



# Defense Health Agency

## ADMINISTRATIVE INSTRUCTION

NUMBER 055  
May 24, 2018

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J-1/, HRD

SUBJECT: Probationary Period for Newly Appointed Managers and Supervisors

References: See Enclosure 1.

1. **PURPOSE.** This Defense Health Agency-Administrative Instruction (DHA-AI), based on the authority of References (a) and (b), and in accordance with the guidance of References (c) through (f):

a. Establishes the Defense Health Agency's (DHA) procedures for the administration of probationary periods to be served by individuals newly appointed to managerial or supervisory positions.

b. Updates and cancels Reference (h).

2. **APPLICABILITY.** This DHA-AI applies to all DHA personnel to include: assigned, attached, or detailed Service members, federal civilians, and other personnel assigned temporary or permanent duties at DHA, to include regional and field activities (remote locations) and the National Capital Region Medical Directorate (NCR MD) activities (centers, clinics, and Medical Treatment Facilities). This DHA-AI does not apply to DHA civilian employees who are members of the Senior Executive Service, members of the Uniformed Services, or contractors.

3. **POLICY IMPLEMENTATION.** It is DHA's policy, pursuant to Reference (d), that:

a. Vacant supervisory or managerial positions are filled with the best qualified candidates available from within or outside DHA.

b. The probationary period is used to allow newly appointed supervisors and managers an opportunity to develop the unique skills and abilities that cannot be readily taught or developed in alternate positions.

c. The probationary period is used by DHA management officials to assess a new appointee's supervisory or managerial performance (not technical ability or program knowledge).

4. RESPONSIBILITIES. See Enclosure 2.

5. PROCEDURES. See Enclosure 3.

6. RELEASABILITY. **Not cleared for public release.** This DHA-AI is available to users with Common Access Card authorization on the DHA SharePoint site at:  
<http://www.health.mil/dhapublications>.

7. EFFECTIVE DATE. This DHA-AI:

a. Is effective upon signature.

b. Will expire 10 years from the date of signature if it has not been reissued or cancelled before this date in accordance with DHA-Procedural Instruction 5025.01 (Reference (c)).



R. C. BONO  
VADM, MC, USN  
Director

Enclosures

1. References
2. Responsibilities
3. Procedures

Glossary

ENCLOSURE 1

REFERENCES

- (a) DoD Directive 5136.01, “Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs (ASD(HA)),” September 30, 2013, as amended
- (b) DoD Directive 5136.13, “Defense Health Agency (DHA),” September 30, 2013
- (c) DHA-Procedural Instruction 5025.01, “Publication System,” August 21, 2015
- (d) Code of Federal Regulations, Title 5
- (e) Office of Personnel Management Guide, “General Schedule Supervisory Guide,” June 1998
- (f) Office of Personnel Management Guide, “Federal Wage System Job Grading Standard for Supervisors,” December 1992
- (g) DoD Instruction 1400.25, Volume 771, “DoD Civilian Personnel Management System: Administrative Grievance System,” December 26, 2013
- (h) TRICARE Management Activity-Administrative Instruction 055, “Probationary Period for Newly Appointed Managers and Supervisors,” February 22, 2013 (hereby cancelled)

ENCLOSURE 2

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. DIRECTOR, DHA. The Director, DHA, will oversee the implementation of this DHA-AI.
  
2. DEPUTY ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (DAD), ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT (J-1), DHA. The DAD, Administration and Management (J-1), DHA, will oversee implementation of this DHA-AI.
  
3. DADs. The DADs will follow and ensure that their respective directorates adhere to the procedures established in Enclosure 3.
  
4. CHIEF, HUMAN RESOURCES DIVISION (HRD), DHA. The Chief, HRD, DHA, under the authority, direction, and control of the DAD, Administration and Management (J-1), DHA, (with the exception of the NCR MD, which includes Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Fort Belvoir Community Hospital, and the Joint Pathology Center) will identify, within DHA, managerial and supervisory positions in the General Schedule and the Federal Wage System.
  
5. CHIEF, HUMAN RESOURCES OPERATIONS (HR OPS) (except for NCR MD). The Chief, HR OPS (except for NCR MD), will:
  - a. Determine if an employee is required to serve either a supervisory or a managerial probationary period. He/she will notify the employee and the supervisor, in writing, of the requirement or non-requirement to serve an appropriate probationary period.
  
  - b. Process Standard Form (SF) 52, Request for Personnel Action (RPA), with required remarks, and notify employees of their requirement to serve a supervisory or managerial probationary period and its duration.
  
  - c. Process SF 52, RPA, in coordination with the Management Employee and Labor Relations Branch, to remove an employee from a supervisory or managerial position, if supervisory or managerial probation was not satisfactorily completed.
  
  - d. Coordinate actions to reassign, demote, or separate an employee for failure to satisfactorily complete the supervisory or managerial probationary period.

ENCLOSURE 3

PROCEDURES

1. REQUIREMENTS FOR APPOINTMENT

a. On initial appointment to a supervisory position, an employee is required to complete a probationary period of 1 year. An employee who previously completed a probationary period in a managerial position is exempt from this requirement.

b. On initial appointment to a managerial position, an employee is required to complete a separate probationary period of 1 year. The separate probationary period for managers may be waived if an employee has satisfactorily completed a probationary period for supervisors and if such exemption is justified by substantiating documentation of the employee's performance and experience.

c. An employee whose initial appointment to a position that is both supervisory and managerial is required to complete a single probationary period of 1 year.

2. REQUIREMENTS FOR IMMEDIATE SUPERVISOR. The Immediate Supervisor will:

a. Establish written performance standards for evaluation of probationers, and communicate these to the employee on initial appointment to the position.

b. Advise and assist the employee on the successful accomplishment of assigned duties and responsibilities of the position.

c. Provide the new supervisor or manager adequate time to prove himself/herself, and direct efforts to help the employee succeed.

d. Conduct performance discussions during the probationary period, and prepare a written record of the discussions to assist in completing the employee's final appraisal.

e. Ensure that an employee selected for first-level supervisory positions receives the appropriate training.

f. Ensure that all employees selected for supervisory or managerial positions are scheduled for specific skills training required for successful accomplishment of their positions.

g. Determine if the employee is to continue in the position after a full and fair evaluation of the employee's performance.

h. Advise the appropriate human resources business partner no later than 60 days before the

completion date of the probationary period, if the employee's performance is satisfactory.

i. Terminate the probationary period as soon as possible after determining that the employee lacks the necessary supervisory or managerial knowledge, skills, or abilities required for the successful accomplishment of the position. This determination may be made at any time during the probationary period.

j. Provide sufficient documentary evidence to the Management Employee and Labor Relations Branch to support the decision to return the employee to a non-supervisory or non-managerial position, except for NCR MD.

k. Coordinate actions involved in submitting the SF 52, RPA, to the appropriate business partner or HR specialist, on:

(1) All final decisions to return an employee to a non-supervisory or non-managerial position.

(2) Notification to an employee, in writing, stating the reasons for his or her return to a non-supervisory or non-managerial position.

(3) The return of an employee to a non-supervisory or non-managerial position for reasons related to supervisory or managerial performance in accordance with this DHA-AI.

### 3. CREDITING SERVICE TOWARD COMPLETION OF THE PROBATIONARY PERIOD.

Creditable service in a supervisory or managerial position that is interrupted during the probationary period is creditable toward completion of a probationary period as detailed in this section.

a. An employee who is reassigned, transferred, or promoted to another supervisory or managerial position is subject to the probationary period prescribed for the new position. Probationary service in the former position counts toward completion of the probationary period prescribed for the new position. If the former position was supervisory, and the new position is managerial, the service counts in the manner prescribed by the Chief, HRD, DHA.

b. Service on detail, temporary promotion, or reassignment to another supervisory or managerial position, while serving probation, is creditable toward completion of probation. Service in a non-supervisory or non-managerial position is not creditable.

c. An absence in a non-pay status, while on the payroll (other than for compensable injury or military duty), is creditable up to 22 workdays. Absence (whether on or off payroll) due to compensable injury in military duty is creditable in full upon restoration to Federal Service. Any non-pay time exceeding 22 workdays extends the probationary period by an equal amount.

d. Absence, whether on or off the payroll, due to compensable injury or military duty, for which the employee is entitled to restoration, in accordance with Reference (d), is creditable in full.

e. When an employee serving probation, in accordance with this DHA-AI, is temporarily placed in another supervisory or managerial position (e.g., by detail, temporary appointment, temporary promotion, or reassignment), the temporary service is creditable toward completion of the probationary period.

f. The probationary service of an employee who is separated or demoted, in accordance with Reference (d), or is placed in a non-supervisory or non-managerial position for deficiencies in supervisory or managerial performance does not count toward the completion of probation required by a subsequent appointment.

g. When there is a break in service (other than for cause) of more than 1 year during a probationary period, the employee must begin a new probationary period.

(1) Temporary service in a supervisory or managerial position under a temporary appointment, promotion, or reassignment will be credited as provided in paragraph 3.e of this enclosure. Prior service, while on detail, may be credited only when a detail to a supervisory or managerial position is made permanent without a break.

(2) Time spent during temporary placement (e.g., detail, temporary promotion, or reassignment) to a non-supervisory position is not creditable toward completion of probation.

(3) Service in a supervisory or managerial position under Veterans Recruitment Appointment is creditable upon the employee's conversion to a supervisory position in the competitive service.

#### 4. FAILURE TO COMPLETE THE PROBATIONARY PERIOD

##### a. General

(1) Satisfactory completion of the probationary period is a prerequisite to continuation in the supervisory or managerial position. If the evaluation of the employee's performance reveals deficiencies in supervisory or managerial performance, the employee will be returned or reassigned to a non-supervisory or non-managerial position of no lower grade or pay band than the position from which he or she came. Such return is not considered an adverse action and is not appealable. The action is appealable if the employee asserts that the action was based on partisan political affiliation or marital status in accordance with Reference (d).

(2) The return of an employee to a non-supervisory or non-managerial position, in accordance with this DHA-AI, will not be grounds for denying the employee consideration for later assignment to another supervisory or managerial position. Position requirements and individual capabilities vary widely. Although an employee may prove to be unsuited for a

managerial or supervisory position and fail to satisfactorily complete the probationary period, the same employee may be successful and meet all the requirements for another supervisory or managerial position. Each employee is entitled to be considered accordingly.

b. Placement after Failure to Complete Probationary Period

(1) An employee in a managerial or supervisory position who does not satisfactorily complete the probationary period may be subject to:

(a) Placement in a vacant position in DHA covered by this DHA-AI at no lower grade, salary, or pay band than the employee left to accept the supervisory or managerial position. If the former position is at a higher grade than the supervisory or managerial position, re-promotion will be in accordance with current merit promotion guidance.

(b) Placement in a vacant position equal in grade, salary, or pay band to that currently held position, if appointment to the supervisory or managerial position was based on reinstatement eligibility.

(c) Separation pursuant to the procedures in accordance with Reference (d), if the appointment was made to a supervisory or managerial position from a competitive certificate.

(2) Placement will be made in consultation with the appropriate business partner (e.g., HR OPS Specialist).

c. Reassignment after Failure to Complete Probationary Period

(1) Reduction-in-force (RIF) procedures will not be used to determine the position to which the employee should be assigned.

(2) An employee who is promoted to a supervisory or managerial position and is subsequently returned to his or her former grade level is entitled to a credit toward a within-grade increase at the lower grade for the time spent at the higher grade.

(3) An employee who is returned to a lower graded position for failure to satisfactorily complete probation, pursuant to this DHA-AI, is not entitled to grade or pay retention. An employee whose entitlement to grade retention ends when promoted to a supervisory or managerial position may resume the remainder of the period of eligibility if probation is not completed, the employee is returned to the position or an equivalent position in which he or she was entitled to grade or pay retention.

(4) An employee who retroactively is placed in a supervisory or managerial position due to a complaint settlement or grievance will not be allowed credit toward probation for the retroactive period.

5. APPEALS AND GRIEVANCES

a. An action to return an employee to a non-supervisory or non-managerial position that is not lower in grade, salary, or pay band than the one the employee left to accept the supervisory or managerial position is not appealable to the Merit System Protections Board, unless the employee alleges that the action was taken based on partisan political affiliation or marital status, nor can it be grieved in accordance with Reference (g).

b. An action to demote an employee to a lower grade than the one the employee left to accept the supervisory or managerial position is governed by Reference (d), as applicable.

c. An employee serving probation has appeal rights only in accordance with Part 315 of Reference (d).

6. SYSTEMATIC TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT OF SUPERVISORS, MANAGERS, AND EXECUTIVES

a. All DHA organizations must provide for the development of individuals in supervisory, managerial, and executive positions, as well as individuals who are identified as potential candidates for those positions based on the succession plans (see Reference (d)).

b. Directorates must also issue written policies to:

(1) Design and implement leadership development programs that integrate with the employee development plans, programs, and strategies that foster a broad perspective and are in accordance with Reference (d).

(2) Provide training within 1 year of an employee's initial appointment to a supervisory, managerial, and/or executive position and follow-up periodically, at least once every 3 years, by providing each supervisor, manager, and executive additional training on the use of appropriate actions, options, and strategies to:

(a) Mentor employees.

(b) Improve employee performance and productivity.

(c) Conduct employee performance appraisals in accordance with agency appraisal systems.

(d) Identify and assist employees with unacceptable performance.

(3) Provide training when individuals undergo critical career transitions (e.g., from non-supervisory to manager or from manager to executive). The training should be consistent with assessments of the organization and the individual's needs.

GLOSSARY

PART I. ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

DAD	Deputy Assistant Director
DHA	Defense Health Agency
DHA-AI	Defense Health Agency-Administrative Instruction
HRD	Human Resources Division
HR OPS	Human Resources Operations
NCR MD	National Capital Region Medical Directorate
RIF	Reduction-in-force
RPA	Request for Personnel Action
SF	Standard Form

PART II. DEFINITIONS

These terms and their definitions are for the purposes of this DHA-AI.

competitive certificate. A list of eligibles from a register submitted to an appointing officer to consider the eligibles for appointment in accordance with Reference (d).

managerial position. The authority vested in some positions under the General Schedule that directs the work of an organizational unit and are held accountable for the success of specific line or staff functions, monitor and evaluate the progress of the organization toward meeting goals, and make adjustments in objectives, work plans, schedules, and commitment of resources. As described in Reference (d), such positions may serve as the head or the assistant head of a major organization within a bureau; or direct a specialized program of marked difficulty, responsibility, and national significance.

RIF procedures. When an agency must abolish positions, the RIF regulations determine whether an employee keeps his or her present position, or whether the employee has a right to a different position.

supervisory position. A position or employee that accomplishes tasks through the direction of other people and meets at least the minimum requirements for coverage in accordance with Reference (e), or a position that meets the criteria for a Wage Supervisor by application of the Office of Personnel Management Federal Wage System Job Grading Standard for Supervisor (see Reference (f)).