



NEWLY HIRED EMPLOYEES ON PROBATION: **FAQs**

Introduction

The probationary period is your opportunity to prove you were the best person to hire for your job! It is also a period where your manager is obliged to evaluate whether you are meeting expectations and should be allowed to continue your employment past the 12 months of probation.

During probation, you are, in essence, an “At Will” employee and can be released at any time for any reason without the due process that our contract provides for employees who have passed probation. However, management understands that *they have made an investment* in hiring you and it is in their best interest to do everything they can to help you quickly assimilate into our culture and begin to be a productive member of the organization.

The Employees Association (EA) is also invested in helping you to complete probation successfully. Strong employees make good leaders!

1. What documents can I refer to if I have questions regarding New Hire probation?

There are **three documents** you should familiarize yourself with:

- a. The SCVWD Employee Development & Performance Program (EDPP) guide. We recommend that you go through the entire guide, but of particular interest is the “Probation Process” (pgs 29-31) <http://www.aqua.gov/home/scvwd/main/admin/hr/LabImages/EDPP%20Master063014.pdf>;
- b. The January 1, 2015–December 31, 2017 EA Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) (<http://www.aqua.gov/mou-employees-association-2015-2017>); Article 12, Section 2E and Article 14, Section 13.
- c. The Disciplinary Process Work Instruction, W621F01 (effective 5/3/13) under Human Resources QEMS documents.

2. As a New Hire, how long will I be on probation?

The District counts it in hours – so, it’s 2,080 hours in paid status, which is equal to 12 months. Paid status includes the use of vacation, personal leave and sick leave. Any unpaid time, such as Leave Without Pay, will extend probation by the corresponding number of hours.

3. How do I find out what my Job Duties/Responsibilities are?

Your supervisor/manager will use the EDPP guide to develop an individual goal plan for you. The goal plan will outline your job duties, responsibilities and milestone timelines. This sets the expectations you will be evaluated on at mid-year and year end periods. You will also work with your manager to create a *development* plan. This will help you outline the training and experience needed to move forward in the organization. It is very important that you meet your work goals and milestones so your manager can work with you to help you achieve your longer-term plan for advancement. You can also find a copy of your classification specification that describes the essential functions of your job on the district’s job page.

4. How long do I have to get my personal goal plan and development plan finalized?

The goal plan should be done within 30 days of your hire date. The development plan can be done later, if you need more time. If you have not met with your manager to discuss goal setting within

your first week on the job, ask for a meeting date/time to get it done and document your request. If you still do not have a goal plan in place within the 30-day period, send your manager an email notifying her/him of your concern that the deadline is being missed. Next step: contact the Union and we will assist you and/or advise you from there. We don't want your first evaluation period to roll around and have you find out you haven't met expectations that were not put in writing to you.

5. How often should I be meeting with my supervisor and/or manager to review my goal plan?

Meetings should be scheduled on a recurring basis, at minimum once per month, which is recommended on page 11 of the EDPP guide.

6. Is it appropriate for me to initiate check-in meetings?

Yes, absolutely. *Especially* as a probationary employee; it is essential that you are pro-active in attempting to follow the EDPP guidelines (see pg. 21 of the EDPP) and that you have all the information and tools you'll need to successfully complete probation.

7. What should I do if I receive feedback from my supervisor/manager that my job performance is not meeting their expectations?

Ask for detailed ways in which you can improve your performance to meet their expectation. Implement the changes or recommendations made, and be sure to check back in regularly with the supervisor/manager to review your progress together. Ask to schedule check-in meetings in advance, such as weekly, every two weeks or once a month, etc. Document any and all conversations and communications and contact the Union to keep us in the loop.

8. Who should I contact if I am concerned with situations that come out of the supervisor/manager review meetings?

Contact Glenna Brambill, Director of Grievance, for EA. She can be reached at extension x2408 or by e-mail at gbrambill@valleywater.org. You may also contact any one of the officers or stewards with general questions (see list attached).

9. If my supervisor/manager rates my performance as needs improvement or unsatisfactory, can I be placed on a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)?

Yes, you can (see page 18 of the EDPP). Performance Improvement Plans are intended to be developmental in nature, to help you reach your goals/milestones. However, managers may or may not choose to use a PIP, so it is important that you refer to Answer 08 to develop a plan to improve the impression of your performance.

10. Can the union help me if I am terminated during my probationary period?

The Union cannot file a grievance on a probationary release. *However*, follow the process in the EDPP, document your communications with your manager and your efforts to be successful, and keep the Union informed. All of these things will be very important tools to help us help you to successfully complete probation.

