager duties, as well as other supervisory duties, for instance, direction of employees that is technical in nature, cost management, etc. It is not appropriate for team leader duties to be assigned as a means to relieve supervisors or managers of their responsibility and accountability for carrying out their performance manager duties. Therefore, the Appendix lists both permissible and inappropriate team leader duties. The list of permissible duties is not exhaustive; consequently, team leaders may perform other similar duties. The list of inappropriate duties reflects those that are to be performed by performance managers and are not to be assigned as team leader duties.

### **IV. INFORMING EMPLOYEES OF THE ROLE OF AN EMPLOYEE ASSIGNED TEAM LEADER DUTIES**

When team leader duties are assigned, it is important that all employees who will receive assistance from the team leader be informed of the team leader's responsibilities and how that relates to the performance manager's responsibilities. Therefore, in order to minimize any confusion, performance managers should provide such information to all affected employees.

## **V. SKILLS-BUILDING FOR EMPLOYEES WITH TEAM LEADER DUTIES**

Performing team leader duties can require skills that an employee may not possess. Performance managers should assess the need for any skills building and assist the employee. Such assistance might be in the form of classroom training or some form of coaching.

## **VI. RELATIONSHIP OF TEAM LEADER POSITIONS TO BARGAINING UNIT STATUS**

The range of duties associated with team leadership can vary widely and some may overlap typical supervisory functions. However, although team leader positions assist performance managers in providing day-to-day direction and assistance to employees, it should not be assumed that they are automatically excluded from a bargaining unit. The definition of a supervisor for labor relations' purposes (to determine if the position is excluded from a bargaining unit) is unique and addressed separately in the law. The determination of bargaining unit status is based on labor relations case law rather than classification standards and guides issued by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). Refer to PL 296-1 for more information.

## **VII. RELATIONSHIP TO CLASSIFICATION OF TEAM LEADER POSITIONS**

The purpose of this Personnel Letter is not to address proper classification titling and grading. The range of duties associated with team leadership can vary widely, subject to the provisions of this Personnel Letter. While some positions may qualify to be titled as a Lead Position, others will not. In addition, the scope of this Personnel Letter addresses situations in which team leader duties are assigned to an employee on a temporary as well as a permanent basis. Classification determinations are not related to the substance of this Personnel Letter; instead, refer to the General Schedule Leader Grade Evaluation Guide published by OPM.

## **VIII. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEAM LEADER DUTIES AND BEING ASSIGNED TO "ACT" FOR THE PERFORMANCE MANAGER**

The lists of permissible and inappropriate team leader duties in the Appendix address situations in which an employee is carrying out duties in a team leader capacity. Therefore, the provisions of this Personnel Letter do not affect management's ability to assign an employee the responsibility for "acting" as a supervisor/manager in the absence of the regular supervisor/manager.

**IX. REFERENCES**

- General Schedule Leader Grade Evaluation Guide, published by the Office of Personnel Management, June 1998.
- Personnel Letter 296-1, Bargaining Unit Coverage Determinations

Roy B. Fox  
Chief Human Capital Officer

Attachment A - Guidance on Permissible and Inappropriate Team Leader Duties

## Attachment A - Guidance on Permissible and Inappropriate Team Leader Duties

<b>PERMISSIBLE TEAM LEADER DUTIES</b>	<b>INAPPROPRIATE TEAM LEADER DUTIES (INSTEAD, THESE ARE PERFORMANCE MANAGER DUTIES)</b>
Communicate and explain the work group's goals and integrate the goals into strategies, work plans, and work products. Enable employees to participate in opportunities to plan for achievement of work goals.	Establish goals for the work group.
Communicate assignments, problems to be solved, and deadlines for completion. As delegated by the performance manager, identify, distribute, and balance tasks among employees in accordance with established work flow and employee skill levels, and make adjustments to accomplish workload in accordance with established priorities to ensure accomplishment within assigned deadlines. Coordinate work among employees.	Identify major assignments, projects, and problems to be solved for the work group, as well as deadlines for completion. Decide the assignment of tasks to individuals when needed to respond to problems that cannot be resolved among employees, including the team leader, and when the performance of any individual employee is below the successful level.
Discuss the status and progress of work with employees, and review completed work against established priorities, deadlines, and other performance expectations. Provide information on such matters to employees.	Provide formal feedback to employees regarding performance.
Provide technical direction and review to employees. Coach employees in assessing strengths/weaknesses and provide leadership in exploring alternatives and identifying needed improvements. Coach employees in the selection and application of appropriate problem solving methods and techniques. Provide advice on work methods, practices, and procedures; and assist employees in identifying potential solutions. Build consensus among employees.	Provide direction to employees and facilitate group discussion when conflict exists within the group that cannot be resolved among employees, including the team leader.
Provide on-the-job training to employees or arrange for intra-unit training needed to accomplish tasks. Provide input to performance manager on training needs.	Establish Individual Development Plans, approve formal training, and approve developmental assignments outside of employee's regular duties or work unit.
Provide available policies and procedures, as well as instructions from the performance manager and respond to questions on the same.	Establish workplace policies for the work group and issue supplemental instructions as needed.
Maintain or guide the maintenance of appropriate program and project files and relevant background information, and the preparation and presentation of reports and related administrative information.	Establish record-keeping and reporting requirements for the work unit

<b>PERMISSIBLE TEAM LEADER DUTIES</b>	<b>INAPPROPRIATE TEAM LEADER DUTIES (INSTEAD, THESE ARE PERFORMANCE MANAGER DUTIES)</b>
Report to the performance manager on group and individual work accomplishments, problems, and progress in mastering tasks and work processes. Attend formal meetings between an employee and the performance manager regarding the employees' performance (this is done only if agreed to by both the employee and the performance manager).	Serve as a Rating Official in establishing performance plans, conducting formal progress reviews, assigning ratings, initiating formal and informal actions to improve employee performance, and initiating performance-based personnel actions. Solicit performance feedback on employees from others.
Represent the findings and recommendations of the employees in dealings with other team leaders, management officials, and clients/customers.	Manage conflict or boundary issues between work groups that cannot be resolved by employees or a team leader.
Approve paid time off and excused absence for short absences of 1 day or less.	Disapprove paid time off and excused absence requests of 1 day or less. Approve/disapprove paid time off and excused absence requests of more than 1 day. Cancel leave that was previously approved.
Approve earning of credit hours and overtime, as delegated by the performance manager.	Resolve any disputes regarding earning of credit hours and overtime. Restrict or deny use of flexischedule privileges.
Attempt to resolve employee concerns and informal complaints. Refer issues that are not readily resolved to the performance manager, including any formal complaints.	Resolve informal complaints that were addressed but not resolved by the team leader. Respond to and handle grievances and formal complaints.
Provide coaching to employees when interpersonal difficulties among team employees are observed. Provide input regarding inappropriate behavior/conduct of employees to the performance manager (but do not attend any meeting between an employee and the performance manager regarding misconduct or discipline).	Counsel employees on behavior/conduct. Investigate conduct-related issues. Initiate disciplinary action when appropriate.
Provide input to performance manager on classification-related matters (e.g., duties performed, level of independence, etc.).	Discuss classification-related matters with an employee. Conduct needed discussions with others, including personnel staff.
Provide advice and recommendations for awards and recognition for employees to the performance manager.	Approve/disapprove awards and recognition, consistent with BPA delegations.
Assist performance manager in orienting new BPA employees to BPA policies, practices, services, and facilities.	Assume overall responsibility for orienting new BPA employees to BPA policies, practices, services, and facilities.
Provide advice and recommendations to the performance manager on employee requests for changes in work schedules, use of Flexi-place, and other similar decisions to be made by the performance manager.	Consistent with BPA delegations, approve/disapprove employee requests for changes in work schedules, use of flexi-place, and other similar employee requests.