



**STATE OF MONTANA
HUMAN RESOURCES AND OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

PRO 2-04-001	CIVIL ENGINEERING PLACEMENT / ADVANCEMENT PROCEDURE
<i>Reference:</i> POL 2-04-052 MDT Employee Advancement/Career Ladder Policy	Effective Date: 2/22/2017 Revision Date: 2/26/2025 Biennial Review Date: 2/1/2027

- 1 PURPOSE:** to provide for the advancement of employees in the Engineering classification series when they have met the requirements for the next higher level. Advancement under this policy is based upon successful job performance and demonstrated competency.
- 2 PROCEDURE**
 - 2.1 **Employees New To MDT:** Upon hire, the hiring committee will evaluate the employee's qualifications including work history and coordinate with the org. unit manager for the employee's placement within the career ladder.
 - 2.2 **Level Descriptions:** These descriptions are an overview and are not intended to define any individual position.
 - 2.2.1 **Level 1:** Entry/training level position. The primary focus at **Level 1** is to gain a depth of experience in the work area that allows the employee to start building expertise.
 - 2.2.1.1 Minimum qualifications are an engineering degree and no prior engineering work experience.
 - 2.2.1.2 Engineering graduates who have not passed the Fundamentals of Engineering (FE) exam may be in a Civil Engineer (CE) ladder position at **Level 1**, but the individual is not eligible for advancement until they provide proof of passage of the FE exam.
 - 2.2.1.3 If the employee has not passed the FE exam within two (2) years, they have the option of:
 - 2.2.1.3.1 staying in the CE career ladder without advancing until proof of passage of the FE exam or,
 - 2.2.1.3.2 upon request transfer into *either* the Designer or CE Technician career ladder series with the potential to advance without passing the FE exam. Transferring between sections or org units must be approved by management if not done through competitive process.

2.2.1.3.3 Upon request, employees transferred to the Designer or CE Technician career ladder that have subsequently taken and passed the FE exam can transfer back to the CE career ladder at the level and pay commensurate with their qualifications.

2.2.2 Level 2: Mid-level ladder position.

2.2.2.1 Minimum qualifications: engineering degree and six (6) months to two (2) years engineering work experience.

2.2.2.2 The employee has provided proof of passage of the FE exam.

2.2.2.3 This is a training level position. It is not expected that employees will remain at this level beyond a reasonable training period.

2.2.2.4 At **Level 2**, the employee continues to gain a depth of experience. The expertise gained allows the employee to increasingly apply judgment and deal with more complex issues.

2.2.3 Level 3: Journey level ladder position.

2.2.3.1 Minimum qualifications:

2.2.3.1.1 BS Degree in Civil Engineering or in an engineering field related to this type of work, **plus** demonstrated ability to apply journey level engineering knowledge and skills to a broad variety of engineering tasks.

2.2.3.1.2 This experience is typically achieved within 2-4 years, and requires proof of passage of the FE exam, or licensed as a Professional Engineer (PE).

2.2.3.2 This level is the top of the CE Ladder progression in some work areas. At **Level 3**, an employee has competence in a specific work area, but that competence should reasonably transfer to other work areas at the same level.

2.2.3.3 Civil Engineer Specialist III(s) who are not PEs are allowed to obtain a Senior Engineering Coordinator certification by receiving a passing test score on the Senior Engineering Coordinator certification exam.

2.2.4 Employee's Responsibility:

2.2.4.1 Work closely with the supervisor to identify and gain the needed experience and develop competence.

2.2.4.2 Seek out differing work assignments and learning and growth opportunities.

2.2.4.3 Understand the needs of the work unit and actively work to meet those needs.

2.2.5 Direct Supervisor's Responsibility:

2.2.5.1 Support a range of work opportunities for the employee.

2.2.5.2 Provide feedback, coaching, and performance reviews.

2.2.5.3 Work with the employee to identify training needs and work to provide the training.

2.2.6 Experience Time General Guideline:

CE Ladder Advancement Level	Guideline Experience Time Range
To Level 2	6 months to 2 years
To Level 3	2 years to 4 years

2.3 Advancement Requests

2.3.1 Step 1

2.3.1.1 When an employee believes they are ready for advancement to the next level, they submit a written request to their immediate supervisor.

2.3.1.2 The request needs to contain a brief outline of the employee's work history and experience and a specific request for advancement to the proposed level.

2.3.2 Step 2

2.3.2.1 The supervisor will review the request with the Review Panel.

2.3.2.2 The Review Panel may accept the request or defer the request for a specified time up to six (6) months.

2.3.2.3 If the request is accepted, a Panel Review will be scheduled.

2.3.2.4 Any work history information needed by the Review Panel will be requested.

2.3.2.5 If the request is deferred, the Review Panel and the supervisor will provide feedback on why the request was deferred and input on deficiencies that should be worked on during the deferral.

2.3.2.6 At the end of the deferral period, the employee must submit a new request that includes information on actions taken during the deferral period.

2.3.3 Step 3:

2.3.3.1 If the Review Panel recommends the advancement, the information will be forwarded to the District/Division Administrator for approval.

2.3.3.2 With Administrator concurrence on the recommendation, the Review Panel completes the recommendation form. Refer to [POL 2-04-052 MDT Employee Advancement/Career Ladder Policy](#) for the advancement effective date.

2.4 Advancement Requirements: Advancement within the CE Ladder is based on meeting the requirements of the Job Profile and actual performance as demonstrated in a Panel Review. The Panel Review is either a Work History Review or a Competency Based Peer Review depending on the level in the ladder. The specific type of review required at each level is below.

CE Ladder Advancement Level	Required Panel Review
From Level 1 to Level 2	Work History Review
From Level 2 to Level 3	Competency Based Peer Review

2.4.1 Work History Review

2.4.1.1 Review work history, performance, and depth of experience.

2.4.1.2 Current performance appraisals are reviewed.

2.4.1.3 The panel makes a determination and provides feedback to the employee.

2.4.2 Part 1 Competency Based Peer Review: a peer review of the employee's actual work.

2.4.2.1 In this review the employee is asked to present and discuss information on their work.

2.4.2.2 The Panel will review the employee's actual involvement, actions taken, their decision process, timeliness, effectiveness, ability to communicate work topics, demonstrated ability level and teamwork.

2.4.2.3 The employee presents and discusses specific work they have performed with an emphasis on the specific involvement and accomplishments.

2.4.2.4 The Panel may ask probing questions about the work presented and about other relevant work experience. (Panel uses Evaluation Form).

2.4.3 **Part 2 Competency Based Peer Review:** a review of the employee's work with the direct supervisor.

2.4.3.1 The focus is on work process, overall competence, performance and teamwork.

2.4.3.2 Information from Part 1 is reviewed from the supervisor's perspective.

2.4.3.3 Current performance appraisals are reviewed.

2.4.4 **Part 2 Competency Based Peer Review:** an elective review based on the information gathered in Parts 1 & 2 of the review process.

2.4.4.1 the Panel may elect to interview others in order to refine information presented and gain a full picture.

2.4.4.2 Personnel both within the work unit and outside the work unit may be interviewed.

2.4.5 **Review Panel:** The Review Panel is a three-to-four-person panel within the employee's work area.

2.4.5.1 If the Review Panel recommends the advancement, the information will be forwarded to the Division/District Administrator for approval.

2.4.5.2 With Administrator concurrence on the recommendation, refer to [POL 2-04-052 MDT Employee Advancement/Career Ladder Policy](#) for the advancement effective date.

2.4.5.3 To ensure consistency statewide, a representative from HR will participate in each review.

2.4.5.4 The Review Panel performs the primary review of an employee's readiness for advancement and determines new hire placement. The typical composition of the Review Panel is shown below:

Location	Pre-Construction, Planning, Other	Construction
Helena	Bureau Chief, Section Supervisor, Supervisors, HR	Bureau Chief, Section Supervisor, Supervisors, HR

Location	Pre-Construction, Planning, Other	Construction
Districts	Preconstruction Engineer, Projects Engineer, Supervisors, HR	Construction Engineer, Operations Engineer, EPM, HR

2.4.6 **Review Board:** The Review Board, appointed by the Chief Engineer, is a three (3) member board that oversees the operation of this policy. The primary focus of the Review Board is to ensure consistent and uniform application of the policy across work units.

2.4.6.1 The Review Board reviews the recommendations of the Review Panel for consistency, uniformity, and proper application of the policy on a random check basis.

2.4.6.2 The Review Board may opt to check more frequently depending on the amount of assistance a work unit requires in complying with this procedure. In instances of disagreement between the employee and the Review Panel, the Review Board may be asked to review specific processes used by the review panel to ensure policy compliance.

HISTORY

REVISION DATE	REVISIONS	POLICY OWNER/AUTHOR
February 22, 2017	NEW Procedure	Keni Grose, HROS Division Administrator
February 28, 2019	Biennial Review – No Revisions	Keni Grose, HROS Division Administrator
February 28, 2021	Biennial Review – No Revisions	Michelle Keele, HROS Division Administrator
December 17, 2021	Text Revisions	Michelle Keele, HROS Division Administrator
March 27, 2024	Biennial Review – Text Revisions	Tamuna Cullison, Acting HROS Division Administrator
February 26, 2025	Text and Format Revisions	Sharon Duncan, HROS Division Administrator