



**Special points of interest:**

- Common questions about FMLA, EAP Referrals, and Brookhaven's Alcohol Policy
- Effective Performance Appraisals
- What we can learn from ORNL's harassment complaint review

Summer 2007



BROOKHAVEN NATIONAL LABORATORY

# Leadership Connection

## Director's Message

Welcome to Brookhaven National Laboratory's news refresher for supervisors. As part of my commitment to improve management tools and communications, I'm pleased to introduce the first issue of *Leadership Connection*.

Becoming an effective supervisor is a challenge that comes with a great deal of responsibility. Aside from your technical expertise, you need a range of skills to manage staff, oversee work assignments, and perform as an agent of the Laboratory. I hope this publication will be another resource to support you in this leadership role by providing timely and relevant information.



Laboratory Director  
Sam Aronson

As supervisors, you are part of Brookhaven's leadership team and are crucial to the success of your organization's mission and the Laboratory as a whole. Supervisors are the key to ensuring that the Laboratory remains competitive by: achieving excellence in science; conducting work safely, cost efficiently, and in a legally and environmentally responsible manner; and developing a diverse, qualified, motivated, and productive workforce.

*Leadership Connection* will be published quarterly by the Human Resources Division. It will cover current issues affecting supervisors and provide answers to your submitted questions, so we can learn from each other and become stronger and more effective leaders. I encourage you to email your questions and topic suggestions for future issues to [supervisornews@bnl.gov](mailto:supervisornews@bnl.gov), so that we may all benefit and prosper from the exchange.

### Save Time, Learn More, Advance

As a Brookhaven supervisor, you have access to the Business Book Review Library. From this site, you can read and print summaries from over 700 of the most influential business books. To access this site, go to below link. No log-in or password is needed.

<http://www.businessbookreview.com/autologin/2165>

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## Increasing Your Appraisal's Value

The end of the fiscal year marks performance appraisal kickoff. You'll be alerted when the electronic appraisal system is open for business. Hopefully, you've been noting specific examples of jobs well done and areas for improvement all year long as having examples ready will not only make the process easier on you, but it will result in more effective performance discussions for everyone involved.

Effective performance management is one of the toughest and most time-consuming aspects of the supervisory role. It is also a function that directly impacts how well work is accomplished at the Laboratory. Get the most from your effort by recognizing specific achievements and setting clear improvement goals.

Performance management [classroom](#) and [web](#) courses are available. If faced with a particularly challenging discussion or topic, come meet with HR staff for help.

**“Leaders are problem solvers by talent and temperament, and by choice.”**

### Tips for Effective Performance Management

- Use specific references, dates, and examples to illustrate achievements and improvement needs.
- Be consistent and objective. Use the same standards for people in the same job.
- Don't evaluate staff too heavily on a single event or the period right before the appraisal.
- Don't blindside anyone. Nothing discussed during the appraisal meeting should be a surprise to the employee.
- Take responsibility for the appraisal rating and its content. Telling an employee that you wanted to rate them higher (or promote them), but were stopped by management or HR will only reinforce the employee's dissatisfaction. Rather than blaming the decision on someone else (whether you agree or not), help the employee to understand the reasons behind the decision.
- Personalize the appraisal. It's not appropriate for an appraisal to consist solely of an employee's self-appraisal remarks. Effective supervisors take the time to incorporate their own comments, observations, and feedback.

The appraisal documentation and meeting may be the only formal opportunity that you have with staff to focus on what and how they're doing. Your staff will notice and appreciate the effort taken to make it personal and specific—even areas for improvement. Employees want to hear what you think, and see that they are worth your time.

## Congratulations 2007 Supervisory Certificate Graduates!



## Lake Wobegon

**“If you're sincere, praise is effective. If you're insincere, it's manipulative.”**

Brookhaven supervisors have a lot in common with the residents of Lake Wobegon in that we suffer from the Lake Wobegon Effect. The Lake Wobegon Effect is the human tendency to overestimate achievements and capabilities in relation to others. It's the effect that results in most parents thinking their children are exceptional, and supervisors rating their reports as exemplary. (It also means that many of us think rather highly of ourselves as well.)

Though we think it's great that parents cherish their children as the best and the brightest, as supervisors you



need to fight the urge when rating staff performance. Though assigning staff the highest of ratings will make appraisal discussions easier on you, doing so limits the

recognition and reward available for your highest achievers. And as supervisors, you should strive to reward and retain your very top performers.

Fight the lake effect! When assigning equal ratings to staff, ask yourself:

- Do they perform equally well?
- Do they exceed expectations at the same level and frequency?
- Is there anyone (your very best performer) who should be set apart?

## Why is it adverse to be a fully qualified, effective performer?

Expected Performance (EP) – Employee meets performance expectations for a fully qualified individual at the job level.

# EP



Our EP rating has a bad reputation on site, and we want to know why, and what can be done to make this rating and/or description more accepted and palatable? Send your thoughts and suggestions to [supervisornews@bnl.gov](mailto:supervisornews@bnl.gov)



## Harassment Handling Lessons Learned from the DOE Complex

Since all supervisors at Brookhaven are required to complete sexual harassment training, if someone were to come to us with a concern, we all know how to respond appropriately, right? That's what staff at ORNL probably thought too, but a recent assessment of the events surrounding a sexual harassment case revealed critical improvement areas from which we can learn.

### Excerpts from the DOE Contracting Officer's Final Decision on the Claim/Settlement

Description of the Claim - An employee alleged that she was subjected to inappropriate slides during daily planning meetings that were held within her division over a five-month period. The claim was investigated and a settlement awarded.

**As part of a follow-up review of the handling of the claim, the following questions were asked to ensure an effective and compliant anti-harassment policy and complaint procedure.**

- Is there a clear definition of what is prohibited behavior?
- Is there assurance that the employee would be protected from retaliation?
- Is there a clearly described complaint process that provides avenues of complaint?
- Is there assurance of confidentiality for those involved to the extent possible?
- Is there a prompt, thorough, and impartial investigation process?
- Is there assurance that immediate and appropriate corrective action will be taken, if determined that harassment occurred?

**The following areas of weakness were identified in the program as a result of this follow-up review.**

- There was not significant attention, focus, or training on this subject, ensuring that employees were familiar with the policy and reporting procedure.
- There were indications that staff may have lacked confidence to raise concerns without fear of reprisal.
- There were concerns that discrimination investigations were not being conducted in a thorough or timely manner.

## Test Your Response

How confident are you in your ability, and that of your employees, to take the appropriate action if a similar concern occurred? Discuss the following questions with staff members, so that they are confident in both how they would respond, and what actions they can expect from you.

- How would you respond if you thought you were being harassed or discriminated against?
- What outlets are available to express your concerns in addition to your supervisor?
- What must a supervisor do once an employee expresses a concern?
- During an investigation and after, what expectations should involved staff have concerning anonymity, retaliation, and follow-up?



## Proper Response - Answers and Outlets for Handling Harassment Concerns

- Employees who believe that they have experienced a possible sexual harassment situation are encouraged to make it clear to the other party, either verbally or in writing, that the behavior is unwelcome and/or objectionable.
- It is the right of any employee to make a complaint that is believed to be sexual harassment. Employees should make the complaint to their supervisor, or may opt to go directly to the Diversity Manager, Employee Relations Manager, or the Director of Human Resources.
- It is the Supervisor's responsibility to notify the Diversity Manager, Employee Relations Manager, or the Director of Human Resources promptly of the complaint.
- The Supervisor needs to reinforce to the employee making the complaint that:
  - He/she will be protected from retaliation;
  - His/her confidentiality will be protected to the extent possible;
  - Immediate and impartial investigation will ensue. The Diversity Manager or the Director of Human Resources & Occupational Medicine will investigate all complaints of sexual harassment and take appropriate corrective measures, which may include disciplinary action.

### **It is a supervisor's responsibility to ensure a work environment that is free from harassment.**

Review with your staff that it is the responsibility of staff to be aware of the appropriateness of their own conduct and behavior and to respect the rights of coworkers. For more info, go to <http://www.bnl.gov/diversity/policies.asp>

## Q&A for Supervisors

Since this is the first issue, we haven't received your questions yet, but do have several that come up in supervisory training that create a lot of discussion and/or confusion, so here they are. . . .

### *Is it okay for staff to go off-site and have a beer at lunch and come back to work?*

Answer: No.

Employees, guests, and contractors can't drink any alcohol (even off-site) and report to work. Being impaired on the job is prohibited. (Yes, that means one beer.)



### *As a supervisor, can I mandate an employee to go to EAP?*

Answer: No. Supervisors can recommend that an employee go to EAP, but they can not mandate it. A mandated referral requires Human Resources approval. If you're concerned about an employee's performance, express your concern and recommend that he/she go to EAP. Stress that the service is completely confidential and available for all types of issues.

#### [EAP Assistance Available for Employees and their Family](#)

- Marital and Family Problems
- Depression, Anxiety, Stress
- Caregiver Resources - Aging Parents, Children
- Grief Counseling
- Addiction/Substance Abuse
  - (Alcohol, Drugs, Internet, Gambling, Food, Pornography)
- Legal and Financial Concerns



## Confused about the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)?

This overview of Brookhaven's FMLA procedures is provided to address some confusion out there.

### What is FMLA?

FMLA allows "eligible" employees to take job-protected, unpaid leave, (or to substitute accrued paid leave) for special circumstances.

### Who is Eligible?

Employees that have been employed by BNL for 12+ months and completed 1,250 hours of service during the 12-month period preceding the leave.

### Reasons for FMLA?

Your own serious health condition.

Birth/care of your child or placement of a child with you for adoption or foster care.

Care of a family member (child under 18) with a serious health condition who is incapable of self-care due to mental/physical disability. Family member includes your spouse, parent, child under age 18, or child 18+ (if incapable of self-care due to mental/physical disability).

### FMLA Period?

Up to 12 work weeks in a 12-month period. Leave may be taken on an intermittent basis with Laboratory approval.

### What is the Process?

- Employee must notify their supervisor and should also notify the Benefits Office of the need for FMLA leave. Supervisor may also notify the Benefits Office.
- Employee can either download the FMLA form (Certification of Health Care Provider) from the Benefits web site, or request from the Benefits Office.
- The form should be completed by the treating physician and returned to the Benefits Office (Building 400B).
- The Benefits Office will send written notification of the acceptance or rejection to the employee and supervisor.
- Employee must keep his/her supervisor informed of absences that relate to the FMLA leave.
- Timecards must be record FMLA time with appropriate codes.

### Still Confused?

For more information click [here](#), or contact the Benefits Office (ext. 2881 or 7516).



Bill Hempfling,  
Human Resources  
Director

## Resources, Contacts, and Links for Supervisors

Let me know what help is needed from Human Resources to assist you in your supervisor roles! Please email questions, comments, suggestions to: [supervisornews@bnl.gov](mailto:supervisornews@bnl.gov) or send to Bldg. 400B.

### Contacts for more information about topics from this issue:

- Benefits and FMLA Questions—Denise DiMeglio
- Employee Assistance Program —Nancy Losinno
- Employee Relations—Susan Foster
- Mandated EAP Referrals —Donna Dowling
- Performance Management —Beth Schwaner
- Sexual Harassment—Shirley Kendall

BNL's EAP and the Cigna Behavioral Health websites are informational resources that BNL Supervisors should use more often. Check out their web sites: [BNL's EAP](#) and Cigna Behavioral Health [www.cignabehavioral.com](http://www.cignabehavioral.com) (Enter Member User ID: bnl; Password: employee)