DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS
111 ARMY PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20310-0111

SAMR

09 MAY 2016

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Army Policy on Requirement for a Higher Level Reviewer for the Department of the Army Civilian Employees Covered Under the Defense Performance Management and Appraisal Program

1. References:

a. Department of Defense Instruction 1400.25, Volume 431, February 4, 2016, subject: DOD Civilian Personnel Management System: Performance Management and Appraisal Program.

b. Section 430.204, Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations.

2. The purpose of this memorandum is to establish Army policy and provide guidance regarding the use of a Higher Level Reviewer (HLR) in Army for employees covered under the Defense Performance Management and Appraisal Program. The requirement and responsibilities for the use of a HLR are not required by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) for ratings except when an employee is rated Unacceptable (Level 1 rating). Reference 1a defines a "higher level reviewer" as a "senior-level management official, normally above the level of a rating official."

3. In accordance with the discretionary authority provided for under Reference 1a, it is Army's policy to use a HLR for approving all ratings (Levels 1, 3, and 5). Two tier rating levels serve as an internal organizational review contributing to organizational rating consistency and provide checks and balances for finalizing employee ratings. HLR officials are responsible for ensuring that (a) appropriate job performance standards are developed; and, (b) the workforce is aware of the Department of Defense and Department of Army core values as well as the organization's mission statements and goals that apply to the employee's performance elements. Additionally, Supervisors (typically the Rating Official) will communicate the performance plan and the final rating to the employee after approval by the HLR.

4. However, an exception to the above policy for two tier rating chain is required if a management official, who could be both the HLR and the Rating Official, is the highest rating official in an organization or at a location. For example, the Commander of an Installation can be the Rating Official and HLR for his/her immediate staff

(e.g., administrative support) while a Director, at the same activity, could be both the HLR and the rating officials for his/her organizational entity. All requests for exceptions must be supported by sufficient rationale to justify the request and must be submitted to the ASA (M&RA), ATTN: DASA-CP, for approval. Each exception to policy will be approved on a case-by-case basis.

5. Covered employees should be made aware of all rating officials involved in the planning and evaluating of their performance. I request that you ensure obligations to labor unions are coordinated, if applicable, before implementing any changes to the Defense Performance Management and Appraisal Program.

6. The points of contact for additional guidance are Ms. Constance B. Ray, of my office, 703 695-5149, DSN 225-5149, constance.b.ray2.civ@mail.mil and Ms. Bonnie W. Roberts, OAG-1CP, 703 806-3886, DSN 656-3886, bonnie.w.roberts.civ@mail.mil.

DEBRA S. WADA

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