

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

PERSONNEL LETTER NO (PL): 315-1

DATE: September 18, 2008

SUBJECT: Probation Period for New Managers and Supervisors

PURPOSE

This Personnel Letter -

- Establishes policy and procedures for administering the probationary period for new managers and supervisors.

- Supersedes Personnel Letter 315-1 dated July 20, 1998.

POLICY SUMMARY

It is BPA policy to require all employees permanently assigned to supervisory or managerial positions to satisfactorily complete a probationary period. BPA may by regulation provide an exception to the probationary period for managers who have satisfactorily completed a probationary period for supervisors when justified on the basis of performance and experience. Time served as a supervisor does not exempt an employee from probation in a subsequent managerial position.

I. DEFINITIONS

Managerial/Supervisory Positions:

Managerial and supervisory positions are those responsible for directing the work of groups, are held accountable for the success of staff, monitor and evaluate their progress toward meeting organizational goals, and make adjustments in objectives, work plans, schedules, and commitment of success.

Supervisor/Managerial Probationary Periods:

The probationary period is the first year of service as a newly appointed supervisor or manager in the competitive service.

II. RESPONSIBILITIES

A. The Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO), through his/her Human Capital Management (HCM) staff:

1. Provides advisory services on the requirements and administration of the probationary period.
2. Conducts reviews to evaluate program effectiveness.
3. Determines whether new supervisors and managers are subject to a probationary period. This includes implementing and maintaining appropriate documentation.
4. Coordinates with the appropriate manager on the development of managers and supervisors.
5. Coordinates with management on placement of employees who do not satisfactorily complete probationary periods.
6. Advises and assists management in removing probationary supervisors and managers from their positions for failure to satisfactorily complete probationary periods.

B. Supervisors and Managers:

1. Provide the new supervisor or manager with a full and fair opportunity to demonstrate his/her capacity to perform satisfactorily as a supervisor or manager.
2. Orient the new supervisor or manager to his/her work environment and job assignments, and provide expectations, guidance, and formal and/or informal training to assist the employee in developing his/her skills, knowledge and abilities to perform effectively as a supervisor or manager.
3. Observe the employee's conduct and performance as a supervisor or manager and discuss his/her progress at frequent intervals.
4. Complete the required 2-month and 10-month supervisory reports as prescribed in Section IV.
5. In consultation with the HCM Employee Relations staff, takes timely action to return an employee to a non-supervisory/non-managerial position if he/she demonstrates during the probationary period that his/her performance, conduct, or capacity does not suit him/her for satisfactory service as a supervisor or manager.

III. SERVICE CREDITED TOWARD PROBATIONARY PERIOD

- A. **Length of Probationary Period:** An employee must serve a probationary period of 12 continuous months upon initial assignment to a permanent supervisory and/or managerial position.
- B. **Creditable Service:** Service in a supervisory or managerial position will be credited as directed in 5 CFR, Part 315, Subpart I. Time served as a supervisor does not exempt an employee from probation in a subsequent managerial position.
- C. **Transfer Employees:** Employees transferring from other Federal agencies who submit documentation of satisfactory completion of a managerial or supervisory probationary period for which they are appointed may not be required to serve a new probationary period.
- D. **Temporary Assignment:** A temporary assignment to a supervisory or managerial position that immediately precedes an appointment to a permanent supervisory or managerial position, may count towards the completion of the supervisory or managerial probationary period as long as:
 - 1. The individual was officially assigned to the position (e.g., a temporary promotion, temporary assignment);
 - 2. The temporary assignment was in excess of 120 days;
 - 3. There was no break between the temporary and the permanent assignment; and
 - 4. The temporary supervisory/managerial duties during the temporary assignment were satisfactorily performed.

IV. DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

A Personnel Action Request (SF-50) to place an employee into a supervisory or managerial position for the first time includes appropriate remarks to document the employee's probationary period. In addition, the probationary period is documented by the 2-month and 10-months Supervisory or Managerial Probation Reports that are sent through administrative channels to the HCM and placed into the file maintained for probation reports.

Vacancy notices for supervisory and managerial positions will annotate probationary period requirements.

V. EVALUATION OF PERFORMANCE DURING PROBATIONARY PERIOD

Evaluation of supervisory or managerial performance is based only on the supervisory or managerial aspects of the position. In addition to the required 2-month and 10-month documentation, supervisors/managers of probationary employees will advise them of their progress or lack of it, and will suggest remedial actions if the employee appears to need it.

VI. FAILURE TO SATISFACTORILY COMPLETE THE PROBATIONARY PERIOD

A. **Decision and Notice of Action:** Action must be taken to return the employee to a non-supervisory/non-managerial position, if the probationary supervisor/manager demonstrates deficiencies after a reasonable trial period that makes him/her unsuitable for continued employment in the position. Such action should be taken as soon as these facts become apparent, before the probationary period expires, and in sufficient time for the probationer to be notified. If the effective date of the action is after the end of the probationary period, the termination may be subject to the full performance-based action procedures described in Personnel Letter 432-1.

The employee must be given notice in writing of the decision to return him/her to a nonsupervisory/nonmanagerial position. The memo should describe the supervisory or managerial performance that was unsatisfactory and provide sufficient factual information to describe the basis for the decision. The supervisor/manager of the probationer prepares the memo with the assistance of the Employee Relations staff. BPAM Chapter 400/700A specifies the managerial level that has been delegated the authority to reassign or demote an employee during supervisor/managerial probation.

B. **Placement and Pay Setting upon Reassignment or Demotion from Supervisory/Managerial Position:** The employee will be assigned to a position in BPA at no lower grade and pay than the one the employee left to accept the supervisory or managerial position. An employee who was demoted into a supervisory or managerial position and subsequently does not succeed because of unsatisfactory supervisory or managerial performance will be reassigned to a position at the same grade and pay as the position in which he/she was serving probation. Employees who do not satisfactorily complete their probationary period, and who are returned to their former grade, are not entitled to grade or pay retention. The highest previous rate rule does not apply to these situations.

C. **Subsequent Assignments as Supervisor or Manager:** An employee's failure to measure up to the requirements of his/her first supervisory/managerial position should not reflect upon his/her ability to fit successfully into another position with supervisory or managerial responsibilities under different circumstances.

- D. **Relation to New Employee Probationary Period (Under 5, CFR 315, Part H):** When a career-conditional probationary period and a supervisory/managerial probationary period are served concurrently, the career-conditional probationary period has precedence. Action to separate an employee who is serving probationary periods concurrently must be taken under the procedures of 5 CFR, Part 315, Subpart H (See Personnel Letter 315-2).

VII. REFERENCES

- 5 U.S.C., Chapter 33, Subchapter I, Section 3321, Competitive Service, Probationary Period
- 5 CFR Part 315, Subpart H, Probation on Initial Appointment to a Competitive Position
- 5 CFR Part 315, Subpart I, Probation on Initial Appointment to a Supervisory or Managerial Position
- 5 CFR 410, Employee Development
- 5 CFR 412, Managerial, Supervisory, and Executive Development
- 5 CFR 353, Restoration to Duty
- Office of Personnel Management (OPM), General Schedule Supervisory Guide (GSSG) of April 1998
- OPM, Job Grading Standards for Supervisors (WS) of December 1992
- BPAM Chapter 400/700A, Employee Relations Program
- BPAM Chapter 400/300A, Employment
- BPAM Chapter 400/410, Employee Development
- BPAM Chapter 400/430, Performance Appraisal
- Personnel Letter 315-2, Probationary Period for New Employees
- Personnel Letter 410-9, Bonneville Power Administration Employee Development
- MAS Handbook Chapter 9, Termination during Probationary Periods

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