



EMPLOYEES' PROVIDENT FUND OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION
EMPLOYEES' PROVIDENT FUND ORGANISATION
MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT, GOVT. OF INDIA
Regional Office, Sham Nagar, Near General Bus Stand, Ludhiana – 141001 (Punjab)

(Regn. No. 33/2015)

Phone: 0161-2440559, 9655565892
Fax: 044 2402206
WhatsApp: EPF Officers' Association (9655565892)
PAN: AAAAE7689J

Email: epfooa@gmail.com
Web: www.epfoa.in
Facebook: Epfoa India
Twitter: @epfoaindia

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November 30th, 2023

To,

**Ms. Arti Ahuja, I.A.S
Secretary to the Government,
Ministry of Labour & Employment,
Government of India,
Shram Shakti Bhawan,
NEW DELHI 110001.**

**Sub: Non-compliance of the DOP&T & EPFO prescribed
timelines for completion of Annual Performance
Appraisal Report (APAR) – regarding**

Ma'am,

As you are aware, the performance of every public servant is assessed annually through his APAR. Hence, APAR assumes immense importance in the career of an EPFO officer, as the work, conduct and capabilities of the officer reported upon can be reasonably judged from the recorded opinion. It is in the interest of every officer that he should know how well or otherwise, he is performing the job assigned to him.

2. EPFO follows the DOP&T prescribed guidelines including the prescribed timelines for filing of the APAR of EPFO officers every year. The timelines are required to be followed scrupulously, and the DOP&T clearly prescribes that after the expiry of the first week of the time-schedule, if the self-appraisal of the reported-upon officer is not received by her reporting officer, the reporting officer can obtain a blank APAR form and proceed to write the report on the basis of her experience of the

work and conduct of the officer being reported upon. Similarly, if the APAR is not initiated by the reporting officer for any reason beyond the 30th June of the year in which the financial year ended, she shall lose the right to enter any remarks in the APAR. In the same manner the Reviewing Officer shall also forfeit his right to enter any remarks in the APAR beyond 31st August of the year in which the financial year ended.

3. The regular timelines prescribed by EPFO for APAR were extended for the year 2021-2022 vide EPFO circular no. HRM-IX/APAR/2021-2022/Timelines/11864 dated 31.10.2022. The revised table is printed below for kind consideration:

S.No.	Activities	New Deadline
1	Submission of self-appraisal by the officer reported upon to the Reporting Officer	14 th November 2022
2	Submission of report by Reporting Officer to Reviewing Officer	15 th December 2022
3	Submission of report by the Reviewing Officer	16 th January 2023
4	Disclosure of APAR to the officer reported upon	17 th January 2023
5	Submission of representation, if any, on APAR by the officer reported upon to the APAR Custodian	Within 15 days from the date of disclosure of APAR
6	Forwarding of representation by the APAR Custodian to the Competent Authority	7 th February 2023
7	Disposal of representation by the Competent Authority and forwarding it to APAR Custodian	Within one month from the date of receipt of representation by the Competent Authority
8	Communication of the decision of the Competent Authority by the APAR Custodian to the officer reported upon	Within 15 days from the finalization of the decision by the Competent Authority
9	End of entire APAR process after which the APAR will be finally taken on record	31 st March 2023

4. It may kindly be noted that as per above circular, the APAR for year 2021-2022 should have been finally closed for all officers latest by 31.03.2023. However, it noted from the HR Portal of EPFO that in some cases the APAR for 2021-22 is still pending at Reviewing Officer level. As per the prescribed timeline, these APAR should have been closed by now as the concerned Reviewing Officer is no longer empowered to make any entries in the said APAR as on date. Unfortunately, even as on date, the APAR entries for the year 2021-2022 have not been closed and entries revealed to the concerned officers and the official portal displays following remarks for most officers:

The APAR Report will be available after the disclosure date as decided by the HRM Wing.

5. Above non-transparency and non-compliance of prescribed timelines by EPFO is not only contrary to the spirit of APAR rules but is also blatantly illegal. In fact, entries made by any authority into the APAR form after the lapse of extended timelines prescribed by above circular are invalid and need to be expunged as per prescribed rules of DOP&T as adopted by EPFO. Continuing vagueness on this issue is giving rise to justifiable fear that the remarks are not being revealed as same may confirm unjustifiable marking. Therefore, the best course of action would be to audit the process and verify if the prescribed rules regarding timelines have been duly followed, and thereafter, to close the APAR and reveal them to the concerned officers immediately.

6. It is also submitted that the process for APAR for the year 2022-2023 has not even been initiated as of now (i.e. the APAR portal has not permitted entry of self-appraisal by the concerned officers), even though as per the prescribed timelines, the APAR for year 2022-2023 must be completely finalised by 30th November 2023. In fact, even the extension of timelines given by DOP&T in view of G20 activities, vide circular dated 12.09.2023 does not permit the reporting officer any authority to make entries after 30.09.2023, and reviewing officer any authority after 30.11.2023.

7. Ma'am, as the Secretary to the Ministry, the DOP&T guidelines on APAR instil the final authority to ensure compliance of said guidelines in your goodself, and therefore, we humbly request you to kindly cause an immediate audit of the APAR process for the year 2021-2022 and ensure that the prescribed rules & timelines are followed by all subordinate authorities.

Thanking you.

Yours sincerely,



**[Saurabh Swami]
Secretary General**

Copy to:

1. Hon'ble Chairman, CBT, EPF/
Hon'ble Minister (L&E), Govt. of India
 2. Central PF Commissioner, EPFO
- } for kind information and necessary action.